THE NO-TRACK NUTRITION SERIES

STRONGER + FASTER WITHOUT TRACKING

A precise food system for strength, cardio, intervals and recovery - without logging every calorie.



NO APP. A CLEAR SYSTEM.

Portions, decisions and adjustments.

THE HONEST STARTING POINT

You can make excellent progress without tracking calories.

Calorie tracking is the quickest way to quantify food intake accurately. It is useful, but it is not compulsory. Your body responds to what you repeatedly eat and do, not whether those choices were entered into an app.

No tracking does not mean no structure.

This system replaces daily calorie logging with repeatable hand portions, a fixed meal rhythm and a short weekly review. Follow the starting plan for 14 full days before changing anything.

01 BUILD

Use the exact plate and meal rhythm in this guide. Choose from the food lists rather than improvising every meal.

02 REPEAT

Keep portions stable most days. Aim for at least 85% of planned meals across the week.

03 REVIEW

Check the goal dashboard weekly. If the expected trend is absent, make one small adjustment only.

Your 14-day agreement

- Use three main meals plus planned training fuel; do not wait for post-session cravings.
- Match carbohydrate portions to easy, strength, interval and long-session days.
- Keep protein steady across the whole week.
- Review performance, recovery, health and body-weight trend once each week.

STARTING RULE

Do not reduce portions after one heavy day, one meal out or one scale fluctuation. Return to the next planned meal. Consistency beats compensation.

LEARN ONCE, USE ANYWHERE

Your hand is the measuring kit.

These visual portions scale roughly with body size and work in kitchens, restaurants and work canteens. They are starting points, not laboratory measurements.

PALM

Protein

One palm-sized, palm-thick serving. Usually about 20-30 g protein depending on the food.

CUP

Carbohydrate

One cupped handful cooked rice, pasta, grains or cereal; or one fist-sized potato.

FIST

Plants

One fist of vegetables or fruit. Two fists can be two different colours.

THUMB

Added fat

One thumb of oil, butter, nut butter, cheese, nuts, seeds, pesto or creamy dressing.

Useful household translations

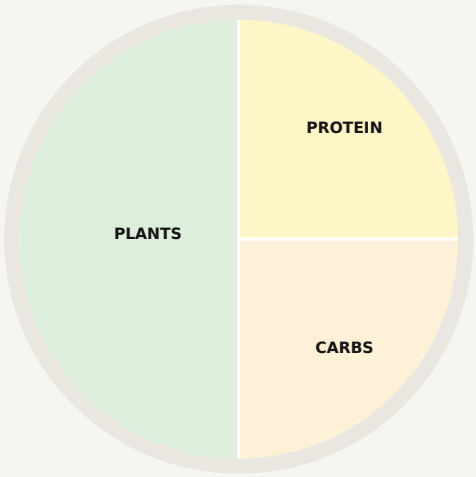
Portion	Food examples	Use this when learning
1 palm protein	Chicken, fish, lean meat, tofu, high-protein yoghurt	About 120-150 g cooked meat/fish, 200 g tofu or 200-250 g yoghurt
1 carb cup	Rice, pasta, oats, beans, potatoes, bread, wrap	One cupped hand cooked, one medium wrap, or two average slices bread
1 fat thumb	Oil, nut butter, nuts, seeds, cheese, avocado	About 1 tablespoon oil/nut butter, or a small closed handful of nuts

You do not need to weigh food every day. If a visual portion is unfamiliar, measure it once or twice, then use the visual cue.

HYBRID PERFORMANCE

The Fuel-by-Demand Plate

Strength and cardiovascular work compete for recovery resources. Protein stays steady; carbohydrate moves with training demand. Chronically under-fuelling can harm both performance and health. [1,3,7,8]



- 1.5 palms protein
  At every main meal.
- 1-2 fists plants
  More away from hard-session windows.
- 1-2 carb cups
  One easy/rest; two hard/long.
- 1 fat thumb
  Keep lower immediately before hard work.

The daily rhythm

Eating time	Exact starting prescription	Purpose
Breakfast	1.5 palms protein + 1-2 carb cups + 1 fist fruit	Set up the day
Lunch	1.5 palms protein + 1-2 carb cups + 2 fists plants + 1 fat thumb	Match session demand
Training fuel	0-2 easy carb portions before/during, based on duration and intensity	Protect quality
Dinner	1.5 palms protein + 1-2 carb cups + 2 fists plants + 1 fat thumb	Replace and recover

THREE DAY TYPES

Easy/rest: 1 carb cup at main meals. Strength or easy cardio: 1-2 cups, with 2 near training. Intervals, long or double-session day: 2 cups at the meals before and after, plus during-session carbohydrate when the work lasts longer than 60 minutes.

YOUR FOOD LIBRARY

Choose mostly foods that make the system easier.

There are no magic foods and no forbidden foods. Core foods make portions, protein, fibre and recovery easier to manage. Flexible foods can still fit deliberately.



PROTEIN FIRST

- Chicken and turkey
- Lean beef
- Fish and eggs
- Greek yoghurt / milk
- Cottage cheese
- Tofu / tempeh
- Beans plus grains
- Protein powder for convenience

CARBS WITH PURPOSE

- Oats and cereal
- Rice and pasta
- Potatoes
- Bread, bagels, wraps
- Bananas and dried fruit
- Rice cakes
- Gels / chews for long work
- Sports drink when useful

PLANTS + FATS

- Colourful vegetables
- Fruit and berries
- Soup and salad
- Olive oil
- Nuts and seeds
- Avocado
- Cheese
- Nut butter

The 80/20 decision

Build normal meals from core foods. Sports drinks, gels and lower-fibre carbs are tools for hard or long training, not moral failures. Use them where they improve performance rather than sipping them all day.

MAKE DECISIONS AUTOMATIC

Use four meal templates.

Pick one option from each line. Repeat breakfasts and lunches if that makes your week easier. Variety across the month matters more than novelty at every meal.

EASY / REST PLATE

Formula: 1.5P + 1C + 2V + 1T.

Example: chicken, potato, large mixed salad and olive oil.

STRENGTH PLATE

Formula: 1.5P + 1-2C + 2V + 1T.

Example: beef rice bowl with vegetables and avocado.

HARD / LONG PLATE

Formula: 1.5P + 2C + 1-2V + 0-1T.

Example: turkey pasta with tomato sauce and cooked vegetables.

FAST FUEL

Before/during: easy carbohydrate, low fat and low fibre.

Examples: banana, toast, rice cakes, gel, chews or sports drink.

Mixed meals: use the batch rule

- Label containers EASY (1 carb cup) or HARD (2 carb cups) before the week starts.
- Keep low-fibre pre-session foods separate from high-fibre everyday meals.
- Pack long-session fuel the night before and know the planned number of portions per hour.

IF HUNGER IS HIGH

If hunger surges after intervals or long work, the session was probably under-fuelled. Add a carb portion before or during next time and eat the planned recovery meal - do not rely on willpower after training.

A FULL WEEK WITHOUT LOGGING

Monday to Thursday

This example pairs meals with a hybrid week: strength Monday/Thursday, intervals Tuesday, easy cardio Friday, long cardio Saturday, recovery Wednesday and rest Sunday.

DAY	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER	SNACK / FUEL
MON Strength	Skyr + oats + banana	Chicken rice bowl + veg	Salmon + potatoes + greens	Toast/banana before; milk after if meal delayed
TUE Intervals	Eggs + toast + fruit	Turkey pasta + cooked veg	Beef rice stir-fry	Banana 30-60 min before; water during
WED Recovery	Yoghurt + oats + berries	Tuna potato salad	Chicken + quinoa + vegetables	Fruit + yoghurt if hungry
THU Strength	Protein oats + fruit	Beef burrito bowl	Turkey meatballs + pasta + veg	Rice cakes before; recovery meal after

SWAP, DO NOT GUESS

Change chicken to fish, rice to potatoes, or berries to fruit - but preserve the number of palms, cups, fists and thumbs. That is how variety stays consistent.

A FULL WEEK WITHOUT LOGGING

Friday to Sunday

Use this as a complete example, then swap foods within the same portion category. Keep the structure even when the ingredients change.

DAY	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER	SNACK / FUEL
FRI Easy cardio	Eggs + toast + fruit	Chicken wrap + salad	Fish + rice + vegetables	Water; snack only if meal timing requires
SAT Long cardio	Pre: oats + banana + yoghurt	Post: chicken rice bowl + fruit	Pasta + lean protein + cooked veg	During >60 min: 30-60 g carb/hour, practised
SUN Rest	Omelette + toast	Soup + protein sandwich	Roast protein + potatoes + 2 veg	Optional yoghurt/fruit; base portions

The 45-minute weekly prep

- Write the week's session type beside each day.
- Prepare easy and hard meal containers with different carb portions.
- Buy simple pre-training carbs and long-session fuel.
- Place a recovery meal or snack where the session ends.
- Check weather and access to fluid before long/hot sessions.

CARBOHYDRATE IS A PERFORMANCE TOOL

Fuel the work you are asking your body to do.

For sessions over 60 minutes, especially hard endurance work, carbohydrate during exercise can preserve quality. Practise the plan in training before an event. [3,7]

WHEN	WHAT TO DO	GOOD OPTIONS
2-4 hours before	1 palm protein + 2 carb cups; lower fat and fibre if the session is hard	Yoghurt/oats/banana; chicken/rice; eggs/bagel
30-60 minutes before	If needed, one easy carb portion	Banana, toast, rice cakes, gel or sports drink
During under 60 min	Water is usually enough for a normal gym session	Drink to comfort; more in heat or heavy sweating
During over 60 min	Start with 30-60 g carbohydrate per hour and practise tolerance	1-2 gels/hour, chews, sports drink or banana combinations
Within 2 hours after	1.5 palms protein + 2 carb cups + fluid	A full meal; add salty foods after heavy sweat

DO NOT TRY A NEW FUEL PLAN ON EVENT DAY

Gut tolerance is trainable. Test the brand, amount, timing and fluid alongside it during ordinary training. For very long events or complex medical needs, use an accredited sports dietitian.

Hydration without guesswork

Start sessions normally hydrated, carry fluid when access is limited, and use thirst, weather, sweat rate and urine colour across the day as guides. Avoid both severe dehydration and forcing excessive fluid. After heavy sweat, replace fluid with meals and include sodium-containing foods.

RESTAURANTS, TAKEAWAYS AND WEEKENDS

Keep the structure. Drop the perfectionism.

A useful system must survive work meals, family food and social events. The goal is not to make every meal lean; it is to stop one choice turning into an unplanned weekend.

1 PROTEIN

Choose a clear protein anchor first: grilled meat/fish, eggs, tofu, beans, yoghurt or a lean burger.

2 PLANTS

Add vegetables, salad or fruit. Ask for an extra side if the meal contains none.

3 ONE MAIN CARB

Choose rice, potatoes, bread, pasta, noodles or dessert as the main extra - not every option automatically.

Use the 'choose two' rule.

At a richer meal, choose the two that matter most: alcohol, starter, dessert, chips, creamy sauce or extra cheese. Enjoy them deliberately. You do not need all six because it is the weekend.

Common situations

Situation	Decision
Early session	Have banana/toast before if tolerated; place a protein plus carb breakfast immediately after.
Work-to-gym	Pack a yoghurt and cereal, sandwich or banana plus shake. Do not arrive on lunch alone.
Restaurant after training	Choose a protein main, 2 carb portions and vegetables; this is recovery, not a cheat meal.
Race/event weekend	Keep familiar meals, lower fibre if your gut is sensitive and practise every product beforehand.

NON-TRACKING STILL NEEDS FEEDBACK

Performance, recovery and health outrank the scale.

A hybrid plan is working when key lifts and cardio quality improve without persistent fatigue, illness, injury or unintended weight loss.

SIGNAL	HOW OFTEN	WHAT GOOD PROGRESS LOOKS LIKE
Key lifts	Every session	Load, reps or quality gradually improving
Cardio marker	Weekly or fortnightly	Same pace feels easier, or more work at the same effort
Recovery	Daily quick score	Energy returns; soreness and sleep are manageable
Body weight	Weekly average if useful	Broadly stable unless another goal is intentional
Health signals	Weekly	No repeated illness, injury, menstrual or libido changes

The weekly review

- Were hard sessions fuelled before they started?
- Did quality hold through the final third of sessions?
- Are sleep, mood and appetite stable?
- Is body weight falling unintentionally or are health signals changing?

Daily body weight is optional. If the scale harms your relationship with food or your body, use waist, photos, clothing fit and performance instead.

AFTER 14 DAYS

Change one lever, then hold it.

Random changes create random data. Only adjust after two consistent weeks, and only when the relevant outcome has genuinely stalled or moved the wrong way.

ON TRACK

Strength and cardio markers improve, recovery is stable and body weight is appropriate. Keep the day-type portions unchanged.

NO CLEAR TREND

If two key sessions feel flat, add one carb cup to the meal before and/or after them. For sessions over 60 minutes, review during-session fuel.

RECOVERY / HEALTH FLAG

Persistent fatigue, recurrent illness/injury, menstrual disruption, low libido or unintentional weight loss can signal low energy availability. Add food and seek qualified help. [8]

Adjustment rules

- Add fuel to hard sessions before adding more caffeine.
- Keep rest-day protein; only carbohydrate portions move with demand.
- If unwanted weight gain occurs without performance benefit, remove one carb cup or fat thumb on rest/easy days only.
- Never cut the fuel that protects the quality of the key session first.

Never respond to one meal, one weigh-in or one poor workout. Look for a repeated pattern.

Hold each adjustment for another 14 days unless health, hunger or recovery makes it clearly unsuitable.

WHEN THE PLAN FEELS DIFFICULT

Solve the problem beneath the problem.

Most stalls are not caused by a broken metabolism. They come from invisible extras, changing portions, missed meals, under-fuelling training, low sleep or an unrealistic weekly routine.

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	NEXT ACTION
Intervals fade	Too little pre-session carbohydrate; poor pacing	Add one easy carb portion 30-60 minutes before and review pace.
Ravenous after long work	Under-fuelled during session	Use 30-60 g carb/hour for >60 minutes and eat recovery meal promptly.
Stomach upset	Too much fat/fibre; new products; fast intake	Use simpler carbs, smaller frequent doses and practise in training.
Strength stalls	Endurance fatigue; low total food; poor sequencing	Separate hard sessions when possible and add carbs around lifting.

WHEN TO GET PERSONALISED HELP

Speak with a GP and/or registered dietitian before major nutrition changes if you are under 18, pregnant or breastfeeding, have kidney disease, diabetes treated with medication, gastrointestinal disease, a history of an eating disorder, unexplained weight change, or symptoms of under-fuelling. Persistent fatigue, repeated injury or illness, menstrual disruption, low libido, dizziness and a worsening relationship with food deserve attention.

This booklet is education, not diagnosis, treatment or a substitute for individual medical care.

PRINT OR SCREENSHOT THIS PAGE

A seven-day consistency check.

Tick the process, not perfection. A strong week is usually 85% consistent, not 100% controlled.

HABIT	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Three main meals	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Protein at every meal	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Day-type carb portions	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Pre-session fuel planned	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
During fuel for >60 min	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Recovery meal completed	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

Sunday review

Wins I can repeat: _____

The meal or situation that needs a plan: _____

My relevant outcome trend: _____

One action for next week: _____

If adherence was below 85%, improve the routine before changing portions.

EVIDENCE AND SCOPE

References and further reading

The evidence supports protein distribution, progressive training, balanced food patterns and training-specific carbohydrate. The hand-portion system is a practical coaching framework for consistent decisions; it is not a clinical prescription.

[1] Jager R et al. International Society of Sports Nutrition position stand: protein and exercise. JISSN, 2017.

[2] Morton RW et al. Protein supplementation and resistance-training adaptations: systematic review and meta-analysis. Br J Sports Med, 2018.

[3] Thomas DT, Erdman KA, Burke LM. Position of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Dietitians of Canada and ACSM: Nutrition and Athletic Performance. 2016.

[4] NHS. The Eatwell Guide: balanced food groups and higher-fibre carbohydrate choices. NHS guidance.

[5] NHS. How to get more fibre into your diet: UK adult target of 30 g daily. NHS guidance.

[6] NHS. Physical activity guidelines for adults aged 19 to 64. NHS guidance.

[7] Jeukendrup AE. A step towards personalized sports nutrition: carbohydrate intake during exercise. Sports Med, 2014.

[8] Mountjoy M et al. 2023 IOC consensus statement on Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport (REDs). Br J Sports Med, 2023.

Start with the next meal.

You do not need perfect data. You need a repeatable system, honest feedback and enough time for the trend to emerge.