

# The Calorie Setup Guide: How to set your calories for fat loss without guessing

If you don't know your numbers, fat loss becomes a guessing game. 🙄

Most people guess their calories and hope for the best. In this guide, you'll learn how to calculate your calories step by step so you can create a smart calorie deficit and lose fat.



## Step 1: Find Your Maintenance Calories

Before you cut calories, you need to know how much you're currently eating to maintain your weight. These are called your **maintenance calories**.

The best way to find this out is simple: **track everything you eat for at least 7 days**.

If you want even more accurate data, you can track for 10–14 days.

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💡 Tip: Log all meals, snacks, drinks, and small bites. The goal here is not to change your eating yet. Just observe.

At the end of the tracking period, calculate the average number of calories you eat per day. That number is a good estimate of your maintenance calories.

If you'd like help with the tracking process, watch [this YouTube video](#) where I walk you through it step by step.





## Step 2: Create a Reasonable Calorie Deficit

Once you know your maintenance calories, reduce them by **15–20%** to create a calorie deficit for weight loss.

General guideline:

- **15% deficit:** best for people who are only looking to lose a small amount of weight
- **20% deficit:** appropriate for people who have more weight to lose

Example 1: If your maintenance calories are **2,200**:

- 15% deficit = **1,870 calories**
- 20% deficit = **1,760 calories**

Example 2: If your maintenance calories are **2,500**:

- 15% deficit = **2,125 calories**
- 20% deficit = **2,000 calories**

## Important:

Your calorie target should **never drop below your Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR)**. Your BMR is the number of calories your body needs to perform basic functions like breathing, circulation, and organ function.

You can calculate your BMR [here](#).

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## Step 3: Set Your Protein Intake

Protein is extremely important during weight loss. If you only cut calories but don't eat enough protein, you're more likely to:

- feel constantly hungry
- experience strong cravings
- lose muscle instead of fat
- end up looking "soft" instead of lean and toned

Adequate protein plus **strength training 2–4 times per week** helps your body keep muscle while losing fat.


## How Much Protein Should You Eat?

Aim for:

### 0.6–1 gram of protein per pound of body weight

- **0.6 g/lb** is a good starting point for vegetarians or people who currently eat very little protein.
- **0.8–1 g/lb** tends to produce the best results for fat loss and body composition.

For example, if you weigh 160 lbs, your protein target would be about 100 g per day at the lower end and up to 160 g per day at the higher end of the recommended range.

 Tip: If you are overweight, calculate protein based on your **goal body weight** instead of your current weight.

## Step 4: If You're Already Eating Very Little

If your food log shows that you are **already eating at or below your BMR**, you should **not reduce calories further**.

This often happens when someone has been dieting for a long time or unintentionally eating too little.

Instead, the best first step may be to **gradually increase calories for a period of time** to help your body recover and restore normal metabolic function. Once your body is in a healthier place, fat loss becomes much easier.

Important: When calories stay very low for too long, the body adapts by slowing metabolism and conserving energy. In that situation, cutting calories further usually makes fat loss harder, not easier.

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## **Worksheet: Your Fat Loss Numbers**

Maintenance Calories: \_\_\_\_\_

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15% Deficit: \_\_\_\_\_

20% Deficit: \_\_\_\_\_

Protein Target: \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Disclaimer**

*This guide is for educational and informational purposes only and is not intended as medical advice. I am not a doctor or medical professional. Always consult with a qualified healthcare provider before making significant changes to your diet, exercise routine, or health plan, especially if you have any medical conditions.*