

# LOOK INTO MACRONUTRIENTS

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## What is the Macro Diet?

A macro diet goes a step further than typical calorie counting. For it, you count the macronutrients—grams of proteins, carbs and fats—you’re eating within your calorie goal, and in what ratios. (To clarify, the macro diet should not be confused with the macrobiotic diet, a fad diet with foundations in Zen Buddhism.)

Counting macros can help you make smart food choices. For example, instead of a 200-calorie snack of Oreos, you’d need to choose a protein- and healthy-carb packed snack to meet your macros—one that wouldn’t just help you restrict your calories but will help give your body the fuel it needs.

## How is a macro diet like?

The macro diet is like the caveman or Paleo diet because it emphasizes the value of whole foods, rather than processed foods. Additionally, it shares some commonality with Weight Watchers and calorie counting because you do need to track your intake and stay within certain ranges.

On the other hand, the macro diet is different from other diets because it’s not a one-size-fits-all approach to dieting. Everyone starts with a target macro ratio (for example, a macro ratio of 50% carbohydrates, 25% protein and 25% fat). As you aim for your specific macro ratio, you might adjust it based on what’s happening with your body.

With a macro diet, you’re not meant to be depriving your body; you’re meant to be feeding it ideal nutrition that makes it more efficient.

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### What Exactly Are Macronutrients?

So, what are macronutrients exactly? Plain and simple, macronutrients are the three categories nutrients you eat most and provide you with most of your energy: protein, carbohydrates and fats. What is not a macronutrient? The other aspects of your foods—micronutrients—are the vitamins and minerals your body needs in smaller amounts.

“It’s important to understand that are versions of each of the macronutrients that are healthier than others,” says Lauren Kelly, a registered dietitian in New York City. “It’s best to stick with the less processed foods, and instead choose whole, fresh food. The fewer ingredients, the better!” says Kelly. So, for example, the following would be excellent choices for each of the macro categories, according to Hundt.

#### Macronutrient #1: Carbohydrates

Fill your plate with healthy carbs, including leafy greens, whole grains and root veggies. A few good picks: broccoli, asparagus, cauliflower, squash, dark leafy greens, green beans, onions, cucumbers, oatmeal, sweet potatoes, potatoes and quinoa.

#### Macronutrient #2: Protein

You need plenty of protein but don’t go crazy ordering greasy burgers and wings. Instead, choose: fatty fish (salmon, mackerel, herring), cod, lean grass-fed beef, turkey, eggs and nuts.

#### Macronutrient #3: Fat

Getting plenty of healthy fats is important for healthy hormone levels, metabolism, mood vitamin absorption. Foods high in essential fatty acids include: coconut oil, olive oil, avocado, almonds, brazil nuts and macadamia nuts.

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### Counting Macros for Weight-Loss

If you're counting macros for weight loss, you'll want to make sure you're counting macros in such a way that you're also cutting calories. Try this range of macro ratio for weight loss: 10-30% carbs, 40-50% protein, 30-40% fat.

Then adjust accordingly. If you're very active, for example, you'll need more carbs—450 grams per day if you exercise five days a week, for example.

### Counting Macros for Bodybuilding

If you're counting macros for bodybuilding and/or muscle gain, you'll want to add overall calories to put on weight. Try this range of macro ratio for bodybuilding: 40-60% carbs, 25-35% protein, 15-25% fat.

It's a misconception that bodybuilders need protein, protein and more protein. In fact, you can overdo it. And overdoing the fats can prevent you from gaining the muscle you want. Counting macros will help you get a handle on exactly how the foods you eat are affecting your results.

### Counting Macros for Maintenance

If you're counting macros for maintenance, you'll want to stick to the amount of calories your body needs to sustain your current weight. Try this macro ratio range for maintenance: 30-50% carbs, 25-35% protein, 25-35% fat

### Counting Macros for the Keto Diet

If you're following the Keto diet—a low-carb, high-fat weight loss plan—you'll want to consume the right balance of carbs, protein, and fat to keep your body in ketosis so it can effectively burn fat. Here is a common macronutrient range to maintain ketosis: 5-10% carbs, 15-30% protein, 60-75% fat (or even more)

Using macro counting to maintain a healthy weight is a good idea—this diet plan will keep you on track, choosing healthy, well-balanced meals, and keep you from feeling starved or having low energy. The great thing about maintenance is you don't need to stress yourself out with exact measurements (of you don't want to) or feel guilty if you have a meal that doesn't completely meet your macros. You can make up for it with your next meal or the next day's meals.