

*How to*

# Calculate Macros

## A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE FOR BEGINNERS

# MACROS 101

*What are they?*

Macronutrients, or macros for short, are nutrients your body needs in large amounts to work properly.



**There are three macros: carbohydrates (carbs), protein, and fat.**

Macros act as your body's main source of energy. Yet they serve different functions. The chart below breaks down how they differ:

| Macro | Carbohydrate | Protein | Fat |
|---|---|---|---|
| **How it helps** | breaks down into glucose, used for quick source of energy, or stored as glycogen in liver or muscles | helps your body build and repair muscles and tissues, make hormones and enzymes & supports immune function | helps with energy, hormone production, nutrient absorption & maintaining body temperature |
| **Calories** | 4 calories per gram | 4 calories per gram | 9 calories per gram |
| **Healthy sources** | • brown rice<br>• oats<br>• quinoa<br>• beans & legumes<br>• fruits<br>• starchy veggies like sweet potato | • salmon<br>• chicken<br>• beef<br>• eggs<br>• tofu<br>• beans/legumes<br>• nuts/seeds | • olive oil<br>• avocado<br>• coconut<br>• nuts<br>• seeds<br>• fatty fish<br>• ghee |

**You need a mix of all three macros to be healthy.** But your unique macros needs vary depending on your health goals and activity level.

*That's where macro tracking comes in...*

# TRACKING MACROS

*What is it?*

Tracking macros, also known as counting macros, is simply **logging how many grams of each macro you consume each day.**

This is often confused with counting calories. But they're NOT the same!

Counting calories doesn't take into account *where* your energy comes from. Tracking macros DOES.

## Macro tracking can help:

- Optimize metabolism
- Promote weight loss
- Build muscle
- Balance blood sugar
- Burn fat more effectively
- Support healthy food choices
- Improve overall health

This can help build awareness of how you're fueling your body. And help you tweak your macros to make it easier to achieve your health goals.

## How to Track Macros

1. **Determine your daily calorie intake.** This will vary depending on your age, height, weight, sex, activity level, and health goals. If you're unsure, this calculator should help.
2. **Choose your ideal macronutrient ratio.** This is the percentage of carbs, protein, and fat to shoot for. Again, this will vary from person to person depending on your body composition and health goals. If you're not sure of the right ratio for you, don't worry! We'll cover several options on the next page.
3. **Track your macros.** Log the foods you eat and their macro content. You can do this old school with a food diary. But the easiest way is to use an app like My Fitness Pal, Lose it!, or My Macros. They do the math for you!

# MACRONUTRIENT RATIOS

*What's best for you?*

The right macronutrient ratio for YOU depends on your **body composition** and **health goals.**

For example, if you're training for a marathon, you'd need more carbs to fuel those runs. But if you're following the ketogenic diet to burn body fat, you'd consume more fat and far fewer carbs.

Here are some macronutrient ratio examples tailored to specific health goals:

## Endurance Athlete

- **Carbs:** 60% of calories
- **Protein:** 20% of calories
- **Fat:** 20% of calories

## Strength Building

- **Carbs:** 40% of calories
- **Protein:** 30% of calories
- **Fat:** 30% of calories

## Overall Athletic Performance

- **Carbs:** 55% of calories
- **Protein:** 25% of calories
- **Fat:** 20% of calories

## Blood Sugar Control

- **Carbs:** 20-30% of calories
- **Protein:** 30-40% of calories
- **Fat:** 30-40% of caloires

## Weight Loss

- **Carbs:** 30% of calories
- **Protein:** 45% of calories
- **Fat:** 25% of calories

## Ketogenic Diet

- **Carbs:** 5-10% of calories
- **Protein:** 20-30% of calories
- **Fat:** 70-80% of calories

# HOW TO CALCULATE MACROS

*Step by step*

Now that we've covered macro ratios, let's dig into the math of counting macros. Here's an example:

## Calculating Macros Example

Let's say your daily calorie goal is 1,600 calories and your ideal macro ratio is **40/30/30**. This would mean you'd aim for **40% carbs, 30% protein,** and **30% fat**.

| Steps | Example |
|---|---|
| **1 - Multiply the daily calorie goal by the %** to get the calorie goal for each macro category that day. | 1,600 calories x 40% = 640 calories carbs<br><br>1,600 calories x 30% = 480 calories protein and 480 calories fat |
| **2 - Divide by the number of calories per gram** to get the number of grams in each category for the day.<br><br>• *carbs:* 4 calories per gram<br>• *protein:* 4 calories per gram<br>• *fat:* 9 calories per gram | 640 calories ÷ 4 = 160 grams carbs<br><br>480 calories ÷ 4 = 120 grams protein<br><br>480 calories ÷ 9 = 53 grams fat |

# MACRO COUNTING

*Measuring food*

To keep macros in your ideal range, portion size is key. If your portions are off, you'll be more likely to overeat or undereat.

Packaged foods have nutritional labels that list the macros. Check the labels for **serving size, total carbs, protein, total fat,** and **calories.**

Whole foods like fruits, veggies, meat, and fish don't always come with a nutritional label. In those cases, you can check a food database like My Fitness Pal for serving sizes and macro info.

Serving sizes can be measured in two ways: by weight or quantity. Let's take a peek a both:



## Weight

Using a food scale is the most accurate way to measure food. They measure weight in grams or ounces. You can then log these numbers into a food diary or a macro tracking app.



## Quantity

No food scale handy? No problem. You can also keep track of your portions with measuring cups and spoons. Simply measure each serving and log your data into a macro tracking app.



# COUNTING MACROS

*Other tips*

Tracking your macros helps you understand where your calories come from. This often leads to healthier food choices. That said, there are a few things you should keep in mind about macro counting:

1 - **Don't just focus on the numbers.** Quality matters too. Twenty grams of donuts does NOT equal 20 grams of quinoa. Avoid letting macro counting turn into an excuse to eat a bunch of junk. Opt for nutrient-dense whole foods like fruits, veggies, whole grains, legumes, and high quality protein over processed foods.

2 - **You don't need to do it forever.** Counting macros can be overwhelming if you're new to it. You might see it as yet *another* thing to keep track of. But you don't need to do it forever. You can always just try it for a week. Even a few days can help you gauge how to eat for your ideal ratio.

3 - **It's not a good fit for everyone.** Counting macros isn't a good fit for people with a history of disordered eating patterns. The focus on food intake could potentially trigger disordered eating behaviors. So if you have a history of disordered eating, it's best to avoid it.