

STEPS TO BASIC NUTRITION



The first thing you need to know about nutrition is that it doesn't have to be intimidating. People may see all the new research about every single little nutrient and vitamin and miracle pill that comes along and wonder how they can ever understand it all. Don't even try because you really don't need to know it all.

STEP 1 – Understand the basics

There are three major nutrients that you eat every day. This table will show you what they are, how many calories are in one gram of each, what their primary function in the body is and what foods they are found in.

NUTRIENT	CAL/GRAM	FUNCTION	FOODS
PROTEIN	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- It is the body's main structural nutrient (immune system uses protein)- All muscles and tissues are made from protein	Eggs, meats, fish, beans, dairy products, soy
CARBS	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- This is preferred energy source of the body- Carbs supply fast energy to the muscles for activity	Grains, pastas, cereals, breads, vegetables, fruits, corn syrup, anything with sugar
FAT	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- This is the energy storage nutrient in the body- Fats are also used as a source of energy for low-intensity activity	All oils (e.g. olive, peanut, canola, vegetable), butter, margarine, meats, junk food

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Water: Water is not often thought of as a nutrient but it is essential to all bodily functions and processes. Without water you would die. It is important to drink plenty of water throughout the day. The amount of water you need will depend on your body size, bodyfat percentage, activity level, climate and more.



Fiber: Fiber is an essential part of your diet. It is an indigestible component of many natural-state carbohydrate foods such as grains. Fiber helps to move food through your digestive system as well as keeping you regular and helping you feel full after eating.

STEP 2 – Use the basics

1. Once you know what the basics are, it is up to you to use that knowledge in your everyday eating habits. Here are some pointers to help guide you.
2. Every meal divide your plate into thirds. Two of the thirds should be a carbohydrate source, e.g. rice or potatoes and one third should be a protein source, e.g. meat or fish. Don't worry about getting enough fat. That is rarely a problem.
3. Eat foods that are unprocessed as much as possible. When foods are processed they lose nutritional value. Eating foods close to their natural state will give you the most benefits. Try to stay away from junk food. You know what constitutes junk food. Reducing the amount that you eat will have a huge impact on your health and well-being.
4. Limit your eating of refined foods that have fat, salt and sugar in them. You don't have to give them up completely, just eat them in moderation.
5. Eat small, frequent meals throughout the day and drink plenty of water.
6. Breakfast should be your largest meal of the day. This gives your body the whole day to burn those calories. Dinner should be the smallest meal. Eating large amounts at night invariably leads to fat gain as your body doesn't have time to burn the calories before shutting down for the night. Eating then going to sleep is how sumo wrestlers attain their great size!
7. Eat protein. This is not to recommend that you go and eat a steak everyday but be aware of your protein intake. Your muscles live on protein and muscles are where the majority of your calories are burned. Eating lean protein every day supports your muscle tissue, especially when exercising.