

FOUNDATIONS

Quick Start Guide



INTRODUCTION

Eating well can feel really difficult sometimes. It can make taking that first step to lasting weight loss and better health feel insurmountable. It's my mission to make it easier — and to help you develop **simple, workable strategies** for eating and living well.

What does eating and living well mean exactly? Good nutrition programs accomplish three primary things **simultaneously**:

1. They improve your body composition.
2. They improve your health.
3. They improve your performance.

One aspect should not come at the expense of others. Keep this in mind as you read through this guide.

Simple, workable strategies, whether they be for weight loss or otherwise, are based on a firm foundation of fundamentals that work in the majority of circumstances. That's why this guide will walk you through the most important fundamentals that we work through with all of our coaching clients to lay the foundation for their long-term success.

It all starts with you. That's what this journey is all about, after all - you and your well-being. Once you know you are ready to make some lifestyle changes for the better, you need to spend some time on the critical first step: choosing goals that will set the tone for your overall success.



Outcome Goals vs. Behavioral Goals

We all know that setting goals is important. What gets tricky is the “how” of goal setting and this is where we tend to sabotage our success from the get go.

Generally, when someone is asked about their fitness goals, they will start with the outcome(s) they want:

- I want to lose 10 pounds in the next month.
- I want to have nice, defined abs.
- I want to stop snacking after dinner.
- I want to squat double my bodyweight.

And working from those outcomes it is pretty easy to follow the common place advice of making a “**S.M.A.R.T.**” goal that is **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**greed Upon, **R**ealistic, and **T**ime-Based.

Wanting to lose 10 pounds in a month (30 days) fits all the criteria perfectly.

Here’s the thing, though: as nice and shiny as that new goal seems, it is slightly misplacing your focus and setting you up for failure later. Why?

It doesn’t account for the messiness that is life.

You see, outcome based goals describe how we want things to be at the end of the process. There’s nothing wrong with that. It’s perfectly fine to think about the things you want, and start with the end in mind - in fact it’s perfectly normal. It’s good to have outcome goals. You should have them.

But you can’t stop there.

Wanting things isn’t enough. Even if you really, really, really want them.

Here’s why: **We often don’t have complete control of our outcomes.**

Outcomes are affected by environmental things. Like:

- Your job gets crazy busy.
- Your kid gets sick.
- Your gym closes for renovations.
- Your mom with dementia needs help.
- You have exams at school.

And they're influenced by physical things. Like:

- Your hormones get out of whack.
- You have a chronic illness. (Or even just a tough bout with the flu.)
- You're stressed.
- You're traveling a lot.
- You're getting older.
- You're having problems sleeping.
- You sprained your ankle or your arthritic knee is doing its thing again.

You get the idea. You only have so much control of the outcome.

That's why it's important to pair your outcome goals with goals that are based on behaviors. While life may get messy around you and things outside of your control can create chaos, you still have control of your every day actions. That's empowering!

You may have some ups and downs. There may be days when the numbers on the scale aren't what you want them to be, but you are still in control. You're in the driver's seat.

Now I'm not saying you shouldn't spend time on outcome goals. You should definitely have them. They give you something objective to aim for and help you know when to adjust course when necessary.

What I am saying is that instead of spending so much time focusing on outcomes, try focusing your (limited) energy on the actual behaviors that need to change to get you where you want to be.

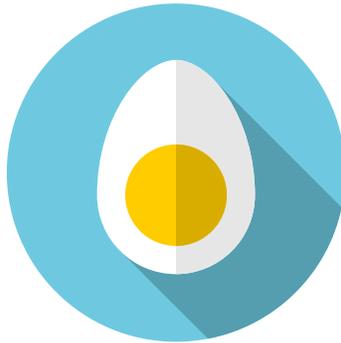
This could be something as simple as eating more slowly so you really develop a sense of satiety or it can be something more involved like creating a healthy plate at each meal.

Behavior goals represent your commitment to practice a particular set of actions or tasks every day, as consistently and regularly as possible. And consistency is the name of the game in fitness.

Some Great Starting Places

If you're ready to get started on setting some behavioral goals, take a look at the following ten habits. The first five are fundamental habits that are powerhouses in long-term change. The last five will give you better short-term results if you need some early momentum to get you going.

Habit 1 - Eat Slowly and Stop at 80% Full



It takes about 20 minutes for our satiety mechanisms to kick in. Your body really is rather good at getting you to eat "enough" calories to stay in energy balance (calories out = calories in). When we eat too quickly, however, it is hard to really dial in to those cues that tell how full you really are, which can be problematic when you are trying to get lean, perform better, or be healthier.

For the vast majority of folks, slowing down is a great idea. Not only does it allow you to better gauge how much you are eating, it also allows you to enjoy your food more thoroughly, and can be a great opportunity to take a breather and reduce some stress.

Now, if you are a busy person (highly likely) and are very good about your portion sizes and creating a good plate, you may be able to pass over this habit.

If you do skip on this habit you need to be objective about it. In other words, you have to ask yourself if you are making measurable progress towards your goal (are you losing weight consistently)?

If not, you may want to double back and work on this habit.

Double Check Yourself - The Hunger Guide

Regardless of your approach from this habit, you can double check that you are consuming the right amount of calories to improve your body composition by simply paying attention to how you feel after your meals. Your body tends to be very good giving you hints to where you are for your overall calorie consumption.

The following "How You Should Feel" tips and cues should give you a good feel for what you are looking for when you are consuming the right amount of calories.

HOW YOU SHOULD FEEL TIMELINE

To Help You Dial In Your Portion Sizes

Today you're going to eat what you feel is a "typical" meal and then observe how you feel immediately after finishing and every hour afterward. Rank your physical hunger on a scale from 1 (no hunger) to 10 (worst hunger ever).

If you've eaten the right amount for fat loss, you might feel like this:

Just before eating

Are you physically hungry? Pause and check in. Look for signals like a rumbling stomach, light-headedness, irritability, etc. You want to be around a 7 out of 10 on the hunger scale.

HOUR

0

Immediately after eating

To be 80% full, shoot for about a 2 or 3 out of 10 on the hunger scale. Pause for 15-20 minutes before you eat more. This will give your brain time to catch up. You want to feel **satisfied, not stuffed**.

HOUR

1

One hour after finishing

You should still feel physically satisfied with no desire to eat another meal.

HOUR

2

Two hours after finishing

You may start to feel a little hungry, like you could eat something, but the feeling isn't overwhelming.

HOUR

3

Three to four hours after finishing

Check in. You may be getting a bit hungry, perhaps a 4 to 6 out of 10. If you're around a 7, eat. Not really hungry yet? That's OK. **Follow your body cues**.

HOUR

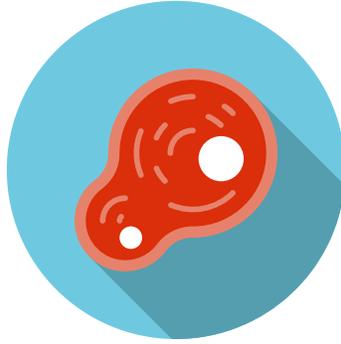
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Four or more hours after finishing

You're probably quite hungry, like nothing is getting between you and the kitchen. If you're around a 7 or higher, eat.

Not really hungry yet? That's OK. **Keep checking in with your body**. You may find you need to act fast once your body decides to be hungry — so be prepared with a healthy and quick option, just in case.

When you're truly physically hungry, eat. Eat slowly, and stop at 80% full. Adjust your meal size and frequency depending on your body cues.



Habit 2 - Eat Protein Dense Foods With Each Meal

Consuming enough protein is essential to achieving your best health, body composition, and performance. In fact it's hard to achieve all three of those with suboptimal protein intake. Some people are able to reach protein optimization without getting protein dense foods at each meal, but it's tough as you have to eat large portions of (very filling) protein at the meals that do feature it on the menu.

So, make it easy on yourself with this habit.

A few things to keep in mind:

Serving Size: A portion size of protein is visually about the size and thickness of the palm of your hand. This amounts to 20-30 g.

Guidelines: Women should aim for 1 palm of protein per meal (20-30 g), and men should aim for two palms (40-60 g).

By adopting this habit, you will not only ensure that you get adequate protein in your diet, you'll also get a nice boost to your metabolism as more energy is required to digest protein. And don't forget about improved muscle mass and quicker recovery times. Protein is a crucial piece of your fitness

PROTEIN CHART

Food type Protein dense foods

Food timing Eaten with each meal

Food amount 1 serving for women (size of palm)
2 servings for men (size of two palms)

- Examples**
- Lean meats such as ground beef, chicken, turkey, bison, venison
 - Fish such as salmon, tuna, cod, roughy
 - Eggs
 - Dairy such as cottage cheese, Greek yogurt, cheese, etc.
 - Beans, peas, legumes, tofu, tempeh, etc.
 - Protein supplements
 - milk-based: whey, casein, milk protein blends
 - plant-based: pea, hemp, rice, soy, etc.



Habit 3 - Eat Vegetables With Each Meal

Boy, if you aren't sick of hearing this one! Most of us have heard this since we were kids. Well, I hate to break it to you, it's not just something moms have said for decades without reason.

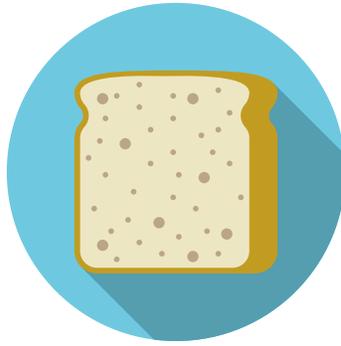
Science has demonstrated that in addition to the micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) that are packed into veggies, there are also important phytonutrients (plant chemicals) that are key to optimal function.

It's also worth mentioning that where proteins and grains present an acid load to the blood, veggies do the opposite, providing an alkaline load to keep your blood chemistry balanced.

Serving Size: a fist-sized portion of vegetables.

Guidelines: Women should aim for 1 serving per meal, where men should try for 2. Vegetables tend to be very low calorie and nutrient dense so more than 1-2 won't destroy your diet. 5-10 total servings per day.

If this is something new to you, start small and slowly work your way up to your goal. Try by adding a fist here and there at first until you reach your goal of 1-2 per meal.



Habit 4 - Eat Some Carbohydrate Dense Foods With Most Meals, Especially After Exercise

Full disclosure, this is one habit that, in particular, can be more variable than the rest. The specific amount you should eat really depends on your body size, body type and physical needs (all things one of our coaches will walk you through).

But, when building good habits it is far better to start with a simple habit before refining and individualizing it. The reality is that if most people just ate a reasonable (key word) amount of carbs at most meals, and had a good chunk of their total carbs following exercise, they would likely come very close to meeting their specific needs without counting and calories, factoring a percentage or worrying about their body type.

Serving Size: a cupped handful of carbohydrate dense foods.

Guidelines: Women should aim for 1 cupped handful with most meals and men should aim for 2. The kinds of foods you are getting your carbohydrates from is an important factor in your overall success. We recommend that the majority of your carbs come from whole, minimally processed sources. Check out this chart for some solid ideas to get you started.

Also, it is okay to have some carb-free meals, such as salad, from time to time. Just make sure you aren't keeping your carbohydrate intake too low for your activity levels. As a rule of thumb, the more active you are, the more carbs you need to fuel and recover from activity.

CARBOHYDRATE CHART

FOR FAT LOSS & MUSCLE GAIN

Food type	Exercise Recovery Drink	Simple Sugars and Highly Processed Starches	Whole-Food, Minimally Processed Starchy Carbohydrates	Fruits And Vegetables
Food Timing For Muscle Gain	During and after exercise	Immediately after exercise (if at all)	Eat soon (within 3 hours) after exercise	Eaten with each meal
Food Timing For Fat Loss	During exercise only	Minimize intake	Eat soon (within 1-2 hours) after exercise	Eaten with each meal (with emphasis on veggies)
Examples	Sugary, protein-rich recovery drinks such as Biotest Surge, Endurox R4	Sugary sports drinks Breakfast cereals Soda Fruit juice Table sugar Sugary desserts Ice cream Muffins Bagels Other carbohydrate- rich snacks	Bread (preferably whole grain) Pasta (preferably whole grain or flax) Rice (preferably whole grain, unprocessed) Potatoes Oats (preferably whole oats) Cereal grains (wheat, rye, etc.)	Spinach Carrots Tomatoes Broccoli Cauliflower Apples Oranges Avocados Berries

SIMPLIFIED CARBOHYDRATE CHART

FOR FAT LOSS OR MAINTENANCE

Carbohydrate Type	Examples	Best Time To Eat
Fibre-Rich	Vegetables (e.g., broccoli, kale, spinach, carrots, tomatoes, celery, cucumber, zucchini, beets, bok choy, lettuce, collards, radish, onion, chard, watercress, etc.) Peas Beans* Legumes* Most fruits*	Eat often, and any time of day (especially for veggies)
Whole Food Starchy	Sprouted or whole grain breads and pastas Corn Yams/sweet potatoes/pumpkin Quinoa Amaranth Oats Long grain rice	During the 3 hours after exercise
Refined Sugary	Desserts Fruit juice Processed foods Soda Sports drinks Most commercial nutrition bars Dates, figs, raisins, dried fruits	Eat occasionally/rarely, and only during the 3 hours after exercise

*Notes: These selections are more carb-dense. So, when including these in meals, be sure not to overeat



Habit 5 - Eat Healthy Fat Dense Foods With Most Meals

Healthy fats are essential to a healthy body and optimal performance. Optimal intake falls somewhere in the range of 20-40% of your total calories. Again, keeping it simple to start is the name of the game so try for the middle at 30%.

Getting enough fat is actually pretty easy - you just need to include a small amount of healthy fats with most meals. As before, here are the recommendations:

Serving Size: One thumb-sized portion of fat dense food.

Guidelines: Women should aim for 1 thumb of fat dense foods per meal, and men should try for 2 thumbs.

Much like with the carbohydrates, there is some variance with fat intake that depends on each person and how well they tolerate them. These guidelines are a great place to start, though, before making any individual adjustments.

Worth mentioning is the importance of balancing your intake of saturated, monounsaturated, and polyunsaturated fats. We recommend aiming that each one make up about a third of your total fat intake for optimal health, body composition and performance.

To help you wrap your head around what's going on with fats, dig into this handy chart for some guidance.

FAT CHART

Food type	<u>Saturated</u>	<u>Monounsaturated</u>	<u>Polyunsaturated</u>
Food timing	No specific timing	No specific timing	No specific timing
Food amount	1/3 of intake	1/3 of intake	1/3 of intake
Examples	Animal fats (in eggs, dairy, meats, butter, cheeses, etc.) Coconut oil Palm oil	Macadamias, pecans, almonds, cashews, pistachios, tahini, pumpkin seeds, hazelnuts olives, olive oil, avocado	Fish oil, hemp seeds, algae oils, safflower oil, sunflower seeds, peanuts, canola oil, soy nuts, walnuts, flax seeds, flax oil, chia seeds, Brazil nuts

Alternative Habits You Can Try

I'll admit it, the five habits listed above can feel very basic - they are fundamentals after all! If, for the next 14 days, you want to tackle some habits that may be less impactful in the long-term, but yield more short-term gains, try one of these instead:

- Exercise for 30 minutes
- Drink at least 8 cups of water
- Sleep at least 8 hours (including naps)
- Replace grains with greens during each meal
- Don't drink any calories

How to Choose Your Habit

Simple: Pick whichever one seems easiest for you!

Once you choose, ask yourself the following question:

"On a scale of 1-10, how confident am I that I can do this habit every day for the next 14 days?"

If the answer is a 9 or a 10, you can get started on that habit.

However, if your answer is less than a 9, either choose a different habit or make your chosen habit easier until you're really confident you can do it. For example, instead of exercising 30 minutes a day, could you do 15? How about 5? Give yourself permission to make it easier and easier on yourself until you're at least 9/10 on the confidence scale. Then do it.

Remember, this is about truly being honest with yourself. Forget about what you think you should be able to do; what can you do, right now? In my experience, to be truly confident (which is what separates those who succeed from those who fail), people need to start with one, quick, easy habit each day.

Now Go Get After It!

These habits should give you a great start on the fat loss process. But remember the rules. Don't try to pile them all on at once. Begin by choosing only one new habit that you're confident you can do for 14 days. Then do it, adding new habits only after you've mastered the first one.

And here's another key tip. As you adopt each new habit, you have our permission to leave everything else the same. Sure, if you're feeling particularly ambitious one day and you want to try a few new things, that's OK.

However, take my word. You can't do it all at once, every day. But the good news is you don't have to! So just let go of that expectation right now.

Instead, pick one proven behavior to start with. The same way you would learn math, or learn to talk, or learn anything, you're going to learn to get in shape.

Want to take it a step further?

As in many facets of life, fundamentals lay the groundwork for continued success. While some of the ideas mentioned in this guide may seem almost too simple, remember that it is behaviors, not lack of knowledge, that trip up most folks. By focusing on building a foundation from these fundamentals you will be well on your way to your health, body composition or performance goals.

If you are already off to a good start and want some guidance as you begin to become more individualized in your focus, or if you are just getting started with all of this and want someone to help you navigate it, reach out.

Men and women in our coaching programs learn how to optimize and individualize their food intake and activity levels to protect their health in sustainable, long-term ways. And we start by making it as easy as possible so you can build momentum and continually improve.

If you are interested in creating a game plan specific to your needs, email me directly at:

getfit@shawngerber.com

