

# Baby Steps

A close-up photograph of a bee on a pink flower with a yellow center. The bee is positioned on the left side of the flower, facing right. The flower has a dense, conical center of yellow buds and several long, thin pink petals extending outwards. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green.

12  
SIMPLE  
STEPS

**TO A HEALTHIER  
LIFESTYLE**

12 STEPS TO LIVING HEALTHY!

**STEP  
TWO**

*Make the  
most of  
Breakfast*

# STEP TWO

# MAKE THE MOST OF

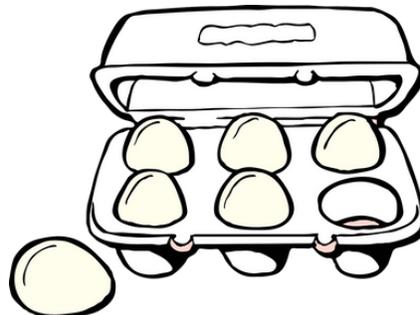
# BREAKFAST

## A DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO EATING A BETTER BREAKFAST

By far one of the biggest mistakes made with breakfast is eating "typical" breakfast foods. That is because most of these are over processed and sugar laden.

The Standard American breakfast often consists of pancakes, waffles, cereal, toast, muffins, bagels and fast food sandwiches, which are by far some of the worst choices on the breakfast plate. Often these processed carb choices are paired with a huge serving of fruit or orange juice.

Eating a high carb breakfast is creating metabolic disasters all day. In turn, these metabolic disasters create excess body fat and diseases related to obesity. While many experts have started to stress the need for more protein, they often forget to warn folks of eating too many carbs.



Metabolic syndrome is a set of conditions believed to increase your risk for heart disease and diabetes. Over a third of Americans are believed to be affected by metabolic syndrome.

Insulin resistance syndrome or insulin resistance is another term used to explain metabolic syndrome. Metabolic Syndrome is most often caused by a sedentary lifestyle and being overweight. However, there are other risk factors including being over the age of 60, being Hispanic or Asian, a family history of diabetes and a personal medical history that includes PCOS, gallstones or sleep apnea.

Don't let yourself think that this is a problem limited to the aging. More and more children are developing metabolic syndrome due to a rise in obesity.

## How it works

The pancreas secretes insulin. In turn, insulin then regulates the nutrients in the bloodstream and has a significant impact on blood sugar management as well as fat and protein metabolism.

Therefore when we consume a meal high in simple carbohydrates (like most cereals), the pancreas compensates by releasing insulin into the bloodstream. The insulin communicates to the cells to pick up sugars in the blood stream.

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Next, the sugar brought along by the blood stream gets stored in the cells for later use. Sometimes, however, cells stop responding to the insulin correctly, and this is what we call "insulin resistant" and the pancreas starts producing more and more insulin to bring the blood sugar levels down.

Often this develops over an extended period of time, but the more resistant, the more insulin and blood sugar levels rise. Damage to the pancreas can occur after a period when the organ is no longer able to keep up. It is at this point when blood sugar levels may exceed a certain threshold that Type 2 Diabetes develops.

Insulin resistance can happen when a high intake of processed carbs, inflammation in the body, a sedentary lifestyle, and an imbalance in gut bacteria among other risk factors are present.

It is important to maintain a healthy weight to avoid the chance of becoming insulin resistant. Having low HDL (the good cholesterol level) and high triglycerides, as well as obesity and large amounts of fat around the belly area, are indicators of metabolic syndrome.

## Get This!

Losing just 3-5% of your current body weight can lower your risk for metabolic syndrome.

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Diets low in carbohydrates can have a significant impact on metabolic syndrome and Type 2 Diabetes although some diets which eliminate carbs almost entirely can also cause an insulin resistance in many people that is considered harmless and is termed "physiological insulin resistance."

Some ways to reduce insulin resistance include:

Quit smoking

Improve sleep quality and quantity

Reduce Stress

Reduce sugar intake (don't eat sugar and especially avoid sugar-sweetened beverages like soda and sweet tea, but also including fruit juices, sports drinks, and sugary coffee drinks)

Exercise and even walking is better than not exercising at all, but high-intensity interval training can help your body burn more fat.

Reduce belly fat

Get enough Omega-3 Fatty Acids through diet or supplements



Protein is key to losing weight. Eating a breakfast high in protein keeps you from feeling hungry earlier in the day by actually reducing cravings and boosting metabolism. In this way, protein helps control weight and will also help you avoid regaining the weight you have lost. Cutting carbs and replacing them with protein is a very effective way to lose fat and control appetite.

Eating protein improves performance. Research has shown that starting the day with high-quality protein sources can even improve anxiety disorders. Protein and the amino acids they provide are the primary building blocks of your muscles, bones, enzymes and many hormones. You simply cannot live without protein.

For this reason, many people now believe that protein should be the bulk of their diet, and are even switching to “high-protein” diets.

Protein is key for healthy muscles and bones. It is essential for life but keeping the protein balance is also important. There are diet fads that contain far too few proteins and also those that recommend consuming too many. Both can hinder your health goals so it is important to find the right balance.

Too much protein really can be problematic, but research also shows that consuming too little can put you at risk of malnutrition as well as deficient in omega-3s which are best sourced from animal protein.

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Many folks who consume a vegan or vegetarian diet will miss out on important omega-3s, conjugated linoleic acid, and other nutrients unless they supplement their diets.

It is important to aim for a goal of 30-70 grams of protein per day spread out in several meals throughout the day. Women who are pregnant or lactating may require more protein. A great way to achieve this number is to aim for 20-25 grams per meal if you eat three meals a day, and to make sure you have protein with snacks as well. Aiming for about 10 grams of protein at snacks will help to fill in any gaps in your meals.

To find your protein requirement subtract your body fat percentage from 100. For example, if your body fat percentage is 21% you would subtract  $100 - 21 = 79$  percent lean body mass. Now multiply that percentage by your weight to get your lean body mass in pounds. ( $79 \times 173 = 136.67$ ) Now, divide that number by two, because you will need one-half gram of protein per pound of muscle ( $136.67 / 2 = 68.34$ ) This gives you in grams the amount of protein your body requires for a day.



While this example may seem like a lot, you'll be surprised how easy it is to add up. Using an app to track your foods, like Myfitnesspal, you will get a better idea of how much protein you are consuming in a day, and then you can adjust accordingly.

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## Suggestions for good sources of protein:

- Eggs 6-8 grams of protein per egg, depending on size, poached or soft boiled is the best way to consume eggs
  - Poultry, pork, red meat all are about 6-9 grams of protein per ounce; I usually shoot for 3-4 ounces per meal, max
  - Top or Bottom Round is one of the leaner cuts coming in at 1 gram of protein per 7 calories, so it usually comes out to about 23 grams per 3 oz serving (BONUS!)
  - Fish tends to contain about 21-25 grams per 3 oz serving, choose wild-caught over farmed, sardines and anchovies are great choices
  - Nuts and seeds typically contain 4-8 grams of protein per quarter cup
  - Beans and lentils usually contain about 7-9 grams per half cup; Navy beans have about 20 grams per cup and lentils come in at about 26 grams per ½ cup
  - Greek Yogurt contains about 23 grams per cup
  - Cottage Cheese comes in at about 14 grams per half cup
  - Soba noodles (made from buckwheat) pack a whopping 12 grams of protein per 3 ounces serving, so swap out your wheat based pasta for these quick cooking noodles, always rinse after cooking to remove excess starches and for the best taste
  - 1 cup of spinach provides about 6 grams of protein
  - 1 cup of broccoli contains about 5-6 grams of protein
  - High-quality protein powders such as a whey protein powder or collagen powder
  - High protein ice cream is a fun way to get a serving of protein at snack time, choose ice creams low in sugar like Halo Top which has 6 grams of protein per serving.
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Studies show that many people unconsciously eat the same meals over and over. So it is recommended to find a handful of breakfast meals that are high in protein and just rotate them. However, if you enjoy a breakfast using a wide variety of different recipes you might invest in a cookbook that focuses on protein.

Get creative when it comes to breakfast, it doesn't have to look like traditional breakfast to be good for you. In fact, many "traditional breakfast foods" are not the best choices as mentioned earlier. Try making a stew for breakfast. It is very convenient to prepare a hearty protein dense stew or soup and then eat for breakfast until it's gone.

For those who can't imagine skipping cereal for breakfast, opt for those containing higher servings of protein and fiber. Watch your serving size when you consume cereal as most people tend to overeat it, which is one of the many reasons I choose to avoid eating any cereal.



If you decide to eat cereal, certainly, be sure to read the label and avoid overly processed foods high in sugar, additives, artificial sweeteners (like Splenda), preservatives and devoid of nutrients.

Another great option is breakfast burritos; there are lots of ways to have a low carb or carb free tortillas. Eggs make incredible wraps! Filling a wrap with eggs, onions, beans, cheese or meat is an excellent way to get in a good serving of protein for breakfast. Add in some avocado, and you will be giving your body the help it needs to avoid metabolic syndrome.

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Crustless quiche, meat muffins, and protein smoothies are all good options for increasing your protein intake at breakfast. Cottage cheese with nuts and berries also makes a filling high-protein morning meal that keeps the metabolism burning efficiently.

According to many experts, it is best to get in your protein within the first hour after waking, so don't put off breakfast until brunch-time as a habit. Try to get your protein heavy breakfast soon after you get out of bed and you'll be on your way to better health and a slimmer waist.

Here's a make-ahead recipe I often use so that I won't have to prepare my breakfast in the morning. It's perfect for a grab-and-go protein.

## Good Morning Protein Poppers

Makes Two Servings

1/4 cup nut butter, like almond (natural, unsweetened)

1 scoop Pristine Protein Powder

1/2 teaspoon maple flavoring (or vanilla)

Sweetener to taste (Swerve, honey, maple syrup, stevia, or dates, about 1-2 tbsp)

1 tablespoon chia seeds

2 Tablespoons cacao nibs (or if you prefer, use Lily's Stevia Sweetened chocolate chips)

Put everything in a bowl and stir until combined. It's very thick, so you may have to "mash" it as opposed to stirring. When it is well-combined roll the mixture into 4 equal size balls.