

# Calories and YOU!

## Let's Get Specific!

People often discount counting calories. And while I agree that counting calories alone doesn't ensure success, it's the most important factor of all, and is a skill you must develop if you want to get lean and stay lean!

Caloric needs vary because people's genetics, age, activity, lifestyle, pH levels and metabolism vary. And boy, can those mathematical equations get confusing! But you still need to know where you're at.

### Let's look at the average caloric needs:

For maintaining weight (TDEE): Men (average): 2700 – 2900    Women (average): 1800-2100

### For losing weight:

Men (average): 2200 – 2700    Women (average): 1200-1800

For gaining weight:

Men (average): 3200 – 4000+    Women (average): 2100 – 2500+



## How to Determine How Many Calories You Need

**1) (Simple method) - Do the Wrist Test:** It's quick and easy! It's for average movers, what the average person training 3 days a week sits at. Grab your wrist with your thumb and middle finger:

- if they overlap, you're small boned and you require less calories: 1400-1600
- If they touch, you're medium boned and you require 1500-1700 calories.
- If they don't touch, you're large boned and you require 1600-1800 calories.

**2) The Harris-Benedict Formula:** (based on total body weight and when you don't know your body fat percentage.

This formula uses the factors of height, weight, sex and age to determine your BMR (basal metabolic rate, the lowest no. of calories to keep you alive, and your TDEE what your daily day looks like).

**Women: to find your BMR** =  $655 + (9.6 \times \text{wt in kg}) + (1.8 \times \text{ht in cm}) - (4.7 \times \text{age})$

1 inch = 2.54 cm      1 kg = 2.2 lbs

Once you know your BMR, you can find your TDEE – total daily energy expenditure, how much you need to eat by multiplying your BMR by your level of activity.

### **Activity factor:**

sedentary (little or no exercise, desk job) = BMR x 1.2

lightly active (light exercise 1-3 days/wk) = BMR x 1.375

mod. active (mod. exercise 3-5 days/wk) = BMR x 1.55

very active (hard exercise 6-7 days/wk) = BMR x 1.725 (elite athletes/pre-contest training)

extremely active (hard daily exercise 7 days) = BMR x 1.9

**Example:** I am female, 50 years old, 5' 2 ½" (160 cm) and I weight 120 lbs (54.43 kg).

**My BMR** is  $655 + 522.53 + 288 - 235 = \mathbf{1230 \text{ calories}}$ , based on my sex, weight, age and height.

**My TDEE:** I'm *moderately active* so my caloric needs -  $1230 \times 1.55 = \mathbf{1906.50 \text{ calories per day based on my activity level.}}$

**3) Katch McArdle Formula** (based on lean body weight) is the most succinct but you need to know your fat%. The same formula applies for men and women (unlike others).

BMR formula for men and women is the same (unlike Harris Benedict) =  $370 + (21.6 \times \text{your lean mass in kg})$

**Example:** I am female, weigh 120 lbs and my body fat is 19%. So...I have 22.80 lbs fat and 97.20 lbs lean muscle ( $120 - 22.80 = 97.2$ ) Converted into kilograms it is... ( $97.2 \div 2.2 = 44.18$  kg).

**Formula:** My BMR =  $370 + (21.6 \times 44.18) = 1324$  (what my body burns at rest) ...now factor in activity level.

**My activity level is *moderately active* so my TDEE =  $1.55 \times 1336 = 2070$  calories** per day based on my activity level.

**There's not much difference based on these 2 formulas**, and knowing my body after years of caloric attention and training, I can say that both of these formulas are fairly close in numbers...the **Katch McArdle** formula is almost bang on.

### **How Many Calories Do I Need to reach my Ideal Weight?**

$655 + (4.4 \times \text{your weight goals in lbs}) + (4.6 \times \text{inches in height}) - 4.7 \times \text{age}$ .

X 1.2 (sedentary)

X 1.3 (active)

**Me:** Say I'm 130 lbs, want to weight 116....  $655 + (510.4) + (285.2) - 235 = 1234 \times 1.3 = 1604$  calories/day

### **How to Cut Calories to Lose Weight Effectively!**

So, now that You Know Your Daily Maintenance Level (BMR) and How Many Calories You Need to Eat based on Your Activity Level (TDEE) ....you need to now cut your calories. Unfortunately most women go overboard...

You can't just zoom down to your new caloric number because it's likely too drastic a cut. For example, most women carrying extra weight eat over 2000 calories a day, and with some diet plans, they usually cut down to 1200 calories – this is a loss of almost 50% of your calories. Yes, you'll definitely lose weight, for awhile anyway, then you'll stall, and in a panic, either up your training time (putting friends, family and life on hold) or you'll cut your calories even more! But this drastic lowering of calories causes your metabolism to halt and you start dropping the very thing we don't want – precious metabolism-boosting and shapely muscle!

**Don't cut your Calories too much or too quickly!** The body doesn't like to cut its calories drastically, so reduce your calories by 20-30% only. Do that for a few weeks, then drop by another 10% for each week after that until you reach your proper level, and watch those pounds melt away. Faster is not better in calorie-cutting!

**Example:** If you're eating 2200 calories and the formula has you at 1600 calories then drop by 20% for a few weeks (about 400 calories), down to 1800. Let your body adjust, stay there for 2-4 weeks and if you stall, drop by another 10% (200 calories) for a total of 1600 calories. Again, watch and wait and if it stalls, you can drop by another 10% for a total drop of 40% and a total caloric intake of 1400.

**Cut the carbs – your first line of defence.** Carbs are usually the weight issue (followed by trans fats) so when you cut carbs (bread, cereal, pasta, muffins, bagels) don't cut them out totally or you'll send your body into shock and it will hold onto the weight. So for the first few weeks, just cut them *in half, and in half again (if you still need to cut them...you should only be eating 1 serving of bread a day, if any – 2 slices bread or 1 bagel or 1cup pasta*. I always say there is life after sandwiches!

**Don't dip below 1000-1200 calories.** If your weight loss stalls gain, we can use other methods to wake it up including carb cycling, tapering and zig zagging, We look at this in detail in the Advanced 12-Week Challenge where it's necessary to get specific, for long-term success! For now, just shake up your calorie totals...don't stay at the same calorie count for more than three days in a row!