

Women's Health: Your Guide to Nutrition during Perimenopause & Menopause

Tips, Recipes and More!



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Welcome!

Congratulations on starting your journey to health and happiness! As a member of Nutrisystem, you're now part of a community dedicated to supporting your goals.

No matter what your schedule is, no matter what your cravings are, no matter how much time you can spare, you can use your meal plan to your advantage. It flexes to your taste and style, so it's totally, personally yours, with our full support.

Choosing the right diet is crucial for achieving sustainable weight loss and overall health improvement. A diet that fits your lifestyle and preferences increases the likelihood of long-term adherence and success. It should align with your health goals, whether it's weight management, muscle building or improving overall wellness.

This guide was created to help you understand women's nutrition. Inside, you'll find valuable information on the benefits of eating a balanced diet, how to get started, essential tips for staying on track, and delicious recipes to keep you motivated.

Our goal is to provide you with all the tools and knowledge you need to be successful.

The best diet for you is one that you can consistently follow and enjoy. Nutrisystem offers a variety of resources and meal options to make it easier for you to stick to your chosen diet and achieve your goals.

Nutrisystem products are designed to fit seamlessly into various diet plans, including one that supports women's nutrition. They offer convenient, nutritionally balanced options to help you stay on track and achieve your goals.

Embarking on a healthy diet is a positive step towards better health and wellness. Remember, every small change you make brings you closer to your goals. Stay motivated, be patient with yourself, and celebrate your progress along the way.

You have the power to create a healthier, happier you, and Nutrisystem is here to support you every step of the way.



Women's Nutrition Overview

This eating approach prioritizes balanced nutrition specifically designed for women.

Grounded in research, it highlights the critical role of macronutrient balance and micronutrient adequacy in women's health, including hormonal regulation, bone health and cardiovascular health. This diet also emphasizes nutrient-dense foods rich in essential vitamins and minerals that women often need more of, such as calcium and vitamin D.

What is a Balanced Diet?

A balanced diet provides the nutrients your body needs to function correctly. It includes a variety of foods in the right proportions to ensure you're getting a mix of carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins and minerals.

Key components of a balanced diet are fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins and healthy fats. By consuming these in appropriate amounts, you can maintain a healthy weight, support overall health and reduce the risk of chronic diseases. Hydration is also an important aspect of a balanced diet.

Protein

Protein is an essential macronutrient that plays a crucial role in building and repairing tissues, producing enzymes and hormones, and supporting immune function. They are composed of amino acids, which are the building blocks of the body. Common sources of protein include meat, fish, eggs, dairy products, legumes and nuts.

Carbohydrates

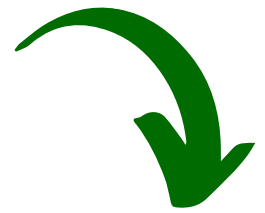
Carbohydrates are the body's primary source of energy. They are broken down into glucose, which fuels bodily functions and physical activity. Carbohydrates can be classified into simple (sugars) and complex (starches and fiber). Foods rich in carbohydrates include bread, pasta, rice, fruits, vegetables and cereals.

Fats

Fats are a concentrated source of energy and are essential for absorbing fat-soluble vitamins (A, D, E and K), protecting vital organs and maintaining cell membranes. They can be classified into saturated, unsaturated and trans fats. Healthy fat sources include avocados, nuts, seeds, olive oil and fatty fish.

Vitamins & Minerals

Vitamins and minerals are micronutrients vital for maintaining overall health and supporting various bodily functions. Vitamins, such as A, C, D, E and K, are necessary for processes like immune function, vision and skin health. Minerals, such as calcium, potassium and iron, are crucial for bone health, fluid balance and oxygen transport. These nutrients are found in a wide variety of foods, including fruits, vegetables, dairy products, meats and whole grains.



What Does Portion Control Have to Do with Balanced Nutrition?

Incorporating portion control into a balanced diet can aid in weight management by ensuring you consume the right amount of calories without overeating. By being mindful of portion sizes, you can enjoy a variety of foods while still maintaining a calorie goal necessary for weight loss or maintenance.

How & Why it Works

Balanced nutrition combined with portion control is a powerful strategy for achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. Here's how they work together to promote weight loss and overall health:



Nutrient Density: Balanced nutrition ensures that you get a variety of nutrients from different food groups. By combining this with portion control, you can enjoy nutrient-rich foods without consuming excess calories, leading to better health and weight management.



Caloric Balance: Portion control helps manage the number of calories you consume, preventing overeating. When paired with a balanced diet, it ensures you're not only controlling calories but also getting the right mix of nutrients.



Mindful Eating: Focusing on both portion sizes and balanced nutrition encourages mindful eating. This means paying attention to the quality and quantity of food, helping you make healthier choices and avoid overeating.



Enhanced Satiety: Balanced meals with appropriate portions of proteins, fats and carbohydrates can help you feel full and satisfied. This prevents hunger pangs and reduces the temptation to snack on unhealthy foods.

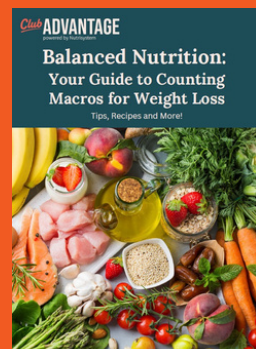
Health & Nutrition Benefits

A balanced diet with portion control is often touted as a powerful tool for improving health—and for good reason. By consuming a variety of nutrient-rich foods in appropriate portions, this approach can have numerous beneficial effects on the body, including:

- Optimal nutrient intake
- Calorie and weight management
- Blood sugar regulation
- Enhanced satiety and satisfaction
- Increased energy levels
- Reduced risk of chronic diseases
- Healthier eating habits

Simplify Balanced Nutrition with Counting Macros!

Check out our [Balanced Nutrition Guide](#) to learn more!



Women's Wellness Myths Debunked

MYTH: Counting macros is only for bodybuilders.

FACT: Anyone can benefit from counting macros to ensure they are getting a balanced intake of nutrients to support their health and fitness goals.

MYTH: Women should avoid carbs to lose weight.

FACT: Carbohydrates are essential for energy, especially for women who are physically active. Whole grains, fruits and vegetables provide fiber, vitamins and minerals. It's important to choose complex carbs rather than cutting them out completely.

MYTH: Women's fitness should focus on cardio over strength.

FACT: While cardio is important for cardiovascular health, women benefit significantly from strength training. Building muscle improves metabolism, supports bone health, and enhances overall strength and functional fitness. A balanced exercise routine should include both cardio and strength training.

MYTH: Menopause causes automatic weight gain.

FACT: While hormonal changes during menopause can affect metabolism, weight gain is not inevitable. Lifestyle factors like diet, exercise and sleep play a significant role in managing weight during this life stage. A proactive approach to wellness can help maintain a healthy weight.

MYTH: The keto diet is the best way for women to lose weight.

FACT: This trendy approach has initial side effects like headache, fatigue, and brain fog (known as the keto flu). More concerning for menopausal women, the keto diet has been linked to increased LDL (bad cholesterol) and potential heart issues. Additionally, it often falls short of essential nutrients like calcium, folate, magnesium, potassium, and vitamins D and E. The diet is high in fat, moderate in protein, and restricts healthy foods like whole grains, starchy vegetables and some fruits.



The Menopause Years

Navigating menopause with positivity is a key component to living life to its fullest at every stage of our physical and mental development. It's time we took a deep dive into this natural and normal phase every woman experiences. In this next section, you'll gain an in-depth understanding of the science behind this phase of your life. From non-invasive ways to help balance your hormones, to proven solutions for nutrition and exercise. You'll also discover tips and tactics for navigating your weight loss journey to make it even easier to stay on track and get the results you want.

Menopause & Strategies for Living Your Best Life

Until very recently, menopause was a hush-hush topic. Years ago, many women “of a certain age” were loath to admit that physical changes happened as they matured, let alone talk about it; even with friends who were experiencing the same thing. According to The Mayo Clinic, menopause can happen anywhere from your 40s to your 50s: the average age in the U.S. is 51. But the reality is that menopause is just one part of this phase of your life.

The menopause journey happens in three unique phases: perimenopause, menopause and postmenopause. Let’s briefly look at what each phase can look like.

Perimenopause

Perimenopause begins before menopause and can last for up to 10 years. It typically begins in your 40s but can start as early as your late 30s. This phase is where you transition from a regular monthly cycle to one that is inconsistent. Due to this, the body experiences an imbalance of too much estrogen and little progesterone. This hormonal imbalance can lead to a varying severity of side effects, depending on the individual.

The most common physical symptoms are hot flashes, a slowed metabolism (we’ll get into this later) and weight gain. Other symptoms include no longer being able to sleep soundly, night sweats, chills, thinning hair and dry skin, vaginal dryness, an increase in bone fragility, mood swings and headaches.

Menopause

Menopause is technically the shortest of the three phases in the journey and reached once you’ve gone without a period for a consecutive 12-month period. At this point, your ovaries have stopped producing estrogen and progesterone—the hormones that cause your menstrual cycle. Once menopause occurs, you’re now in the postmenopause phase.

Postmenopause

The postmenopause phase happens after you’ve reached menopause. The symptoms of perimenopause may start to decline but for some they do not go away entirely. Unfortunately, this is the time when other health risks may increase due to decreased estrogen and progesterone, like osteoporosis and heart disease. It is also a time when other physical symptoms can present themselves like wrinkles, more weight gain and thinning hair due to rapid cellular aging.

Cause of Menopausal Side Effects

Why do side effects happen? The answer is simple: **HORMONE IMBALANCE**. Much of your hormone health is out of your control, but not all of it. You can help influence cortisol and insulin levels, which will be talked about shortly.

The imbalance of sex hormones (estrogen, progesterone and testosterone) often requires a doctor to help manage. Many of the symptoms related to menopause are due to this imbalance. The good news is there are some natural ways to help mitigate the side effects. Here is a list of hormones that govern various parts of the body and why an imbalance during menopause exacerbates symptoms.

Important Note: The following section has tips that may help optimize hormone health by consuming different foods that might be beneficial. We are not suggesting the use of supplements as a replacement for whole food consumption. Any vitamin/mineral consumption should be discussed with your health care provider prior to use.

Estrogen

Estrogen is produced in the ovaries with lesser amounts produced in the adrenal glands (which sit on top of the kidneys) and fat cells. As you go through the menopause journey, your estrogen levels drop and you're no longer ovulating. This decrease may lead to fatigue and mood changes, night sweats and an increase in body weight and body fat—especially in the belly—along with hot flashes.

Additionally, as estrogen declines during menopause, ghrelin (the hunger hormone) increases and leptin (the fullness hormone) decreases. Therefore, you'll often feel insatiable during this phase. To combat this, it is important to begin paying attention to your internal hunger and satiety cues now.

Natural Ways to Boost Estrogen

- Consume a diet rich in phytoestrogens, which mimic estrogen in the body. Eat soybeans and the products produced from them like tofu and miso as your PowerFuels.
- Flax seeds and sesame seeds are sources of phytoestrogens and also great sources of Omega-3 fats, particularly alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), which has been shown to also be beneficial for heart health.
- Low levels of B vitamins (specifically Riboflavin, B6 and B12) can lead to the reduction of estrogen levels. Since B vitamins are water soluble vitamins, meaning they cannot be stored in the body for prolonged periods of time, they need to be consumed regularly through food. Good sources of B vitamins include salmon, eggs, milk, lean meats, beans and dark, leafy greens.
- Vitamin D and calcium along with estrogen work together to support bone formation. Sources of calcium include milk, cheese, yogurt, fish, beans and dark, leafy greens. Sources of vitamin D include fatty fish (salmon and tuna), egg yolks and cheese. Also look for foods fortified with calcium and vitamin D like 100% orange juice, whole grain cereal and soy milk.

Progesterone

Progesterone is produced in the ovaries, but a small amount is also produced in the brain. It's main functions are to prepare the body for pregnancy, promote sleep and produce an overall calming effect. During menopause, progesterone declines and with that comes side effects such as irritability, anxiety, mood swings and insomnia.

Natural Ways to Boost Progesterone

- Increase your intake of vitamin B6 through milk, eggs, fatty fish (like salmon and tuna) and beef. It's also in sweet potatoes, carrots and spinach.
- Consume foods rich in magnesium like nuts, tofu, avocados and legumes (beans, lentils and peas). You can even end your day with a little dark chocolate as an Extra.
- Eat foods containing zinc. Good sources include shellfish, seeds, whole grains, spinach, mushrooms and asparagus.

Testosterone

Testosterone is also produced in the ovaries, but mostly in the adrenal glands. Its main function is sexual health as well as increased energy and strength. It also works with estrogen and progesterone to keep your bones strong and promote cognitive health. During menopause, you may get to the point where there are higher levels of testosterone in the body as estrogen and progesterone decline. This is when a shift in body fat distribution can occur to more of an apple shape as belly fat is gained.

Cortisol

Cortisol levels rise in some women during menopause which can cause mood swings, sleep disorders, hot flashes, digestion problems and weight gain. Known as “the stress hormone,” an overabundance of cortisol can adversely impact the way a woman physically and emotionally responds to stress and can increase feelings of depression and anxiety.

Natural Ways to Reduce Cortisol Levels

- Adopt healthy sleep habits, beginning with sleeping and waking at the same time every day. Limit the use of electronics before bedtime and stabilize circadian rhythms (internal body clock) by getting as much sunshine as possible in the morning and midday.
- Calm stress levels through relaxation and meditation along with walking—a proven solution for stress management.
- Balance blood sugar levels by steering clear of foods laden with sugar or refined carbs higher on the glycemic index which can spike cortisol levels.
- Limit alcohol and caffeine intake, both of which can significantly increase cortisol levels.
- Avoid overexercising and ensure proper recovery. While it is important to move your body every day and engage in strength training, it is also crucial to rest. Include activities great for recovery such as yoga, stretching, massages and other forms of self-care.



Insulin

Insulin is a fat-storing hormone created by the pancreas. Every time you eat, glucose increases and insulin releases. This sends glucose to cells throughout your body so it can be burned for fuel to keep you energized and vibrant. Estrogen helps insulin shuttle blood sugar into the cells to be stored as energy. As you age and estrogen decreases, you become less sensitive to insulin (also known as insulin resistance). The result? Increased belly fat, lower energy and unhealthy food cravings.

Natural Ways to Help Mitigate Insulin Resistance

- Prioritize eating more whole food sources of protein by selecting lean meats, low-fat dairy and plant-based protein sources (e.g. beans, lentils, tofu, etc.). Protein should be distributed evenly throughout the day at each meal occasion. Increase fiber intake with whole grains, fresh fruits like berries and beans.
- Increase daily movement and physical activity. Commit to moderate exercise regularly and include strength training and weight-bearing exercise in your routine.



Before we move on to the next set of hormones, it is important to talk about the cortisol-insulin connection during menopause. These are two of the hormones that you can directly impact through lifestyle changes. Decreasing estrogen directly affects the ability to manage stress and insulin sensitivity. When the body is in a constant state of stress, cortisol is produced in greater amounts. Elevated cortisol levels increase blood sugar in the body, which in turn elevates the risk of insulin resistance resulting in weight gain, especially harmful belly fat. Use the [Self-Care recommendations](#) provided later in this guide to create your own list of doable stress-relieving habits to focus on.

Melatonin

Melatonin is the body's sleep chemical. Produced by the pineal gland in the brain and released into the bloodstream, this hormone decreases throughout your lifespan. You produce melatonin naturally when your body is exposed to darkness. This helps you to wind down and get good quality sleep, which leads to improved mood and decreased depression. Since insomnia is a common complaint during menopause due to the decrease in estrogen and melatonin, it's important to establish a proper sleep routine.

Natural Ways to Increase Melatonin

- Take a warm bath before bedtime and limit artificial light.
- Eat foods rich in melatonin like eggs, tart cherries, portobello mushrooms, fish (which also contains omega-3 fatty acids) and pistachios, the nut richest in melatonin.
- Limit or avoid coffee after noon and alcohol at night.
- Refrain from screen time just before bed and invest in room darkening shades.

Human Growth Hormone (HGH)

This hormone is released by the pituitary gland. It stimulates protein production and affects fat distribution. It is also connected to estrogen levels. Low levels of HGH adversely affect shedding stubborn belly fat and cause a decrease in muscle and bone mass.

Natural Ways to Boost HGH

- Do what you can to manage your weight, particularly dangerous belly fat. Try time-restricted feeding or intermittent fasting along with your Club Advantage plan. Initial research shows these methods can promote HGH production.
- Reduce sugar intake.
- Curb late-night snacking.
- Try high intensity interval training (HIIT).

Thyroid Hormone

This hormone is produced by the thyroid gland and regulates metabolism, energy levels and sensitivity to other hormones throughout the body. Along with estrogen, the thyroid hormone helps bones stay healthy and strong. If your thyroid is out of whack, you can experience high cholesterol, fatigue, forgetfulness, mood swings, weight gain and an intolerance to cold temperatures. It is important to consult a physician if any of these symptoms occur.

Natural Ways to Support Thyroid Health

- Iodine is a trace element and is needed to produce thyroid hormone. Most Americans receive adequate iodine through regular table salt and PowerFuel choices like dairy, seafood, meat and eggs.
- Zinc is another trace element that promotes thyroid health and is in foods like red meat, fish and lentils, along with the amino acid Tyrosine, which is rich in pumpkin seeds and avocados.
- Morning exercise stimulates the production of the thyroid hormone.
- Cold therapy such as a cold shower after a warm bath has also been proven to stimulate thyroid hormone production.



Morning exercise stimulates the production of the thyroid hormone.

Metabolism

Chances are you or someone you know has said something like “my metabolism just isn’t what it used to be.” General sentiment is that as we age, our metabolism slows down which makes it more difficult to lose weight. While this is true, it is not to the degree often thought. Let us address this and dive into metabolism during menopause and as we age.

Metabolism is often referred to as how fast the body burns calories. However, there are two types of metabolism to consider: metabolic rate and food metabolism.

Metabolic Rate

Metabolic rate is how fast you use energy (aka burn calories) and is often how most people define metabolism. A recent [study](#) has shown that metabolic rate goes through four distinct phases as you age. The study also found that there were no differences in metabolic rates between men and women when controlled for muscle mass and body size.

- **Infancy:** From birth to age one, metabolic rate is 50% above the adult rate.
- **Up to Age 20:** Metabolic rate slows by 3% each year.
- **Age 20-60:** Metabolic rate is steady.
- **Age 60+:** Metabolic rate declines less than 1% each year.

The bigger influence on metabolic rate is the total amount of fat-free or muscle mass in the body. Muscle mass decreases through both the natural aging process and a decrease in activity. The latter has the greatest impact on decreasing metabolic rate. It also decreases naturally during weight loss but eating a diet high in protein and engaging in resistance training can help preserve lean muscle mass.

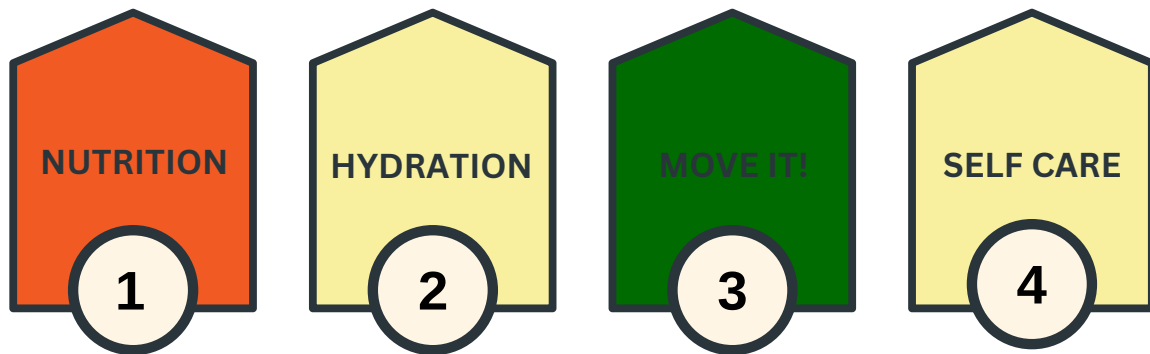
Food Metabolism

Food metabolism is how your body digests, absorbs and uses the nutrients from food. When food is metabolized, it leads to rises and falls in levels of sugar, protein or fat in your blood. Certain foods can make the rise bigger or last longer. As you age, your body does not metabolize nutrients as efficiently.

In one recent [study](#), findings showed that independent of age, menopause had a greater effect on blood sugar markers, inflammation, risk of pre-diabetes and cardiovascular disease and increased insulin resistance. We talked above about how the hormonal changes during menopause directly impact these outcomes, too.

Understanding the effects that menopause and aging have on metabolism helps to explain why your meal plan was built for you specifically in this phase of your life. If you follow the plan, by prioritizing protein, choosing complex carbohydrates rich in fiber and healthy fats, plus incorporating some form of resistance exercise, you’ll have the recipe for weight loss success.

The 4 Pillars of Health During Menopause



Now that you understand your hormonal make-up and are equipped with additional strategies to keep your body in balance, let's explore more ways you can live a healthier, happier lifestyle every day, so you never miss a beat.

Nutrition

It all starts right here.

Why Protein is Essential

We briefly discussed the importance of protein and how it is a critical component to help you build strong bones while mitigating the loss of muscle mass, which is a normal part of aging and menopause (and a trend you can reverse with diet and exercise). Foods loaded with protein include PowerFuel choices like chicken, turkey, fish, eggs, almonds, dairy products like Greek yogurt and, of course, protein shakes. If you are finding it difficult to add in PowerFuel choices, protein shakes can be a great supplement. Protein-rich foods tend to be more filling and are broken down and digested slower than carbohydrates, which makes you feel fuller longer.

Don't Starve Yourself

To keep your body fueled and feel energized, you must eat. Strategies you may have dabbled with in the past like very low calorie or crash diets will wreak havoc with your system and can exacerbate the symptoms of menopause. Nutrisystem ensures that you are receiving the proper number of calories to produce sustainable weight loss based on your metabolism. Don't be afraid to eat while trying to lose weight.





Don't Be Scared of Carbs

Carbs are the primary energy source for your body and help you perform at your best. Simple carbs like those found in sweet foods, soda and refined grains quickly spike blood sugar. We already learned that insulin-resistance is an issue during menopause. To control this, we need to focus on complex carbs, not eliminate carbs altogether. By focusing on adding SmartCarb choices like whole grains, fruits and beans, plus non-starchy vegetables, you can continue to enjoy carbs and their benefits from good-for-you fiber.

Let's quickly focus on the benefits and importance of fiber. Fiber is a type of carbohydrate that the body can't digest. There are two types of fiber, both of which are beneficial: soluble, which can be dissolved in water, and insoluble, which cannot be. Women need about 25–35 grams of fiber each day, however the average amount consumed in the United States is only 15 grams each day. The good news is that by following your Club Advantage plan daily, you will get in that fiber sweet spot.

Soluble fiber can help keep you healthy in a variety of ways. It can also be a prebiotic that helps activate a healthy gut. Soluble fiber can be found in SmartCarb choices like oatmeal, apples, blueberries, lentils and

beans. It can also be in PowerFuel choices like nuts and veggies like onions, garlic, asparagus and leeks to name a few.

Insoluble fiber helps provide bulk to your digestive system. It can be found in Smart Carb choices like quinoa, legumes, brown rice, whole wheat, high fiber cereals and fruits with edible skins. It is also found in PowerFuel choices like nuts and seeds and veggies like dark leafy greens.

The Drawbacks of a Keto Diet

This trendy approach has initial side effects (the keto flu), which include headache, brain fog, fatigue and sore throat. However, there are much more serious ramifications for menopausal women. Since menopause is associated with an increased risk in heart disease, some [studies](#) have associated a keto diet with increased LDL (bad cholesterol) and endothelial dysfunction, which is a narrowing of blood vessels on the surface of the heart. In addition, keto does not meet the recommended daily allowances for calcium, folate, magnesium, potassium and vitamins D and E. The keto diet is only moderate in protein (not what we want) and high in fat. Some foods like whole grains, starchy vegetables and some fruits are minimized or eliminated.

What You Eat and When is Important

Front-loading your calories and carbs earlier in the day versus at nighttime may help you feel more satisfied and less hungry throughout the day. It can also help prevent late-night eating that may derail your weight loss efforts.

[Researchers](#) have discovered that how efficiently your body processes nutrients, like carbohydrates, is influenced by your body's circadian rhythms. Your internal body clock aligns its various processes with the natural 24-hour cycle of light and dark. This means your body is primed to use and store carbohydrates best during the daylight hours and primed for rest and repair during the nighttime hours.

Because the risks of developing insulin resistance increases post-menopause, include more high-quality SmartCarb choices, like fiber, earlier in the day to provide adequate nutrients at a time when your body may be more primed to use those nutrients.

Intermittent Fasting

Initial research and some hormone experts suggest intermittent fasting may have health benefits for menopausal women. Intermittent fasting is not for everyone, so it is ok if it doesn't interest or work for you. Deciding not to incorporate it will not affect your results.

There are many different strategies for intermittent fasting, so feel free to use a little trial and error to see what might work for you. If you don't want to fast every day, you can choose to do it every other day, or even once a week.

If you are going to give it a try, simply decide on an eating window, whether it is 16:8 (the most popular) or 14:10 or 12:12. Using 16:8 as an example, you eat all your meals during a specific 8-hour period that you choose while fasting for the other 16 hours. An example could be that you eat from 12 pm to 8 pm.



Heart Health and Menopause

You are at increased risk for cardiometabolic syndrome during menopause, which can lead to coronary heart disease, heart attack and even stroke.

The common characteristics of this condition include obesity, insulin resistance and increased blood pressure. All the more reason why weight loss, stress management and being active are critical to leading a heart healthy lifestyle.



Listen to Your Gut

Research on the microbiome has exploded over the past few years and is still in its infancy. What we do know is that your gut health affects what is happening in your body and brain.

If you have an unhealthy gut, you may be at greater risk of weight, heart and mood issues, as well as affecting your metabolism and energy. Due to decreases in estrogen and progesterone, the bacteria that normally metabolizes these hormones results in decreased diversity of the gut microbiome.

The best way to ensure a healthy gut microbiome is to focus on consuming a diet rich in SmartCarb choices like whole grains and fresh fruit, fermented dairy PowerFuel choices like Greek yogurt and plenty of fiber-filled non-starchy veggies, as well as engaging in regular activity and staying hydrated.

Foods to Improve Gut Health

Improving your gut health starts with foods you put into it. Make sure your diet includes plenty of fiber through whole grains and vegetables, fermented foods like yogurt, sauerkraut and kimchi and prebiotic-rich foods like bananas, apples and garlic.

The Benefits of Adaptogens

Adaptogens is a fancy name for a specific group of herbs. They have been used for centuries to help mitigate menopausal symptoms and serve as key treatments within integrated health practices. Consuming them may be another way to help balance hormones and reduce inflammation. As a reminder, it is always important to consult with your health care provider before starting to include any of these herbs in your diet. Here are a few examples of how they can be beneficial:

Ashwagandha

This herb helps you adapt to stress and reset hormonal balance. It's been proven to reduce hot flashes and night sweats.

Schisandra berry

This herb helps reduce excessive cortisol release, which can also reduce night sweats and reduce heart palpitations.

Maca

A relative of turnips and radishes, this root vegetable helps manage stress and depression while increasing energy levels and helping to build strong bones.



Other Herbal Remedies

In addition the adaptogens recommended above, you may want to speak with your doctor about adding the following herbal remedies to your diet. Research is overall inconclusive on their ability to reduce symptoms, but many women have had success with using:

Black Cohosh

This supplement has been known to alleviate night sweats and hot flashes. However, make sure you avoid it if you have any signs of liver disease.

Evening Primrose Oil

This oil has been known to treat symptoms like bone loss and hot flashes.

Valerian

Known as “Nature’s Valium” this supplement induces a sense of calm and has been known to improve quality of sleep.

Chasteberry

This supplement can reduce the amount of anxiety you feel you are experiencing.

Ginseng

One of the most popular supplements across age groups, this can be most beneficial for menopausal women by supporting immune function, heart health and energy levels.

Hydration

Even when you were a teenager, you were lectured about the importance of drinking 8 glasses of water a day. During menopause, it's even more important.

Did You Know?

Drinking water can help reduce bloating that can happen with hormonal changes!

Water is a key component to ensure your nutritional health and a simple way to achieve optimal health. Since many women find menopause makes them feel “dried out” due to lower estrogen levels, make sure you drink at least 8-12 glasses of water a day. Some women may even need more. In addition to thirst, another great way to tell if you are properly hydrated is by the color of your urine. It should be clear or straw-colored. You will happily discover a reduction in headaches, an improvement in your skin, hair and nail health, along with a reduction in hot flashes and bladder irritation.



Move It!

Having an active lifestyle is an important part of everyone's physical and mental health. During menopause it's essential to maintain muscle and bone health. Aside from optimal protein intake, the best thing you can do is to start adding some type of strength training to your routine; it is key to maintaining muscle mass and increasing bone density. Strength training also helps with better balance to reduce the risk of falls and helps you maintain a healthy metabolism. This does not mean you shouldn't engage in cardiovascular exercise, as it is important to help offset the risk of heart disease. Consider power walking, biking or swimming, and combine these activities with stretching, weight training, yoga and Pilates. Make exercise fun so you stay motivated by walking or running with a friend, playing tennis, golfing or hiking.

While regular workouts are critically important, there is more to movement in this increasingly sedentary society. We spend a tremendous amount of time sitting behind screens, whether it be our computers, tablets or phones. You need to be cognoscente of the importance of non-exercise activity thermogenesis (NEAT).

What Does This Mean?

Non-exercise activity thermogenesis includes tasks you might not think of as exercise, like cleaning your home, playing with your children, walking the dog or doing yard work like weeding and raking leaves.

Moving throughout the day will increase your mobility and stability, strengthen your core and even help you disprove the common belief that weight gain is a natural part of menopause. In fact, NEAT is one of the most important parts of your metabolic rate and the number of calories you burn.

NEAT Tips:

- Consider taking the stairs instead of riding the escalator the next time you are in a department store.
- Park at the end of the lot rather than in a space closer to the door the next time you go grocery shopping.
- Stand up instead of sitting while you are working at your desk.
- Take breaks when you are in the office and walk the hallways for 10 minutes every few hours.



Check out the Strength and Resistance Training Workouts section of this guide for two excellent workout routines!

These workouts consist of five simple exercises each and are designed to strengthen your muscles. (As a side benefit, weight-bearing exercise also builds bone density, protecting you from osteoporosis as you age.) Always consult your physician before starting any exercise program.

Self Care

Women are traditionally caregivers, whether it be looking after children, spouses or elderly parents. This adds an entire level of stress that can go undetected until it is manifested in one's physical and mental health.

Taking “me” time needs to be a priority, and you need to make a concerted effort to carve out that space for yourself.

Earlier, we discussed the importance of sleep and foods to increase melatonin to promote fewer restless, interrupted nights. Below, we've also provided some tips to help you cope with your busy life and healthy ways to reduce the impact of juggling all the balls you constantly have in the air every day.

Self Care Tips for a Busy Lifestyle

- Ask for help. You do not need to do it all alone.
- Learn how to say “NO!” if the demands on your time and energy are creating unnecessary stress.
- Stretch before you go to bed.
- Use a diffuser with calming scents.
- Find a hobby where you can accomplish something just for you, whether it be gardening, sewing, painting or cooking new dishes.
- Take pride in learning something new on a bi-weekly basis (it will increase your self-satisfaction rate exponentially).
- Make time for facials and massages.
- Limit screen time and find books that help you recharge and relax.
- Spend time with friends, even if it is only once a week.
- Walk after dinner to lighten your mood.
- Practice self-compassion, ditch the concept of perfectionism and don't dwell on the mistakes you make.
- Make deep breathing exercises a part of your daily routine.
- Take time for journaling or meditation.



Mindset and Emotions

Oxytocin is a chemical messenger in your brain that is critically important in many human behaviors and social interactions including sexual arousal, trust, romantic attachments and parent-infant bonding. The main physical functions are to stimulate uterine contractions in labor and childbirth, plus the ability to stimulate contractions of the breasts so women can lactate.

Known as the “love hormone” this key player cannot be ignored when it comes to its impact on menopause. Just like estrogen, oxytocin levels decline during menopause and can have a negative effect on your feeling of mental well-being as well as your cognitive functions. However, there are natural ways to boost oxytocin release. Give someone a simple hug, cuddle with your significant other and spend time listening to music that lifts your spirits. You will be surprised how these simple tactics increase your overall mental well-being.

Additional Tips for Developing a Positive Growth Mindset

- Don't place any limitations on your dreams. Be your own cheerleader when you take on a new challenge. Cultivate a sense of purpose to maintain your momentum and embrace the big picture.
- Engage with new people and build a network of trusted friends and advisors so you always have a support system.
- Believe in your own ability to succeed no matter how large a task may be.
- Focus on the end goal for all your endeavors instead of how fast you can get there.
- Enjoy the process instead of worrying about the final result.
- Take ownership of your attitude and bypass negative influences and people.





Getting Started

Embarking on your journey to balanced nutrition for health, wellness, and weight loss is a powerful step toward a healthier, more vibrant you. In this section, you'll discover essential tips for preparing both your body and mind, from setting realistic goals to staying hydrated. We'll also share 10 scientifically proven strategies tailored for women's weight loss. By following these steps, you'll be well on your way to a balanced, healthy lifestyle that enhances your overall well-being!

Prepare Yourself



Educate Yourself & Set Goals

- **Learn About Food Groups:** Understand the different types of food groups and their impact on your body. Familiarize yourself with portion sizes to ensure you are consuming the appropriate amount for your goals. The [Meal Plans Grocery Guide](#) can help with both of these things!
- **Reading Labels:** Get accustomed to reading nutrition labels to identify different foods and understand their nutritional content per serving. This will help you make informed choices.
- **Goal Setting:** Establish clear, achievable goals for your healthy, balanced diet. These could be specific or broad. [Learn more about setting goals here.](#)

Transform your life, one balanced plate at a time. Embrace portion control, fuel your body with the right nutrients, and watch as your health and happiness soar!

Stay Hydrated & Maintain a Balanced Diet

- **Hydration:** As with any weight loss plan, it's important to drink water to stay hydrated and support overall health. Aim for at least 64 ounces of water a day.
- **Balanced Diet:** Ensure you're consuming adequate amounts of proteins, fats and carbohydrates. A well-rounded diet supports overall health and energy levels.
- **Include Fiber:** Not all carbs are created equal. Make sure to incorporate fiber-rich foods like vegetables, fruits and whole grains to maintain digestive health.
- **Mindset:** Adopting a balanced diet and practicing portion control requires a shift in mindset. Embrace the change by focusing on the positive health benefits and how it aligns with your goals.
- **Support System:** Share your dietary goals with family and friends. Having a support system can provide encouragement and accountability. Consider joining online communities (such as the [Nutrisystem Support Community on Facebook](#)) or forums for additional support and ideas.
- **Expert Guidance:** If needed, consult with a Nutrisystem coach to tailor your diet to your specific needs.

10 Scientifically Proven Tips for Women's Weight Loss

01

COMBINE DIET AND EXERCISE

Research shows that pairing diet with exercise is key for weight loss. In a [study](#), women who dieted and exercised for 45 minutes daily lost 11% of their starting weight—outperforming those who only dieted or exercised.

02

BUILD AND MAINTAIN MUSCLE

Muscle burns more calories than fat. [Research](#) shows that overweight women who regularly do resistance training have been shown to maintain more muscle mass and have higher metabolism rates than women who do just aerobic exercise (such as walking). Lifting weights is just one form of resistance training. Simple squats, lunges and push-ups also build muscle and you can do them anywhere.

03

DON'T SKIP MEALS

Skipping meals can backfire by triggering overeating later. A [study](#) found that women who skipped meals lost eight fewer pounds compared to those who ate regularly.

04

KEEP A FOOD JOURNAL

Tracking your food intake can lead to better results. In the same [study](#) cited above, the women who kept food diaries lost six more pounds than those who didn't.

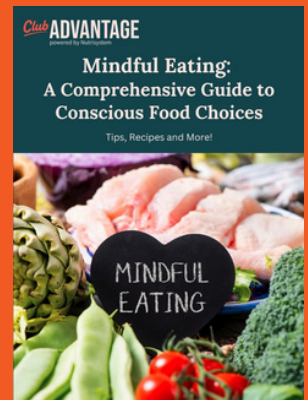
05

PRACTICE MINDFUL EATING

Does being under stress make you immediately think of eating? What could you do instead to help calm yourself down? In one [study](#), women took classes in mindfulness meditation and stress reduction to help curb their stress eating. This helped them to be more mindful of their feelings and sensations at mealtime.

Interested in Mindful Eating?

Check out our [Mindful Eating Diet Guide](#) to learn more!



06

PACK YOUR LUNCH

Eating out, especially for lunch, can sabotage weight loss. In one [study](#), women who ate out for lunch weekly lost fewer pounds than those who ate out less frequently. Packing your own meals gives you control over ingredients and portion sizes. Instead of running out for lunch, consider packing your own meal, such as a Nutrisystem lunch. They're tasty, convenient and perfectly portioned for weight loss. You can also find plenty of [healthy lunch recipes](#) on The Leaf!

07

PRIORITIZE SLEEP

Lack of sleep disrupts your body's levels of leptin and ghrelin, two hormones that regulate your [appetite and metabolism](#). Poor sleep can also impact fat loss. One study found that both sleep-deprived and well-rested participants lost similar weight. However, well-rested individuals lost over half their weight from fat, while sleep-deprived participants lost only a quarter from fat, with the rest from muscle—something women especially can't afford to lose.

08

INCREASE PROTEIN INTAKE

Your metabolism burns more calories digesting proteins than carbs or fats. In fact, [research](#) shows that eating protein increases your metabolic rate by 15-30 percent, compared to 5-10 percent for carbs and 0-3 percent for fats. Stock up on lean proteins like eggs, chicken and canned tuna.

09

TAKE DAILY WALKS

Regular walking, even in short bursts, can burn calories and increase metabolism. Add a hill or a stairway to your route and you can turn up your metabolism by almost [15 percent](#).

10

SEEK SUPPORT

By joining Club Advantage, you've taken a key step that significantly impacts women's weight loss success. [Research](#) on women who lost 10% of their body weight and maintained it for over a year found that most successful losers—and all maintainers—joined a supportive weight loss program. These maintainers were more mindful of trigger foods, portion sizes and exercised regularly. They also embraced a lifelong commitment to a healthy lifestyle. Nutrisystem provides endless support through convenient meals, [guides](#), our app and [blog](#), coaching and a [support community on Facebook](#).



Kitchen & Pantry Essentials

This list of recommended grocery add-ins and Nutrisystem foods is curated specifically for women eating a balanced diet. We made sure to include a variety of options from our [Grocery Guide](#). We also provided a list of foods from our menu that are a good source of protein and fiber. Stock up on them so you always have convenient options on hand!

6 Superfoods for Women's Health



Beans

The combination of magnesium and vitamin B6 has been shown to [reduce PMS symptoms in women](#). Magnesium regulates serotonin levels that impact mood and may also help to decrease bloating. Beans may help reduce the uncomfortable and often frustrating symptoms of water retention and bloating.

Fatty Fish

Fatty fish are high in omega-3 fatty acids, which research has shown offer excellent heart health benefits. One [study](#) specifically looked at women of reproductive age (who were previously underrepresented in studies). They found that a low intake of fish is associated with an increased risk of heart disease in this younger population.



Tomatoes

Tomatoes are packed with lycopene, a powerful antioxidant responsible for their vibrant red color. [Research](#) suggests that lycopene may help prevent cancer, particularly breast cancer, making it an especially valuable antioxidant for women.

Watermelon

In addition to water, [watermelon](#) is packed with nutrients, including the antioxidant lycopene that's found in tomatoes. It also contains many other vitamins and minerals, including B vitamins, vitamin A, vitamin C, magnesium and potassium. Vitamin C is used to produce collagen and promotes healthy skin.



Leafy Greens

Leafy greens are rich in calcium. Since women are at a higher risk of osteoporosis, it's important to find ways to incorporate more of this nutrient into your diet. Other [good sources of calcium](#) include dairy products, beans, dried peas and fortified foods like orange juice and cereal.

Bananas

Bananas are famous for their potassium content. This is especially important for women, as [research](#) shows potassium may provide some protection against osteoporosis. It's also an electrolyte, so it has the added benefit of helping muscles recover after a workout.



Recommended Grocery Add-Ins

PowerFuels

PowerFuel grocery add-ins consist of healthy fats and high-quality proteins. They provide energy, keep you satisfied and help maintain muscle.

LEAN MEATS & POULTRY

- Chicken, 2 oz. cooked
- Deli Meats, 2 oz., low- or reduced-sodium
- Lean Beef, 2 oz. cooked
- Pork, lean cuts, 2 oz. cooked
- Turkey, 2 oz. cooked

FISH & SEAFOOD

- Canned or Pouched Fish (tuna or salmon), in water, 2 oz. or ½ cup
- Fatty Fish (tuna, salmon, mackerel, swordfish, trout), 2 oz. cooked
- Shellfish (shrimp, lobster, crab, scallops, mussels), 3 oz. cooked
- White Fish (bass, flounder, tilapia, cod, halibut), 3 oz. cooked

EGGS & DAIRY

- Cottage Cheese, low-fat or fat-free, no salt-added, ½ cup
- Eggs, 1 large
- Greek Yogurt, low-fat or fat-free, 2/3 cup or 6 oz. single serving containers
- Milk, fat-free or low-fat, 1 cup or 8 oz.
- Semisoft Snack-Sized Cheese Pieces, light, 2 pieces or about 1 oz.
- String Cheese, low-fat or reduced-fat, 1 piece

PLANT-BASED PROTEINS

- Edamame, shelled, ½ cup
- Tempeh, low- or reduced-sodium, 3 oz. cooked or ½ cup
- Tofu, 1 cup

PROTEIN POWDERS & BARS

- Nutrisystem Protein Shakes, 1 serving
- Other Protein Shakes and Powders, 1 serving (80-140 calories with at least 10g protein and no more than 5g added sugar per serving)
- Protein Bars, 1 bar (80 -120 calories with at least 8g protein and no more than 5g added sugar per serving)

NUTS & SEEDS

- Almonds, unsalted, 2 Tbsp. or 12 nuts
- Cashews, unsalted, 2 Tbsp. or 9 nuts
- Hemp Seeds, unsalted, 2 Tbsp.
- Peanut Butter, no added sugar, 1 Tbsp.
- Pistachios, unsalted, 2 Tbsp. or 24 nuts
- Pumpkin Seeds, unsalted, 2 Tbsp.
- Walnuts, unsalted, 2 Tbsp. or 7 halves

HEALTHY FATS & OILS

- Avocado, 1/3 fruit or 1/4 cup pureed
- Olives, 8 - 10 large
- Olive oil, 1 Tbsp.

SmartCarbs

SmartCarb grocery add-ins are carbohydrates that contain fiber and typically register lower on the Glycemic Index. That means they are digested more slowly, helping you feel fuller longer.

BREAD, PASTA & GRAINS

- Bread, 100% whole grain, 1 slice
- Chickpea Pasta, ½ cup cooked
- Lentil Pasta, ½ cup cooked
- Quinoa, cooked, ½ cup

BEANS & LEGUMES

- Black Beans, no-salt-added, ½ cup canned
- Chickpeas, no-salt-added, ½ cup canned
- Hummus, ¼ cup
- Lentils, ½ cup cooked

FRUIT & STARCHY VEGETABLES

- Apples, 1 medium
- Blueberries, 1 cup
- Sweet Potatoes, 1/2 cup
- Banana, 1 medium
- Corn, 1/2 cup
- Watermelon, 1 cup



Vegetables

Vegetable grocery add-ins are non-starchy veggie choices that are packed with nutrients essential for health. Choose a variety of veggies every day! One serving is 1 cup raw or 1/2 cup cooked.

- Asparagus
- Bell Peppers
- Brussels Sprouts
- Cabbage
- Carrots
- Cauliflower
- Cucumber
- Green Beans
- Mixed Greens
- Mushrooms
- Radish
- Sugar Snap Peas
- Spinach
- Tomatoes
- Zucchini

My Grocery List

Use this space to write down your favorite Nutrisystem grocery add-ins. Take it with you the next time you head to the grocery store!

POWERFUELS

LEAN MEATS, POULTRY, FISH, SEAFOOD

☐	_____
☐	_____
☐	_____
☐	_____

EGGS & DAIRY

☐	_____
☐	_____
☐	_____
☐	_____

PLANT-BASED PROTEINS

☐	_____
☐	_____
☐	_____
☐	_____

PROTEIN BARS/SHAKES

☐	_____
☐	_____

NUTS, SEEDS & HEALTHY FATS

☐	_____
☐	_____
☐	_____
☐	_____

SMARTCARBS

BREAD, PASTA & GRAINS

☐	_____
☐	_____
☐	_____
☐	_____

BEANS & LEGUMES

☐	_____
☐	_____
☐	_____
☐	_____

FRUITS & STARCHY VEGETABLES

☐	_____
☐	_____
☐	_____
☐	_____

VEGETABLES

☐	_____
☐	_____
☐	_____
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☐	_____
☐	_____

Nutrisystem Foods

that are a good source of protein & fiber!



Quick Breakfasts for Busy Mornings

- Cinnamon Bun Bar
- Turkey Sausage & Egg Muffin
- Peanut Butter Oat Bar



Perfect for
grabbing and
going when
you're in a rush!

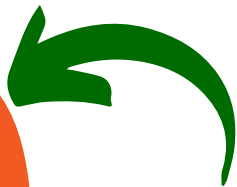


Easy Lunches for Work

- Spinach and Cheese Pretzel Melt
- Classic Hamburger
- Chicken Mozzarella Melt



**Easy to
customize:** add
all your favorite
burger toppings!



Hearty Inspirations®
meals contain up to
30+ grams of protein*!

Simple Weeknight Dinners

- Beef Lo Mein
- Grain-Crusted Pollock with Vegetables
- Italian Sausage and Turkey Pepperoni Pizza



Snacks & Shakes

- Lemon Zest Cake
- White Cheddar Popcorn
- Vanilla Ice Cream Sandwich
- Nutrisystem Shakes



Roll the sides in
crushed nuts
for extra crunch
and healthy
fats!



*Hearty Inspirations dinners contain 20 – 30g protein vs. standard dinners at 9 – 22g protein.



Tips to Stay on Track

Achieving your weight loss goals is within reach with the right guidance. Explore proven methods for adherence and maintaining motivation throughout your journey. Learn how to navigate obstacles and turn them into opportunities for growth. Plus, discover the most important metrics to monitor and celebrate your progress. These comprehensive tips and tricks will keep you on track, ensuring your path to weight loss success is both rewarding and sustainable.

Strategies for Adherence & Motivation

Set Specific, Measurable & Achievable Goals

- **Goal Setting:** Define clear, specific goals such as “meet daily carbohydrate and fat targets” or “prepare three balanced meals per week.” Make sure these goals are realistic and attainable within your lifestyle.
- **Measurable Outcomes:** To track progress, use quantifiable metrics like grams of protein, carbohydrates and fats, as well as meal frequency or weight changes. [Learn more about setting goals here.](#)

Keep a Food Diary to Monitor Intake & Progress

- **Food Logging:** Consistently track your meals and snacks to monitor your calorie intake and macros. The [sample meal plans](#) are a great resource for tracking your daily menu.
- **Review and Reflect:** Regularly review your food diary to identify patterns, successes and areas for improvement.

Experiment with New Recipes & Foods

- **Recipe Exploration:** Try new recipes that balance proteins, carbohydrates and fats to keep your meals exciting and diverse. Explore different cuisines and cooking methods. The official Nutrisystem blog, [The Leaf](#), has tons of delicious recipes that are healthy and balanced.
- **Ingredient Variety:** Incorporate a wide range of foods from each food group to avoid monotony and ensure you get a variety of nutrients.

Lean on Us

- **Nutrisystem Meals:** Take advantage of Nutrisystem foods for added convenience. They’ll keep you on track, even when life gets busy!
- **Guides & Resources:** Use the [Meal Plan guides and resources](#) to help you structure your day and ensure it aligns with your goals.

Overcoming Challenges & Setbacks



Plan and Prepare Meals in Advance to Stay on Track

- **Meal Prep:** Dedicate a day each week to plan and prepare meals. Cook in bulk and portion out meals to ensure you meet your nutrition and calorie goals.
- **Freezing and Storing:** Freeze pre-cooked meals or ingredients to have convenient, ready-to-eat options on hand.

Keep Balanced Snacks on Hand for Busy Days

- **Snack Preparation:** Stock up on portable, balanced snack combos:
 - Greek yogurt and berries
 - Cottage cheese with pineapple
 - Apple slices with peanut butter
 - Hummus with veggies
 - Trail mix
 - Protein bars
 - String cheese with whole grain crackers
 - Cheese and apple slices
 - Banana with almond butter
 - Mixed nuts and dried fruits
 - Fruit and protein/yogurt smoothies
- **Emergency Stash:** Keep snacks in your bag, car or office to avoid reaching for unhealthy options when you're on the go.

HOW TO HANDLE DINING OUT & SOCIAL EVENTS

Plan Ahead: Check the menu online before heading out. Many restaurants provide nutritional information on their websites, allowing you to choose healthier options in advance.

Watch Your Portions: Restaurants often serve large portions. Consider sharing a meal with a friend, ordering a half-portion, or boxing up half of your meal to take home.

Choose Water or Unsweetened Beverages: Stick with water, sparkling water or unsweetened tea. If you choose to drink alcohol, do so in moderation and opt for lower-calorie options like wine or spirits with soda water.

Practice Mindful Eating: Pay attention to what you're eating and how it makes you feel. Eat slowly, savor each bite and stop when you feel satisfied, not overly full. Check out our [Mindful Eating Guide](#) to learn more.

Refer to the Dining Out Guide for More Tips: Use our [Dining Out Guide](#) for specific recommendations on what to order at various types of restaurants. Reach out to a Nutrisystem coach for additional tips and advice on dining out.

Metrics to Track

Weight & Body Measurements

The frequency that you weigh yourself is a personal preference. Just keep a few things in mind:

- Weigh at the same time of day and with the same amount of clothing.
- The scale can fluctuate drastically from day to day, sometimes even 5 pounds, so you must be conscious of that and not get frustrated.
- Chart your progress and look at the weight loss trend over the month, not just a few days.
- If you're not weighing at all, use other indicators of success, such as body circumferences (waist, hips, arms, etc.) to assess changes in body composition. Track the changes you see in these indicators from week to week.

Energy Levels & Physical Performance

Track your daily energy levels, particularly how you feel before and after meals and workouts. Track improvements in physical activities, such as lifting heavier weights, running longer distances or increased endurance.

Hunger & Fullness Levels

Track your hunger level before, during and after meals. Being mindful of this can help you see trends in how foods may impact your hunger and cravings. This will allow you to choose foods that help curb your hunger and cravings and minimize those that leave you feeling less satisfied.

Sleep Quality & Duration

Keep a log of your sleep patterns, noting the duration and quality of sleep each night. Use apps or devices that monitor sleep quality to gain insights into your sleep patterns.

Adapting to Individual Needs & Preferences

Adjust Portion Sizes and Ingredients

- Customize portion sizes to fit your hunger levels, activity levels, and weight loss or maintenance goals.
- Adjust foods to accommodate dietary preferences and restrictions, such as plant-based proteins for vegetarians or lactose-free options for those with dairy intolerance.

Consult a Nutrisystem Coach

- Seek personalized advice from Nutrisystem coaches to tailor your balanced diet to your specific needs and goals.

Addressing Nutritional Gaps

Ensure a Balanced Intake of Vitamins & Minerals by Incorporating a Variety of Foods

- Incorporate a variety of foods that also provide essential vitamins and minerals, such as leafy greens, nuts, seeds and whole grains.
- Include superfoods that are rich in nutrients, like chia seeds, quinoa and kale, to enhance your diet's nutritional profile.

Consider Supplements if Certain Nutrients Are Lacking

- If you find it challenging to meet all your nutritional needs through food alone, consider supplements like multivitamins, omega-3 fatty acids, and specific minerals such as calcium or magnesium.
- Consult with your healthcare provider before starting any supplementation to ensure it's appropriate for your individual needs.



Recipes & Hacks

The following pages have links to simple and quick recipes that fit into a balanced diet. Plus, we teach you how to hack the Nutrisystem menu with plenty of tasty and nutritious additions to our meals and snacks!

Simple & Delicious Recipes

Healthy & Balanced!



Simple Sheet Pan Dinner Recipes

CHICKEN PARMESAN, BLACKENED COD AND VEGETABLES, TOFU FAJITAS, CAJUN SHEET PAN SHRIMP AND VEGETABLE BOIL, PORK TENDERLOIN WITH SWEET POTATO FRIES & MORE!

[GET THE RECIPES](#)

Deliciously Sweet Smoothie Creations

STRAWBERRY YOGURT, PINEAPPLE MANGO, RASPBERRY ALMOND BUTTER, CREAMY BLUEBERRY, STRAWBERRY BANANA, MATCHA MELON, PEAR PASSION FRUIT & MORE!

[GET THE RECIPES](#)



Warm & Hearty Dutch Oven Meals

HONEY GARLIC SHRIMP AND RICE, POT ROAST, BEEF STEW, MINISTRONE SOUP, FRENCH ONION CHICKEN AND POTATOES, EASY LASAGNA SOUP, SALMON CHOWDER WITH CORN & MORE!

[GET THE RECIPES](#)





Sandwich Recipes for Easy Lunches

BUFFALO CHICKEN SLIDERS, PULLED PORK TENDERLOIN, ARTISANAL GRILLED CHEESE, AVOCADO CHICKEN SALAD, AVOCADO TUNA MELT PANINI, SKINNY EGG SALAD & MORE!

[GET THE RECIPES](#)

Flavorful Chicken & Rice Recipes You'll Love

ONE-PAN CHICKEN, RICE AND VEGGIES, INSTANT POT CHICKEN CREOLE, CHICKEN AND BROCCOLI STIR-FRY, FIESTA CHICKEN AND RICE BOWL, EASY CHICKEN FAJITA BAKE & MORE!

[GET THE RECIPES](#)



Nutritious Air Fryer Breakfast Recipes

CINNAMON FRENCH TOAST, AIR FRYER BAKED EGGS, BLUEBERRY CHEESECAKE DONUTS, AIR FRYER FRITTATA, APPLE FRITTERS, AIR FRYER JELLY DONUTS & MORE!

[GET THE RECIPES](#)

Healthy Pasta Night Inspirations

CHICKEN PICCATA, CREAMY SPINACH GNOCCHI, ZOODLE MAC AND CHEESE WITH ROASTED VEGGIES, SHRIMP FRA DIAVOLO, VEGETABLE LASAGNA BAKE, BEEF LO MEIN & MORE!

[GET THE RECIPES](#)



Creative Protein Powder Recipes

PROTEIN OVERNIGHT OATS, CHOCOLATE PEANUT BUTTER FRENCH TOAST, PROTEIN WAFFLES, EDIBLE COOKIE DOUGH, PISTACHIO PROTEIN BOMBS, PROTEIN BROWNIES & MORE!

[GET THE RECIPES](#)



Unlimited Veggie Recipes to Keep You Full

CRUNCHY KALE CHIPS, CILANTRO LIME CAULIFLOWER RICE, ONE-PAN OVEN ROASTED VEGETABLES, PICO DE GALLO, ROASTED ASPARAGUS, STEAMED SNAP PEAS & MORE!

[GET THE RECIPES](#)



Nutrisystem Food Hacks

to Boost Nutrition!

- Add nut butter to the Nutrisystem Honey Wheat Bagel, Buttermilk Waffles or Homestyle Pancakes.
- Make a breakfast sandwich on Nutrisystem Buttermilk Waffles, Homestyle Pancakes or Honey Wheat Bagel. Just add eggs and/or cheese!
- Make “fried” chicken and waffles with Nutrisystem Buttermilk Waffles ([Get the recipe here!](#))
- Serve Nutrisystem Granola Cereal or crumbled Biscotti Bites over Greek yogurt.
- Add nuts and seeds to Nutrisystem Granola Cereal.
- Add an egg and/or cheese to the Nutrisystem Classic Hamburger or Grilled Chicken Sandwich. Enjoy with a side of sweet potato fries.
- Slice up Nutrisystem Stuffed Chicken Breasts and serve over fiber-rich pasta or brown rice.
- Add edamame to the Nutrisystem Beef Lo Mein.
- Add meat to our plant-based meals, such as the Nutrisystem Mediterranean Flatbread, Ravioli Formaggio and Margherita Pizza.
- Add brown rice, quinoa or whole grain pasta to the Nutrisystem Grain-Crusted Pollock with Vegetables, Bourbon-Style Chicken, or Merlot Beef with Root Vegetables.
- Roll the Nutrisystem Vanilla Ice Cream Sandwich in crushed nuts.
- Add any Nutrisystem ice cream snack to a blender with protein powder and fruit to create a protein-packed milkshake.
- Chop up Nutrisystem snack cakes or cookies and create a parfait with your favorite yogurt, fruit and nuts.
- Get creative with Nutrisystem protein shake mix with [these delicious recipes](#).



Strength & Resistance Training Workouts

Here are two excellent strength-building resistance training workout routines. One of them requires no special equipment and uses your body weight for resistance. You can do it anywhere—in your living room, in your backyard, even in a hotel room while traveling. The other one requires resistance bands.

These workouts consist of five simple exercises each and are designed to strengthen your muscles. (As a side benefit, weight-bearing exercise also builds bone density, protecting you from osteoporosis as you age.)

You will do these exercises circuit-style, a basic technique in which you do one exercise after another in order, resting just 20 seconds in between exercises.

The quick pace elevates your heart rate, revs your metabolism and burns more calories.

Important Notes:

- Strength training, also called resistance training, typically requires a day of rest to allow your muscles to recover and repair in between workouts. For that reason, plan on alternating between one of these strength workouts and aerobic activities such as walking. In other words, avoid doing strength workouts on consecutive days.
- Always consult your healthcare provider before starting any exercise program.

Beginner Body-Weight Strength Circuit

Do the warm-up first. Then perform each exercise in order for the repetitions indicated, resting 20 seconds before moving on to the second exercise in the circuit and so on. Start with one circuit every other day during week one. During week two, add a second circuit; rest for 1 minute in between circuits. In week three, try to complete three circuits, resting for 1 minute between rounds.

WARM-UP:

HIGH KNEE MARCH IN PLACE WITH ARM CIRCLE

30 REPS

Stand with feet hip-width apart and your arms outstretched at your sides, parallel with the floor and palms facing up. Start marching in place, lifting each knee high so your thigh aligns parallel with the floor on each step. Two steps equal one rep. Simultaneously, rotate your arms in tight circles counterclockwise. After 15 high knees, turn your palms down and circle your arms clockwise for 15 reps.



1 OF 5:

WALL PUSH-UP

8-10 REPS

A. This is an easy way to start toning your arms and building upper-body strength. Stand and place your hands against a wall at shoulder height, arms straight and parallel with the floor. Your feet should be spaced hip-width apart and arms' length from the wall. You will be in a push-up position, but standing.

B. Brace your core and slowly bend your arms until your forehead grazes the wall. Pause, and then straighten your arms to return to the starting position. That's one repetition (rep).

NOTE: Once you master the wall push-up, try a plank. Start in a floor push-up position and bend your elbows to place your forearms on the floor facing forward. Your body should form a straight line from your heels to your head. Brace your core and don't allow your hips to sag. Hold this position for 10 seconds. You're done! Gradually increase the duration of your plank hold.



2 OF 5: WALL SIT

20 SECONDS

A. Stand with your back against a wall and your feet spread shoulder-width apart, toes pointed slightly outward. Now, walk your feet about 18 inches from the wall. Raise your arms in front of you. This is the starting position.

B. Pressing your back into the wall, slowly bend your legs to lower your body toward the floor. Stop when your thighs are parallel with the floor. Sit tall in this position with head back and hips touching the wall. Hold this position with tension in your legs for 10 to 20 seconds and then stand, using your hands against the wall to help you if needed. If you would like, do another 20-second hold or two. Over time, try to work up to holding the wall squat for 60 seconds.



3 OF 5: FLUTTER KICK

8-10 REPS

A. Lie on your back on the floor with your hands under your hips and your toes pointed.

B. Engage your abs to lift your feet (not your head) about a foot off the floor. Keeping your legs rigid, begin quickly kicking your straight legs back and forth as you would while swimming. Every four kicks equals one rep.



OPTIONAL: SUPERMAN

8 REPS

If you find the flutter kick too difficult, try the Superman instead. It's another good exercise to strengthen your core, especially your lower back.

A. Lie face down on the floor with your arms outstretched in front of you and your legs behind, toes pointing.

B. Raise your arms and legs a few inches off the ground while you squeeze your glutes and feel the stretch in your lower back. Hold for 3 seconds, lower, and repeat.



4 OF 5: HIP RAISE

8-10 REPS

A. Lie on your back on the floor with your knees bent and feet flat. Your feet should be about 6 to 8 inches apart, and your heels should be 12 to 14 inches from your hips. Open your arms out to the sides with palms down.

B. Brace your core and press into your heels to lift your hips upward until your body forms a straight line from your shoulders to your knees. Hold this top position for 3 seconds, squeezing your butt muscles. Slowly lower your hips to the floor. That's one rep. Repeat.



5 OF 5: STABILITY LUNGE

8 REPS

A. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and your arms at your sides. Lift your left knee until your thigh is parallel with the floor as you raise your arms straight overhead, palms together.

B. Balance for 3 seconds, then slowly drop your left foot into a front lunge so your front leg forms a right angle and your back knee hovers an inch above the floor. Keep your arms above your head. Press your front foot into the floor and bring your right leg forward to stand. Then repeat with the sequence with your right leg. That's one rep. If this exercise is too difficult, try it with your hands on your hips.



Resistance-Band Strength Circuit

You will need an exercise band for this workout. These rubberized resistance bands are available at most national sporting-goods retailers and online. Choose a band with light to intermediate resistance or purchase bands of varying resistances for use as you become stronger.

Do the warm-up first. Then perform each exercise in order, resting 20 seconds before moving on to the next exercise in the circuit.

Complete one circuit every other day during the first week. Add a second and third circuit during weeks two and three, respectively.

WARM-UP: WALKING KNEE HUG

20 REPS

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and your arms at your sides. Step forward with your right foot and lean slightly forward at the hips. Lift your right knee, grasp it with your hands, and pull it toward your chest while standing tall. Let go of the knee and step forward with your right foot. Next, raise your left knee and pull it to your chest. That's one rep. Continue alternating legs.



WARM-UP:

REVERSE LUNGE WITH REACH AND TWIST

20 REPS

Stand with arms at your sides. Step back with your left leg and lower your body until your right and left knees form right angles. Simultaneously twist your torso to the right and raise your right arm behind you. Place the back of your left hand on the outside of your right knee to help you deepen the rotation of your upper body. Then, return to a standing starting position. That's one rep. Repeat the move on the same side. After 10 reps to the right, lunge with your right foot back and rotate to the left for 10.



1 OF 5:

EXERCISE BAND FLY

10-12 REPS

A. Attach the middle of an exercise band securely to a door handle or other stationary object. (Follow the directions that came with the exercise band.) Face away from the door and grasp the handles of the band; bend your elbows. Walk away from the door until the tension pulls your bent arms out to the sides at about shoulder level. Assume a staggered stance, with one foot in front of the other.

B. Without changing the angle of your elbows, pull your hands together in front of your body until your knuckles meet. Slowly return to the starting position. That's one rep.



2 OF 5:

EXERCISE BAND SEATED ROW

10-12 REPS

A. Sit on the floor with your legs extended straight and loop the middle of the exercise band securely around the arches of your feet. Grab the handles (if the band is too long, wrap it around your feet as shown) so that there's tension in the band when your arms are extended in front of you. Your back should be straight.

B. Keeping your elbows close to your sides, pull the band back to each side of your body, squeezing your shoulder blades together. Pause for a second, then slowly return to the starting position. That's one rep.

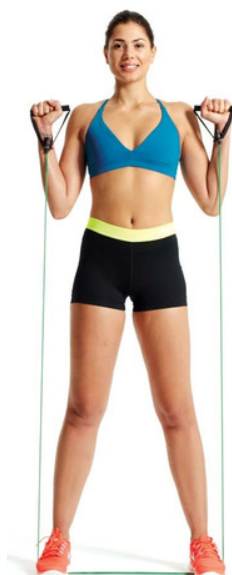


3 OF 5:

EXERCISE BAND SQUAT WITH SIDE KICK

10-12 REPS

- A. Hold the handles of an exercise band and step on the middle of the band with feet hip-width apart. Raise your hands to shoulder height, palms facing forward.
- B. Bend your knees and push your hips back as if sitting in a chair until your thighs are parallel with the floor.
- C. Press your feet into the floor to stand and immediately lift your right leg out to the side. Return to the starting position and repeat on the opposite side. That's one rep.



4 OF 5:

EXERCISE BAND BICEPS CURL

10-12 REPS

A. Stand on the middle of an exercise band with feet hip-width apart. With arms straight at your sides, grasp the handles of the band (or the band itself) so that there is slight tension in the resistance band.

B. Keeping your upper arms pressed against your sides and stationary, bend your arms to raise your hands to your shoulders. Pause, then slowly release back to the starting position. That's one rep.



5 OF 5:

WOOD CHOPPER

20 REPS

A. Step securely on the band with your left foot and step your right foot out so your feet are a little wider than shoulder-width apart. Grasp the handle of the band with both hands by your left thigh. Your left hand should hold the handle with your left palm up, and your right hand should grasp with your right palm down. Keep your arms straight. Be sure that there's a little tension in the band but not so much that you won't be able to pull it across your body.

B. Keeping your arms straight, pull the handle across your body and over your right shoulder as you twist your torso slightly to the right so the band ends up forming a diagonal line from your left foot to above your right shoulder. Pause, then release. Complete 10 reps to the right, then stand on the band with your right foot and do 10 “chops” to the left.



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