What are macros?

Protein, carbs and fat. That is all macros are.

Three things you eat

Every food is a mix of protein, carbohydrate and fat. These are macros. Almost all your calories come from them.

What each one does

- **Protein** builds muscle and keeps you full. Meat, fish, eggs, dairy, beans, tofu.
- **Carbohydrate** is fuel. Rice, potatoes, oats, bread, fruit.
- **Fat** helps make hormones and absorb vitamins. Oils, nuts, eggs, oily fish.

None of them is bad. Eating more calories than you burn, for a long time, is what adds fat.

Fat is the dense one

A gram of fat has 9 calories. A gram of protein or carbohydrate has 4. That is why oil, butter and nuts add up fast.

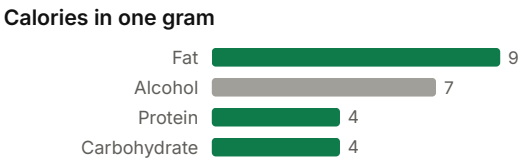


Figure 1: Fat has more than twice the calories *Alcohol is not a macro, but its calories count too. Source: US Institute of Medicine.*

A sensible split

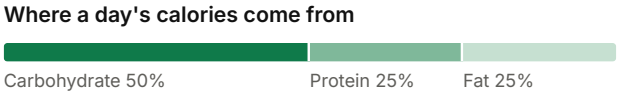


Figure 2: A balanced starting point *Inside the advised ranges: carbs 45–65%, protein 10–35%, fat 20–35%. Source: US Institute of Medicine.*

Set protein first. Keep fat moderate. Fill the rest with carbs.

Don’t forget fibre

Fibre comes with carbs from plants: oats, beans, wholegrain bread, fruit and veg. The World Health Organization says aim for at least 25 g a day.

Do you have to count?

Count for a few weeks. You will learn what a portion looks like. Then you can stop. Food targets works out your numbers.

SOURCES

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5. World Health Organization (2023). Carbohydrate intake for adults and children: WHO guideline. World Health Organization.

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