

How to Count Macros

Today we are going to teach you how to set up your caloric requirements and macronutrient targets adequate to your goals. Bear with me because you're going to do some math today!

So let's get right into it...

If your goal is to burn fat (weight loss) then you will have to create a negative energy balance (caloric deficit). If your goal is to build muscle (weight gain) you will create a positive energy balance (caloric surplus). Or if your goal is simply to maintain your current weight, you will need an isocaloric balance (maintenance calories).

Generally when we want to calculate our caloric requirements we do it based on our weight, age, height, sex, physical activity, body fat percentage, muscle mass, metabolic capacity and our goal. But in the formulas below we utilize a much simpler way of calculating your daily requirements, and it's based on our daily physical activity and our weight.

* Note: If you are over weight, use your goal weight as your guideline.

* For those of you on the metric system, if you want to know your weight in pounds you will simply multiply your weight in kilograms by 2.2.

Knowing your weight in pounds will now allow you to use the chart below to calculate your calories.

Activity Level @macrofitness	Goal: Weight Loss	Goal: Weight Maintenance	Goal: Weight gain
Sedentary (Minimal exercise)	Body weight (lbs.) x 10-12	Body weight (lbs.) x 12-14	Body weight (lbs.) x 14-16
Moderately Active: (3 4 Times a week)	Body weight (lbs.) x 12-14	Body weight (lbs.) x 14-16	Body weight (lbs.) x 16-18
Very Active: 7 Times a week)	Body weight (lbs.) x 14-16	Body weight (lbs.) x 16-18	Body weight (lbs.) x 18

Example:

A 260 lbs. moderately active over weight male with an LBM of 180 lb. that wants to lose weight (burn fat) Will multiply $180 \times 14 = 2,520$

This would be a good starting point to approach fat loss.

Keep in mind that these are basic guidelines and not perfect numbers. With these calculations we do not take into account individual differences or metabolic capacity. So use these numbers as a starting point and adjust as you go along. Some trial and error will be necessary to find your perfect numbers.

Now that you know your caloric requirements, its time to set up macronutrient targets.

SETTING UP MACRO TARGETS

If you are above 15% body fat (men), 20% (women), use your goal weight to adjust your macros. Or to be more accurate, use your LBM (Lean body mass) if you can.

*** Important:**

1g of protein = 4 calories

1g of carbs = 4 calories

1g of fat = 9 calories

First and most important: Protein

Protein requirements may vary according to your current goal. But as a general guideline we use (1g x bodyweight (lbs.)) for active individuals that train on a regular basis. If a person does not workout, protein requirements will be about half that.

Example: A 180 lb. lean male will have a daily intake of 180g of protein. Or a 220 lbs. over weight male with an LBM of 160 lbs. will have a 160g daily intake.

Your body doesn't actually need too much protein to build/maintain muscle optimally. And the values given above are actually higher than what's needed, but rounding it out to 1g per pound makes the math easy. And there's nothing wrong with consuming a bit more protein than needed as long as it does not exceed your caloric requirements.

Second: Fat

Fat requirements will be set up between (0.25g - 0.5g x bodyweight (lbs.)). The amount of fat you choose between these guidelines can be based on personal preference for both weight loss or weight gain.

Example: A 150 lb. female can have a fat intake of 37.5g per day (150 x 0.25). This should be the lower end of the spectrum; I wouldn't recommend anything below 20% of your bodyweight in fat grams.

Third: Carbohydrates

Carbs are what we play with during our fat loss or gaining phases. Generally fats and protein stay relatively the same regardless of the goal. So we manipulate our carb intake based on our calorie requirements for our specific goals. And these carbs fill in the remaining calories that we need.

Now let me sum this up all together to give you a couple of examples of how to set up your calories/macros.

Example 1: Edgar Allan Bro... Get it? Because, bro... Never mind... Lets move on.

Edgar Allan Bro is a 160 lb. moderately active male trying to burn fat at 2,240 calories

$$160\text{lb} \times 14 = 2,240 \text{ calories}$$

His macros will be the following:

$$\text{Protein: } 1\text{g} \times 160\text{lb.} = 160\text{g}$$

$$\text{Fat: } 0.45\text{g} \times 160\text{lb.} = 72\text{g}$$

This would be the equivalent of 1,288 calories.

$$(160 \times 4 = 640), (72 \times 9 = 648)$$

$$(640 + 648 = 1,288)$$

So the 952 calories he has left to hit 2,240 calories should come from carbohydrates, which would be 238g.

$$(2,240 - 1,288 = 952)$$

$$(952/4 = 238)$$

End result:

Calories: 2,240

Macros: Carbs: 238g / Protein: 160g / Fat: 72g

Pretty simple huh?

Now let me give you another example...

Example 2: Marilyn Monbro

Marilyn is a 120 lb. moderately active lean female that wants to put on some muscle mass (weight gain) with 2,160 calories

$$120\text{lb} \times 18 = 2,160 \text{ calories}$$

Her macros will be the following:

$$\text{Protein: } 1\text{g} \times 120\text{lb.} = 120\text{g}$$

$$\text{Fat: } 0.5\text{g} \times 120\text{lb.} = 60\text{g}$$

This would be the equivalent of 1,020 calories.

$$(120 \times 4 = 480), (60 \times 9 = 540)$$

$$(480 + 540 = 1,020)$$

So the 1,140 calories she has left to hit 2,160 calories should come from carbohydrates, which would be 285g.

$$(2,160 - 1,020 = 1,140)$$

$$(1,140/4 = 285)$$

End result:

Calories: 2,160

Macros: Carbs: 285g / Protein: 120g / Fat: 60g

And now you know how to set up your calories and macronutrients for your goals. Now start counting and see the results come!!