

TOP 5

Most Important Nutrition Principles

The 5 Most Important Nutrition Principles

1. The quantity of food you eat (in calories) determines your weight.

There is a certain amount of food your body needs based on things like age, sex, genetics, and activity. This total amount of food is measured in calories. If you eat more than your caloric needs, you gain weight; if you eat less than your caloric needs, you lose weight. It's really that simple. $\text{Calories in} > \text{Calories out} = \text{Gain Weight}$; $\text{Calories in} < \text{Calories out} = \text{lose weight}$.

Action: Determine how many calories you consume on a daily basis over a 7 day period. The most precise method of this is weighing and measuring your food/drinks on a kitchen scale.

2. The quantity of food you eat (in macronutrients) determines your body composition.

Weight is the number you see on the scale; body composition is how much of that number is muscle versus fat. Macronutrients (Carbohydrates, Protein, Fat) are another way to describe quantity. Macronutrients are the significant source of CALORIES in someone's diet. The body uses the macronutrients differently, so by controlling intake in terms of macronutrients (instead of just calories), we have better control over body composition changes (i.e., fat loss vs. weight loss vs. muscle gain).

Action: Determine how much protein, carbs, and fat you consume in the calorie amount you figured out from principle #1. Enter the amount of food you determined by weighing and measuring your food in an app. Like MyFitnessPal for 7 days.

3. The quality of food (as determined by micronutrient density) determines your health.

While weight does affect health regardless of food quality, we find that time and time again, whole, unprocessed foods are associated with health. These foods are high in micronutrients (vitamins and minerals), as well as non-essential but health-protective compounds like fiber and phytochemicals.

Action: Since you have been monitoring what you eat in an app. You can easily see how much whole, unprocessed food you eat. Most apps will tell you micronutrients and fiber as well.

4. Timing only matters to the extent it affects quantity.

For 99% of us, WHEN you eat food doesn't have an effect on weight, body composition or performance unless that changes the total amount of food consumed. For example, having a post-workout protein shake is beneficial if it allows you to reach your protein goal for the day. But that shake could be moved to anywhere in the day and have the same effect. There isn't a magical "window of gains".

Action: Try eating in different windows throughout the day and leave a period of at least 12 hours each day where you don't eat. Ex.- Do you feel better eating breakfast at 7:00am and finishing your last meal at 6:00pm or not breaking your fast until 10:00am and then finishing your last meal at 8:00pm.

5. It is never one thing.

The body needs close to 40 essential nutrients and is also positively affected by thousands of other non-nutrient health-protective compounds like phytochemicals. So, there is never ONE nutrient (e.g., saturated fat) that is "good" or "bad." It's the collective amount of all the nutrients you eat in relation to your genetics and other factors (e.g., stress, training, sleep) that determine your outcome and this is all affected by your lifestyle.

Action: Don't just focus on your nutrition, look at your entire lifestyle in these 3 pillars:

Nutrition: Keep a food journal of the foods that make you feel good, make you feel bloated, make you feel tired, etc...so you know how YOUR body reacts to all foods.

Movement: total daily activity and your specific exercise program. Are you doing enough or too much?

Stress management: Are you sleeping enough? What is the quality of your sleep? Do you have some healthy stress reduction strategies? breathing exercises, meditation, journaling, etc..

BONUS: All diets control quantity to varying levels of precision.

All diets can be plotted on a continuum of low/no (paleo) to high/complete (macros) control of the quantity of food one eats, which dictates weight or body composition changes. Although Macros gives the user the most control, most people do not want to weigh and measure their food. Therefore, the rules of MANY diets attempt to control quantity without weighing and measuring. For example, the diet may restrict certain food groups like carbs (keto) or meat (vegan).

Action: You must know how much you are eating in order to make a change. This can be weighing and measuring, using containers, taking photos, or simply eating the same foods in a smaller amount. Awareness is always the first step to knowing what to change.