

The Perfect Day of Eating
By Cassandra Forsythe, M.S.
Men's Health

7:00 a.m.: BREAKFAST

After a full 7 or 8 hours without food, your body craves a healthy dose of high-quality protein. Start your day right with at least 30 grams (g), along with plenty of slow-digesting carbs. Because your carbohydrate stores are low after an overnight fast, there's no better time to fill your tank. Just make sure your carbs come primarily from fruit and 100 percent whole-grain sources.

PROTEIN-PACKED OATMEAL

Prepare: 1 package Nature's Path Instant Flax 'N Oats

Mix in:

- 1 scoop strawberry whey-protein powder (Choose a product that's 100 percent whey protein, such as Optimum Nutrition 100% Whey Gold Standard; optimumnutrition.com.)
- 3 Tbsp 1% milk

Have on the side:

- 1 medium pear
- 1 cup green tea or coffee (sweetened with Splenda)

472 calories, 32 g protein, 76 g carbohydrates, 8 g fat (1 g saturated), 9 g fiber

OPTION 2: SPICY OMELET

Make with:

- 1 cup Egg Beaters
- 1 medium egg
- 1/2 cup fresh spinach
- 2 mushrooms, sliced
- 2 Tbsp shredded light Cheddar cheese
- 1/2 cup salsa

Have on the side:

- 1 slice 100% whole-wheat bread with 1 tbsp Smucker's low-sugar jelly
- 1 cup V8 juice

421 calories, 37 g protein, 40 g carbohydrates, 11 g fat (4 g saturated), 5 g fiber

OPTION 3: STRAWBERRY-AND-BANANA WORKOUT SHAKE

If you work out first thing in the morning, choose this option. Drink half of the shake right before your session and half immediately afterward.

Blend together:

- 2 scoops vanilla whey-protein powder
- 6 oz Yoplait Light fat-free strawberry yogurt
- 8 frozen strawberries
- 1 large banana
- Plenty of ice

491 calories, 52 g protein, 61 g carbohydrates, 6 g fat (1 g saturated), 5 g fiber

10:00 a.m.: MIDMORNING SNACK

Eating protein- and fiber-rich meals or snacks every 2 to 3 hours helps keep your blood-sugar levels normal. This not only improves your body's ability to burn fat, but also reduces risk factors for heart disease by lowering cholesterol and triglycerides. Frequent eating also prevents afternoon binges on useless calories, like the leftover Krispy Kremes from your morning staff meeting.

GRAPES, CHEESE AND HAM

- 1 1/2 cup seedless grapes
- 2 slices fat-free American cheese singles
- 4oz Healthy Choice ham slices

352 calories, 28 g protein, 51 g carbohydrates, 4 g fat (1 g saturated), 2 g fiber

OPTION 2: MEXI-TUNA

Mix together:

- 1 3 oz can (or packet) Starkist Premium Chunk Light Tuna in Water
- 3/4 cup canned black beans
- 1/2 cup salsa
- 1/2 cup canned green beans

335 calories, 45 g protein, 41 g carbohydrates, 1 g fat (0 g saturated), 15 g fiber

OPTION 3: CHILI

Microwave:

- 1/2 can Hormel Less Sodium Chili with Beans

340 calories, 18 g protein, 30 g carbohydrates, 17 g fat (7 g saturated), 9 g fiber

Noon: LUNCH

These lunches not only are high in protein and healthy fat, but also score low on the glycemic index. So, like the midmorning snack, they contain carbohydrates that have little impact on your blood sugar. This keeps your fat-burning furnace stoked and helps prevent the dreaded midday lull.

TUNA SANDWICH

Make with:

- 2 slices 100% whole-wheat bread
- 1 3 oz can (or packet) Starkist Premium Chunk Light Tuna in Water
- 1 Tbsp Hellmann's Light mayonnaise
- 1 Tbsp mustard
- 1 lettuce leaf
- 2 slices tomato
- 1tsp chopped onions
- 1 Tbsp chopped celery

Have on the side:

- 1oz Planters mixed nuts

506 calories, 45 g protein, 41 g carbohydrates, 17 g fat (2 g saturated), 7 g fiber

OPTION 2: CHEF'S SALAD

Combine:

- 2 cups chopped romaine lettuce
- 1 large hard-boiled egg
- 2 oz Healthy Choice turkey breast
- 2 oz Healthy Choice ham
- 1 oz sliced light Cheddar cheese
- 1 oz sliced light American cheese
- 6 cherry tomatoes
- 1/2 oz sliced almonds
- 2 Tbsp Hidden Valley Original Ranch Light Dressing (For a different flavor, try dressing your salad with olive oil and vinegar, which has 0 grams of sugar.)

493 calories, 54 g protein, 20 g carbohydrates, 22 g fat (6 g saturated), 4 g fiber

3:00 p.m.: MIDAFTERNOON SNACK

As the day goes on, your ability to utilize carbohydrates for energy decreases, boosting the likelihood that they'll be stored as fat. So late afternoon is a good time to start downsizing your carb intake and increasing the amount of healthy fat you consume. This also leads to fewer total carbohydrates in your daily diet, which speeds fat loss, according to multiple studies over the past 5 years.

CHEESE STICKS AND NUTS

- 2 sticks 2% fat string cheese
- 1 oz walnuts
- 307 calories, 24 g protein, 5 g carbohydrates, 24 g fat (6 g saturated), 2 g fiber

OPTION 2: BEEF JERKY AND CELERY WITH PEANUT BUTTER

- 2 oz beef jerky
- 1 celery stalk
- 1 Tbsp Simply Jif Creamy Peanut Butter 33% Less Sugar
- 277 calories, 33 g protein, 14 g carbohydrates, 10 g fat (2 g saturated), 3 g fiber

OPTION 3: LOW-CARB PROTEIN BAR

- 1 Metabolic Drive Protein-Energy bar (t-nation.com) or similar product that contains fewer than 30 g carbohydrates and 20 or more g protein

240 calories, 20 g protein, 26 g carbohydrates, 8 g fat (3 g saturated), 2 g fiber

6:00 p.m.: DINNER

Your sense of satiety, or feeling of fullness, is less sensitive in the evening than in the morning, which may help explain why you crave foods like ice cream at night. It's also another reason it makes sense to eat a dinner that's high in protein and healthy fat, both of which keep you full longer than carbohydrates do.

PAN-FRIED SALMON WITH BROCCOLI AND BEANS

Pan fry:

One 5 1/2 oz salmon fillet (in 2 Tbsp olive oil preheated in a nonstick skillet) on medium-high heat for 4 minutes; turn and fry for another 5 minutes. Season with fresh lemon juice and dill.

Have on the side:

- 2 cups steamed broccoli (measured raw)
- 1/2 can dark-red kidney beans (Wash thoroughly, then serve without cooking.)

516 calories, 56 g protein, 36 g carbohydrates, 19 g fat (3 g saturated), 18 g fiber

OPTION 2: MEAT LOAF WITH GREEN BEANS

Combine:

- 1 lb extra-lean ground beef
- 1/2 cup oats
- 1/2 cup Heinz OneCarb Ketchup (Use this version instead of regular ketchup to avoid unnecessary sugar.)
- 1 large egg
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp pepper
- 2 Tbsp dried onion flakes
- 1 tsp dried mustard
- 1 tsp Worcestershire sauce

In a baking pan, mix and form the ingredients into a loaf with your hands, then place into an oven preheated to 350 degrees.

Cook for:

15 to 20 minutes. Makes 2 servings

Have on the side:

- 1 cup cooked green beans

530 calories, 52 g protein, 28 g carbohydrates, 20 g fat (9 g saturated), 5 g fiber

9:00 p.m.: BEFORE-BED SNACK

Slow-absorbing proteins such as casein—the type of protein found in dairy products—deliver a steady supply of amino acids to muscle cells while you sleep, protecting your hard-earned muscle.

PROTEIN PUDDING

Mix together, then chill for 1 hour:

- 1 scoop chocolate whey-protein powder
- 6 oz 1% milk
- 1 tsp sugar-free Jell-O pudding mix

239 calories, 33 g protein, 17 g carbohydrates, 4 g fat (1 g saturated), 1 g fiber

OPTION 2: COTTAGE CHEESE AND STRAWBERRIES

Mix together:

- 1 cup Breakstone's 2% cottage cheese
- 3/4 cup sliced strawberries

198 calories, 29 g protein, 14 g carbohydrates, 3 g fat (0.5 g saturated), 3 g fiber

Photograph by John Blais

Provided by Men's Health

URL: <http://health.msn.com/dietfitness/articlepage.aspx?cp-documentid=100143665>