

## Session Four: Meal Management Strategies

Skip breakfast? Eat your heaviest meals at night? You're only setting yourself up for failure. In order to achieve your goals you must develop and practice meal management strategies.

### Plan To Succeed

Having a plan is essential if you are truly serious about creating a positive physical change. Obviously it takes a good amount of planning, preparation, and persistence to get into the habit of eating this supportively and this frequently. You must prepare your food well ahead of time. Initially it will be a bit tedious, but once you get into the habit you'll see some amazing changes.

Plus, when meals are balanced and timed appropriately, you can avoid energy swings and non-productive food choices. Modern lifestyles in our fast-paced world have made it difficult to prepare a food plan for a week, much less a day.

### TIMING

**BREAKFAST** - The most important meal of the day. If you are someone who thinks skipping breakfast will help you lose weight, think again! Studies have shown that those who skip breakfast are 4 ½ more likely to be obese than those who don't.

The average 8 hours of sleep burns about 450 calories, therefore your body needs to refuel within 60 to 90 minutes of waking. Eating breakfast is like adding kindling to the fire of your metabolism.

If you skip breakfast, your metabolism slows down and your blood sugar drops. As a result, you become hungry, have less energy and your body will be more likely to store fat. You are just setting yourself up to impulsively snack in the morning - often on high-fat sweets - or to make up for those lost calories by eating extra servings or larger portions later in the day.

Need more proof? A recent study conducted by the National Weight Control Registry at the University of Colorado found that those who had lost and maintained at least 30 pounds for at least one year ate breakfast every single morning.

### Eat Every Two to Three Hours.

Eating once or twice a day is a sure fire way to lose muscle and lower your metabolism. As you already know, less muscle mass and a lower metabolism is not the way to get to your goal. To control your appetite, regulate your blood sugar level and build lean muscle mass, you must eat every 2 – 3 hours.

Understanding how your body's blood sugar levels rise and fall explains why you need to continually refuel your body. Normally when you eat, your blood sugar, or glucose levels, will rise, level out, and then drop in about three hours. If you don't eat again within three hours or so, your blood sugar begins to drop even further. If your blood sugar drops too low, your body starts kicking in an emergency mechanism to make sure there's enough sugar around for brain, heart and other organ function. It does this by "catabolizing" lean muscle mass. In other words, your body starts eating your muscle for energy. This will only slow down your metabolism; you'll burn the muscle you're trying to build which sabotages your body's ability to burn fat.

Eating five to six meals a day also provides your body with the energy it needs to contend with daily activities and stress. Digesting food requires energy, which cranks up your metabolism. So the more frequently you eat, the more calories you burn. The bottom line is you'll maintain consistent energy levels and turn your body into an efficient, fat burning machine.

## **Pre and Post Workout Fuel**

If you're spending time exercising and putting energy into your workouts, it only makes sense that you eat the right foods before and after your workouts if you really want to reach your goals. Yet many people exercise on an empty stomach and fail to refuel after a workout.

### **Fuel your Workout**

By not eating, your body uses muscle protein for fuel because it doesn't have enough carbohydrates to burn. If you start your workout well-fueled, your body will burn a combination of the carbohydrates stored in your muscles and the fat stored in your fat cells.

Ask yourself how many times have you stopped exercising because you felt dizzy, shaky, or just plain tired? That's because you didn't have enough fuel to go the distance. Have a small meal composed of complex carbohydrates about an hour before your workout. A Prograde Lean meal replacement shake is a great alternative if you are pressed for time or do not like the heavy feeling of working out with a "meal" on your stomach. You will have the energy to workout with the intensity necessary to maximize the results of your workout and you'll avoid experiencing low blood sugar jitters and dizziness.

### **Replenish your Muscles**

It's important to make the right choices after you exercise. Otherwise, your hard work won't yield the results you want. After a workout, your body's energy levels are considerably depleted and must be replenished.

Eating a properly balanced meal 30 to 45 minutes after your workout does two important things. One, it helps your body to recover quickly, which is needed for muscle growth because of tissue repairs and for replacing lost glycogen in the muscles. And two, it helps muscle growth.

A liquid meal replacement shake such as Prograde Workout has the perfect balance of carbohydrate and proteins that can be quickly absorbed. Drinking your post workout meal is an excellent strategy. Not only are liquids easily digested and absorbed at a faster rate, but after exercising there is a window of about an hour when your ability to absorb nutrients is exceptionally high. After that time your uptake of nutrients returns to normal, so don't miss the opportunity to feed your hungry muscles.

When you help your body recover from the stress imposed upon it (exercise) by ingesting the proper nutrients at the right time, the quicker you will be able to affect body composition change (gain muscle, lose fat or both). You will automatically help your body "bounce back" and you will see results in less time.

Prograde has also added a "sports drink" to their lineup of healthy supplements. It's called Fusion and it has very little sugar, unlike most sports drinks on the market. It also has 24 grams of protein and all the amino acids you need to replenish your muscles.

## BALANCING

### **Give Your Body What it Needs.**

Eating a meal that is balanced to include carbohydrates, proteins and fats gives your body everything it needs to function efficiently and feel its best.

**CARBOHYDRATES:** The main fuel source. Carbohydrates supply your body with energy. Without an adequate supply of carbohydrates, your body goes into carbohydrate deprivation. This is called a state of ketosis (your body is using protein “muscle” as energy). This is not good to be in for very long because it will rob your body of muscle tissue in an effort to create energy.

Carbohydrates come in two forms: simple and complex. Simple carbohydrates are for quick energy like fruit juice. Complex carbohydrates are used for timed-released and lasting energy. Fruits, vegetables and whole grains are good sources of complex carbohydrates and make you feel more satisfied after a meal.

**PROTEIN:** The building blocks of muscle. Next to water, protein is the most abundant material in the human body. While consuming enough protein is essential for growth and development of the body, eating huge amounts will not build muscle. In order to build muscle, protein must be consumed with enough carbohydrate calories to provide the body with energy. It's important to eat the right amount and the right kind of protein to get the results you want. Choose lean cuts of meat, fish, low fat milk, nuts, beans or soy products.

**FATS:** The most misunderstood nutrient. Your body needs fats to manufacture hormones, for proper brain function and for healthy joint lubrication. In addition, fats release energy slowly, providing a necessary feeling of fullness by prolonging digestion. Eliminate fats completely from your diet and watch your energy/strength levels go down as well as your sex drive. Also your skin will get dry and your hair will lose its shine. Be sure to eat healthy, unsaturated fats. Look for them in nuts, fish oils and seeds. Ensure your daily fat intake by supplementing with high quality fish oil like Nordic Naturals Arctic Cod Liver Oil with Vitamin D. It is very common in western society today to consume foods that are low or even deficient in essential fatty acids. In fact, the typical diet contains too much Omega 6 fatty acids and not enough Omega 3. When there is too much Omega 6 fats this promotes the production of inflammation causing chemicals in the body. Fortunately, Nordic Naturals is a powerful source of the potent Omega 3 fatty acids your body craves for optimal health.

Each meal should contain a portion of each of the macronutrients. Eating the recommended balance creates a favorable environment that leads to muscle growth, fat loss and optimal health.

### **Go for Variety**

Eating a variety of foods is the untold secret of “happy” weight management. According to several studies, those who had difficulty adopting a nutrition plan ate the same foods week in and week out. Don't make the same mistake! Before you sit down to plan your menus and make out your grocery list, plan to include at least one new food a day or week.

When you think about variety, think about eating the full rainbow assortment of fresh fruits and vegetables on a regular basis. If you use this tactic, you won't become bored and tempted to choose high-calorie snacks and you'll improve your nutritional intake at the same time

### ***Bonus Fat Loss Rule:***

Go to bed early and get adequate rest every night. Two reasons: Lack of sleep increases the hormone *cortisol*, which is a hormone that stores fat and burns muscle (in other words, it does the exact opposite of what you are trying to accomplish), and decreases your testosterone levels (which need to be high in order to keep your fat burning/muscle gaining processes going at full speed). While sleep requirements vary, seven to nine hours of sleep is generally a good rule of thumb. The probability of succumbing to late night cravings increases exponentially for every late hour of the day that you stay awake.

## **PLANNING**

### **Supportive Menu Design**

Take the time to plan when, where and what you will eat. Set aside a few minutes each week to think about the meals you'll need for the upcoming week. Begin by creating an outline, based on your lifestyle, showing when you will eat each day (approximate times) and how you will fit a supportive meal into every 2–3 hours. Once you have a plan, create a variety of meal options. Keep it simple in the beginning. It should only take a few minutes to lay out 7 breakfast meals, 7 lunch meals, 7 dinner meals, and 2-3 additional snacks for each day. Then ask yourself two questions. (1) Which foods do I need from the store to make these meals? (2) What foods do I already have in the house? Make your shopping list from your answers to these questions.

### **Pack your Lunch**

One thing that totally kills a sound nutrition plan is going to work. Work, however, is not the culprit. The culprit is Lunch Hour. If you do not pre-pack your meal, lunch comes along and you will end up going to the nearest fast food joint and exposing yourself to temptation. Therefore, the best way to stay on your nutrition plan (and also avoid losing meals) is to pre-pack everything in such a way that when a meal time comes, it is relatively easy to have access to the food.

### **Cook in Bulk**

After a long, hard day at work, the last thing you probably feel like doing is going home to slave over a hot stove to cook a meal. Whether you cook for yourself or prepare meals for your family, you know how much time it takes to prepare and get food ready each and every day. And you already know that eating at restaurants may be convenient, but they're not an ideal option if you're trying to eat supportively, as meals out can be high in calories and have poor nutrient profiles.

The best way to reduce the tedious time spent preparing meals and still stick to a healthy eating plan is to pick one day per week to plan and prepare your meals and snacks for the entire week. That way, you don't need to worry about cooking every night. All it takes is a couple of hours of planning, and cooking can be one fewer thing that you'll have to worry about in your busy day.

Keep your meal strategy simple by cooking a lot of supportive, easy to cook food (i.e. chicken breast, steamed vegetables, brown rice, etc.) one day per week. Begin with your menu plan. Be easy on yourself and plan at least three of the five meals that use the same food as a main ingredient. Measure out and divide up your daily meals into Tupperware containers for individual storage.

All it takes is a little planning and a dedicated day once a week to get your plan on track. Cooking and preparing foods shouldn't be a time-consuming hassle. By planning your week and preparing your foods ahead of time, you won't have to rely on takeout food or make unhealthy choices at the end of your busy day.

## **Be Prepared with Portable Snacks**

How many times this past week have you eaten on the run? No place is safe either – the car, your desk, maybe even the shower! Your time is strapped, your body is tired, and you need food that's easy to grab 'n' go. It is very easy to forget eating healthy.

Make your own supportive snacks portable and easy for on-the-go eating. Prepared ahead of time, they can be tossed into a gym bag or purse.

- Celery sticks with peanut butter and raisins
- Whole rye crackers with peanut butter
- Low-fat cheese cubes
- Hardboiled eggs
- Low sugar Trail mix
- Vegetable sticks with a packet of low-fat dip
- Yogurt and granola –watch the sugar
- Box of raisins or other dried fruit but beware, a lot of dried fruits have a ton of added sugar
- Apples, bananas, strawberries and a handful of nuts
- Whole Rye crackers and low-fat string cheese
- Fruit smoothie in a thermos especially made with Prograde Lean Meal replacement powder
- Tuna and cottage cheese in mini-containers

## **Make a Shopping List**

Grocery stores are very tempting places. They are carefully designed by experts to persuade you to buy. So unless you know what you are looking for, you can easily end up buying a ton of items you didn't plan for. Before stepping foot in the grocery store, plan out what types and amounts of foods you will eat throughout the week by making a shopping list. This will help you to comply with your nutrition plan.

Never shop for groceries on an empty stomach. Hunger increases temptation. If you are hungry when you shop for food, you will be led astray.

Shop the outside aisles. Grocery stores are designed with the four basic food groups on and around the perimeter. If you stick to the outside aisles, you'll find produce, bakery, dairy and meat -- the most natural, unprocessed foods that are best for your health. Avoid going up and down the aisles where processed "convenience" foods dwell to tempt you away from healthy foods.

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## **Complete...**

1. Plan four portable, supportive snacks that you would eat during the week.

### **2. Take Inventory**

Your environment supports your habits. If there's nothing bad in the house to eat, chances are you're going to eat properly. Take a moment to survey what items you have in your pantry and refrigerator. What can be discarded? What can be replaced?

3. Why is it important to eat every 3 hours?

4. List 3 ways to minimize temptation the next time you go to the grocery store.