

The Macronutrients

Carbohydrates – Different Sides to the Same Coin.



Ah yes...we love our carbs. Any why not? Nothing elicits a warm, fuzzy feeling like a hot cinnamon bun on a cold winter's day. But we are a nation addicted to carbs, and it's adding to our weight struggles, soaring diabetes rates, insulin resistance, overly-acidic bodies and a host of other undesirables.

But not all carbs are created equal. In fact, *the right kinds of carbs* are of extreme importance. They supply energy to body, and they are the **only** source of energy to the brain and red blood cells. But they must be understood in their differences, and treated with respect. A 'holding of the reins' is necessary here.

If you're looking to optimize all three of our goals – to *look, feel and perform* better, close attention to carbs is extremely important. But make sure *you're using them* to your advantage, instead of *them using you!*

Know the difference between 'real' and 'other' carbs

First, if you're looking to lose weight, increase your **real, live** carbs (those found in nature, like fruits and veggies) and minimize or eliminate **other** carbs (man-made, refined ones - breads, pasta, crackers, cookies, chips etc...you know the drill!). And combine your carbs with protein which will help lessen the sugar value of the carbs.

Second: If you must indulge in these 'other' carbs, do so before 3 pm. The reason for this is simple - if you eat other carbs in the evening, your body's metabolic processes are winding down for the day, so you can't digest these starchy carbs efficiently. So they end up being only partially digested, and are carried over into the next day. Before you know it, things starts piling up! Literally!



Third, eat a little bit of **real, live** carbs with every meal (veggies, fruit, raw or lightly steamed). They clean out the cells, energize your body, provide much-needed antioxidant protection, lower blood sugars, remove toxins and reduce cravings.

Fourth: while fruit is a healthy carb, if you have weight issues, limit your fruit intake to one piece a day, and make it a low sugar choice like an apple, pear or berries).

Fifth: If you like your juice, milk, sodas or alcohol, *and* you have weight issues you now know why you can't get rid of the excess weight. Your body converts all carbs into sugars for fuel. (Remember, the other word for 'carbs' is 'sugar'). And the simpler the sugars (liquid form is the simplest), the faster it gets absorbed and stored as excess calories. So for optimum weight, immediately replace all sodas, juice, milk, and those designer coffees with water. Pretty simple.

‘Get out of jail’ card: There’s an exception to the rule when it comes to eating **‘other’** carbs and here it is - if you trained that day, you get to eat a serving of ‘other’ carbs after your training session. It’s like your own ‘get out of jail’ wild card. You’ve earned it, and your body is well-equipped to burn it off after training.

The ‘real’ (live) carbs – complex carbs

Vegetables and fruits are the preferred choice for several reasons:



- **They are whole, ‘live’ foods** as nature intended
- They are full of antioxidants, vitamins, minerals and enzymes
- They contain soluble and insoluble fibre (good for digestion, elimination, removes toxins)
- Eat a ‘rainbow’ of different coloured fruits and veggies.
- Eat some raw veggies at every meal, to clean the cells and rev up the metabolism.
- **Eat 5-10 servings of fruits and veggies** each day (a ‘serving’ is ½ cup).

Grains are another valuable complex carb source, but eat them judiciously!

- Eat whole grains (spelt, kamut, quinoa, tabouli)
- They contain soluble and insoluble fibre (good for digestion, elimination, removes toxins)
- Minimize or eliminate bread (yes, there is life after sandwiches!)
- **Eat 2-4 servings a day** (a serving is ½ cup rice, ½ potato).
- If you’re trying to lose weight, **cut out all grains.**

The ‘other’ (man-made) carbs – simple carbs

- **Sucrose** (white sugar)
- **Fructose** (Fruit sugar) – ie fruit juice
- **Lactose** (milk sugar) – ie milk
- **Man-made, refined products** – ie bread, chips, crackers, cookies, fast foods, etc



We should try to minimize these carbs. Why? Because they absorb quickly, and cause the body to release insulin in greater-than-necessary quantities. When this happens, it signals to the body to store more fat and use muscle for fuel, definitely what you don’t want (remember, our metabolism is in our muscles! Lose the muscle and you lower your metabolism!) They can also lead to.....

- hypoglycemia
- peaks and valleys, low energy, anxiety, mood swings
- stored fat today and in the future – weight gain!
- future onset diabetes

What is the GI Index?

The GI index refers to the glycemic index which measures the sugar value of a food and its impact on our body's blood sugar levels. In our carb-heavy world, we eat way too many high glycemic foods (heavy, starchy, simple sugars) which adds to weight gain, poor energy, lack of motivation, emotional disturbances, an overly-acidic body, future-onset diabetes and more.

The key is to eat lower on the GI table. Try to keep the majority of your foods below 75 value.

If you're going to indulge in a high glycemic food, the way to bring down its value is combine it with *fibre* and *protein*. That's why orange juice has a much higher glycemic value than the actual orange – it's been stripped of its sugar-lowering fiber. Or why if you want to eat a chocolate bar, eat it after a meal, versus eating it alone – the fibre and protein in a meal will soak up the excess sugar in the bar, giving it a lower GI value, versus eating it alone where the sugar value acts like a run-away race horse in your system.

Eat low (in the index) and you'll stay low (in bodyweight)!

Breads

Whole grain rye	42
Coarse barley	57
Pumpernickel rye	51
Coarse wheat	69
Whole meal rye	89
Whole meal barley	93
Coarse oat	93
Rye crisp	95
Whole wheat	69
Pita bread, whole wheat	57
Dark rye, Black bread	76

Cereal Grains

Buckwheat pancakes	45
Oatmeal (long cooking)	49
Oat bran	85
Muesli	56
Millet	103
Buckwheat	78
Couscous	66
Bulgur	48
Wheat kernels	63
Rye kernels	47
Pearled barley	25
Cornmeal, whole grain	68

Rice & Pasta

Whole wheat spaghetti	37
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Brown rice	50
Wild rice	55

Fruit

Bananas	55
Raisins	64
Dried fruit	65-70
Apples	36
Oranges	40
Cherries	23
Plums	25
Grapefruit	26
Peaches	29
Pears	38
Grapes	45
Mangos	55
Dates	103
Papaya	58
Cantaloupe	65

Beans, Peas & Legumes

Peanuts	15
Black-eyed peas	33
Soybeans	15
Lima beans	36
Navy beans	40
Broad beans	75
Chickpeas (canned)	60
Chickpeas (dried)	47

Kidney beans (dried)	30
Kidney beans (canned)	74
Frozen peas	51
Green lentils (canned)	74
Green lentils (dried)	25
Pinto beans	62

Vegetables

Parsnips	98
Carrots	90
White potatoes	82
Sweet potatoes	48
Yams	45
Beets	64
Mashed potatoes	98
Baked russet potato	116

Dairy Products

Nonfat yogurt, plain	15
Whole milk	27
Cheese (raw)	30

Sugars

Honey	58
Fructose	20
Lactose	57
Sucrose	75
Glucose	100
Maltose	105



Helpful Hint

If you don't have access to a GI table, here's a self-administered test you can use. Next time you are wondering about a carb's sugar content, *just think about how the carb feels in your mouth*. Is it overly *sweet* (tropical fruits, fruit juices) or *starchy* and *heavy* in your mouth (bananas, potatoes, beans, corn), then it's likely a high glycemic carb, the kind you want to keep to a minimum. So trade up the pineapple for an apple or a pear, and the banana for some berries. Got it?

No No-Carb Diets!

You need carbs to burn fat. If you cut the carbs too much, your body will be forced to burn precious muscle. And we don't want that! (Remember, your metabolism is in your muscles!). Also, if you cut carbs too drastically, it will also cause your body to hoard the fat, so when you do resume regular eating, you will gain back more weight than when you started! (Can anyone say *Atkins Diet?*).

As long as you're eating lots of veggies and one to two servings of fruit a day, you are feeding your body healthy carbs that will help you to burn fat on a regular basis. So cut out the bread, crackers, and pastas, and know you're on your way to a healthy metabolism, while at the same time breaking free of that carb addiction, the one that keeps you overweight and lethargic!

A Note about Cutting Down on Man-Made Carbs: If you've been eating a regular diet of breads, pastas, crackers etc., it is often advisable to first cut your refined products consumption in half, rather than cut them out all at once. For some people, cutting them out all at once may be too difficult, too much of a shock on the body, and there may be a too-drastic drop in energy. Only you can decide, as every body is different.

Carbohydrates - Top 10 Tips



Summary

- 1) The best kinds of carbs are **‘real, live’** carbs like fruits and vegetables.
- 2) For weight loss, do not consume **‘other’** carbs (man-made carbs like breads, pastas, crackers, cookies, chips) after 3:00 pm.
- 3) The only exception is consuming **‘other’** carbs after training. During this time, your body is best able to burn them off.
- 4) When using the glycemic index, eat the majority of your foods under 75.
- 5) To level out the high glycemic (sugar) value of a carb, combine it with protein.
- 6) If trying to lose weight, limit fruits to 1-2 servings of low glycemic fruits like apples, pears and berries (no tropical fruits).
- 7) For optimum weight loss, replace all juice, milk and sodas with plain water.
- 8) If you want to lose weight, minimize or cut out white potatoes, beans, rice and all grains.
- 9) For optimum health, ensure you’re eating some raw veggies at every meal.
- 10) If you cut carbs completely, you will see rapid weight loss for a time, but this is water loss. It will cause you to gain weight more easily in the long-run.

Remember, make carbs about 40-50% of your total caloric intake!.