

LEAN LADIES

CALORIE, PROTEIN & WORKOUT BLUEPRINT

Exactly How To Eat & Train
To Lose Fat & Build A Lean, Toned Physique

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If you want to learn how to eat and exercise to get a strong, toned, defined physique, then welcome, you've come to the right place.

The 3 most important parts to losing fat and getting toned (what I also call *gaining* or *building* muscle) are

1. Right calories
2. Right amount of protein. I recommend using [My Fitness Pal](#) app for tracking that
3. Right exercise.

There are more factors that go into losing fat and gaining muscle successfully and healthfully, but these are the three we're focusing in this blueprint.

Part 1 of this blueprint covers the nutrition part (calories + protein needed for your goal), and Part 2 covers the workout part.

Whether you want to lose weight, maintain your bodyweight or gain muscle, this guide will get you started.

In addition to this guide, check out these Balanced Vibes podcast episodes:

[*Want To Get Lean? Stop Doing These Things \(And Do These Instead\) - Ep 105*](#)

[*How To Burn 300-500 Extra Calories A Day \(Without Added Cardio\) - Ep 68*](#)

[*Working Out But No Results? 10 Reasons Why This Happens - Ep 40*](#)

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Note: These nutrition guidelines are the basic recommendations for getting started with building a strong, lean body. This blueprint doesn't cover more advanced macro nutrition techniques like macro adjustments, carb cycling and diet breaks, which must be a part of your journey when the goal is body composition change. Make sure to discuss these techniques with your coach to get a customized plan for your needs.

You should not stay in a calorie deficit for more than 16 weeks at a time.

Part 1: Nutrition

Step 1: Determine Your Goal

I want to...

1. Build a lot of muscle (and I'm okay with gaining some weight in the process)
2. Maintain my weight and build muscle
3. Lose weight (and I'm okay with losing some muscle in the process).

Which one should be your goal and what do you need to accomplish each? Let's go over each one of them.

Build Impressive Muscle - You Need Calorie Surplus

When the goal is to build muscle (aka to *bulk*), we need to eat a lot of calories and train hard. Because we take in more calories than we burn, our bodyweight will go up somewhat because while we gain muscle, we likely gain some body fat too. But it's not a bad thing, and it also shows you *how much strength* your body can really build! You'll be blown away.

In a surplus, it's important to lift heavy to ensure that we gain *maximum* amount of muscle and *minimal* amount body fat.

Who Is This Best For?

This option is best for you if you want to build visibly strong muscles and nice curves. It's also great if you want to see what your body is actually capable of — your strength numbers will increase because you're taking in more energy, and more energy means more potential for strength building.

Maintain Weight and Build Some Muscle - You Need Calorie Maintenance

The second best tool for muscle building is calorie maintenance. When we do that, we eat roughly as much as we burn. That way we still have a good amount of material to build muscle, although not quite as much as in calorie surplus.

Who Is This Best For?

This option is great for you if you want to build nice curves, reduce body fat, and fit into your old jeans again, but you don't have much or any extra weight you want to lose.

Lose Weight and Fat - You Need Calorie Deficit

Here, we're eating less calories than what we burn. If the body is healthy, we lose weight and fat in this process.

Generally speaking, this is not the best option if the goal is to gain muscle, because muscle needs energy to grow. However, those who are new to fitness and lifting, will often get best from both worlds — lose weight and fat and build muscle. It's great to be a beginner!

Because we want to minimize muscle loss (it's the tissue that gives us health and vitality — and that looks good!), it's important that we continue to lift weights.

Who Is This Best For?

This is the best option for those who have been eating a little extra and as a result, put on some body fat. They want to decrease both body fat and weight.

So, pick your goal: Which one of these three are you aiming for?

Step 2: Find Your Maintenance Calories

No matter which one of the three your goal is, you have to know your maintenance calories before moving on to the next step. Maintenance calories are a (theoretical) number of calories that you should be able to eat without (significant) changes in your bodyweight -- no loss, no gain.

How To Find Your Maintenance Calories

1. Find Your BMR

BMR is your *Basal Metabolic Rate* - the amount of calories you burn every day, even if you don't move at all. Click on [THIS LINK](#) to calculate it.

Now that you know your BMR, let's move on to the next step.

2. Determine Your Activity Level

Of the following options, which one describes your activity level best?

Level 1: No working out at all, or very light exercise once a week. Steps are typically under 5K daily

Level 2: Light exercise 1-3x/week. Steps are typically 10K or less daily

Level 3: Light or moderate exercise 2-3x/week. Steps are typically over 10K daily

Level 4: Moderate exercise 3-6x/week. Steps are typically 10K or more daily

Level 5: Intense exercise 6-7x/week. Steps are typically 10K or more daily.

Examples of each one:

Light exercise: 30 minutes light yoga, resistance band work, pilates, easy bike ride, etc

Moderate exercise: 45-60 minutes of weight lifting, cross training or running

Intense exercise: 1+ hours of weight lifting, 1+ hours of running, Crossfit, 1-hour bootcamp, 1-hour spin class, etc

3. Find the Right Activity Multiplier

Each level corresponds to a certain *Activity Multiplier*.

Level 1: Multiplier 1.2

Level 2: Multiplier 1.375

Level 3: Multiplier 1.46

Level 4: Multiplier 1.55

Level 5: Multiplier 1.725

Find Your Maintenance Calories

To find your maintenance calories, multiply your BMR by the correct Activity Multiplier.

Maintenance Calories = BMR x Activity Multiplier

Example:

BMR 1595

Activity Multiplier: 1.375

Maintenance calories: $1595 \times 1.375 = \mathbf{2193}$

Click on [THIS LINK](#) to see estimated maintenance calories for a female who is 30-40 years old, 5'7"/1.67m tall, lifts weights 4-5x/week and walks 10K+ steps daily.

Step 3: Find Your Target Calories According To Your Goal (Weight Loss, Maintenance, Gain?)

This is based on your goal that you determined in Step 1.

If your goal is to

1) Build a Lot Of Muscle And Be OK With Gaining Some Weight

Add 10-15% calories to your *Maintenance Calories*. In some cases, 20% is okay, too.

2) Maintain Weight and Build Some Muscle

Eat according to your *Maintenance Calories*. Note: If you're currently eating a lot less than that, increase your calories to that point gradually (50-100 cal a week), not overnight.

3) Lose Weight and Fat

Eat 10-15% calories less than your *Maintenance Calories*. Important: You can only do this if you are currently eating at least *close* to your maintenance level, and better yet, more.

If you aren't, you should not cut calories at this point, as your metabolism might be too slow. If you still cut, you can potentially cause hormonal imbalances and you won't get the physique results that you wanted.

If you have a lot of excess weight, 20% deficit is okay but only if you have a lot of weight to lose. The less you can cut, the better it is for your metabolism. **NOTE: Your calories should not drop below your BMR.**

Step 4: Find Your Protein Needs

Now we get to a very important part — *protein*. This is going to be the key macronutrient for both, losing fat and gaining muscle.

Aim to eat 0.6-1 grams of protein per 1 lbs of your bodyweight. If you use the metric system, simply convert your weight into lbs [HERE](#).

Start at the lower end of that protein range, if

1. You are a vegan/vegetarian
2. You have been eating very low protein previously (less than 100 grams)
3. You're not very active and/or you are new to lifting.

Aim for the higher end of that protein range, if

1. You eat meat
2. You're used to eating higher protein
3. You're an experienced lifter and your workouts are intense/high volume.

Important!

1. Every woman should eat at least 100g of protein a day. Even if your calculation gives you a lower number than that, bring it up to 100.

2. There is no need to eat more than 165g of protein a day, no matter what your size. If you're currently overweight, think what would be a healthy/best bodyweight for you, and use that when calculating your protein needs, but don't go over 165 grams — there is no need for this much protein.

Putting It All Together:

Start eating according to your *Target Calories* and the protein number that you calculated.

For now, don't worry about fats and carbs and just focus on protein and calories. However, please don't restrict carbs and fats! Every active woman should eat at least 40g of fat and 100g of carbs, no matter what their size. These are the bare minimums, and many of my clients eat twice as much.

Additional Resources: (click on links)

[How To Hit Your Daily Protein Goal: Examples](#)

[How To Get 30+ Grams Of Protein At Breakfast](#)

[5 Ways To Increase Protein in Breakfast](#)

[Leaner and Fattier Protein Foods](#)

[Vegetable Proteins](#)

Part 2: Workouts

General Guidelines

Aim to do resistance training 3-4 times a week, and if your energy and recovery are *absolutely* great, 5 days a week. Remember that more is not always better and failing to recover properly will slow down both fat loss and muscle building.

In addition, walk at least 8-10K steps a day and more if you have time. Please don't ignore this, as keeping your steps up is extremely important even if you work out regularly.

If you work out 3-4 times a week, have a rest day after every heavy lifting day. If you work out 5 days a week, have a lighter day after an intense/high volume lifting day.

You don't have to *crush* every single workout. Push yourself with weights, but also listen to your body — there are days when going to the gym with the goal of *practicing* movements serves you a lot better than maxing out.

Creating Your Workout Plan

Step 1: Choose At Least 2 (Or 3) of The Big 5 Lifts

To build a strong, athletic physique and maximize fat loss, focus on the five most valuable exercises. Here are the *Big 5 Lifts* (click on videos for each exercise demo):

[Barbell Squat](#) or [Dumbbell Squat](#)

[Barbell Deadlift](#) or [Dumbbell Deadlift](#)

[Barbell Row](#) or [Dumbbell Row](#)

[Barbell Bench Press](#) or [Dumbbell Bench Press](#) (or [Dumbbell Floor Press](#) if you don't have a bench)

[Barbell Overhead Press](#) or [Dumbbell Overhead Press](#)

I recommend choosing 2-3 from this list for every workout.

Step 2: Pick Your Add-On Exercises

Also include 3-6 add-on exercises from [THIS LIST](#). Note, this is not a complete list of add-on exercises, there are many more, but these are some of the best ones to get started with.

Step 3: Reps and Sets

If done correctly, all rep ranges, from 1 to 30 and beyond, build muscle. We keep things simple here: Aim for 8-12 reps on your lifts, and do 3-4 sets, so that the last rep is challenging but you're still able to complete it with great form.

Note that *simple* doesn't mean it won't work — it definitely does! You will get great results with the 8-12 rep range if your form is great and weights heavy enough to challenge you. But keep in mind for the future that it's a good idea to vary your rep ranges too, to keep making progress.

Example Workout 1:

3 rounds of
8-12 Barbell Deadlifts
8-12 Lat Pulldowns
8-12 Single Arm Rows

8-12 Barbell Squats
8-12 Dumbbell Sumo Goblet Squat
8-12 Walking Lunges

Example Workout 2:

3 rounds of
8-12 Dumbbell Bench Press
8-12 Dumbbell Pull Overs
8-12 Dumbbell Lateral Raises

8-12 Barbell Overhead Presses
8-12 Arnold Presses
~30 sec Farmers Walk

Putting It All Together:

Create your workouts by choosing 2-3 exercises from the *Big 5* list. Add on 3-6 additional lifts from the *Add On Exercises* list.

Generally, start with exercises that use more and larger muscles, and leave the ones that use smaller muscles towards the end of the workout. For example, do deadlifts (that work your arms, back, hips, legs) before you do biceps curls (that work your arms), etc.

Additional Resources: (click on links)

[Lifting Weights But Seeing No Results?](#)

[6 Important Things To Pay Attention To When Lifting Weights](#)

Last But Not Least... The Real Secret Ingredient To Building A Strong, Lean Body:

Consistency.

Results don't come overnight, or after one week of getting your protein and calories right, or after two weeks of lifting weights.

The goal is to create new habits that we can keep forever, because this is the only way to make our results last.

It does not mean tracking your protein and calories forever, but the idea is to learn what the right amounts of protein and calories look like for you. For that, we need to track our food at first.

Movement should be a daily practice for everyone. The great news is that maintaining muscle usually requires less effort than building it did.

If you are very consistent with this simple plan, you start seeing first results about 4 weeks after starting.

8 weeks later your results look a lot better.

Several months later you can see a very different picture.

[CLICK HERE](#) to see what a gradual change looks like, and make sure to look at both photos (there's a little arrow on the right side of the photo to click on).

So, stay consistent with your protein intake, eat calories according to your needs, and train regularly. Don't expect to be perfect, but remember that what you do most of the time gives you most of the results. *One* day will never make or break your progress!

Disclaimer: *The content in this guide is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding your health. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you read and learned from this guide.*