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PRESENTS...

Nutrition and Meal Planning Made Simple

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Intro from the Author

Fitness never came easy for me, like most people. I was overweight as a young kid and that translated into my early high school years. I became fed up with being overweight and decided to do something about it. I began educating myself at the young age of 14. I would read magazines, browse the web, and talked to as many health savvy people as I could.

I quickly found that most people had no idea about being healthy.

When I first began working out in 8th grade, my mom told me I shouldn't gain muscle because it eventually would turn to fat. A friend's parent told me I had a "good base" to turn all of the fat I had into muscle. This was just the tip of the iceberg of ridiculous statements that I encountered from people that I perceived as healthy. I quickly began to understand that I needed to further my education in health and wellness, so I decided to go to Rowan University to study health and exercise science.

Having graduated college in 2006, I am now a personal trainer, football coach, and a health and physical education teacher for grades 9-12. I enjoy teaching the FACTS about health and wellness to my students. I try to bring a practical element to all of my classes.

Of course everyone has heard the generic rhetoric of "most" health and physical education classes. Statements like "eat your vegetables" and "an apple a day keeps the doctor away" seem to stick in the mind of high school graduates, but how many can actually apply nutritional information they learned in high school to create a diet plan for themselves? From

my experiences, almost none can.

For me personally, I learned more about fitness and nutrition from my high school football coach than I did from 12 years of health and physical education classes. It was fortunate for me that I someone in my life was so knowledgeable but most people just are not that lucky. Thanks Coach Spit!

Experiencing and seeing the lack of application in schools has driven me to ensure that by the time my students graduate, they can implement all of the things I teach into their lives. I make sure we cover exercise progression, all of the major muscles of the body and how they work, all of the multi-joint movements of the body, nutritional information, and how stress affects the body. We then apply this information by constructing workout and diet plans, developing exercise progression presentations, creating stress management guides, and diet analysis skills.

I feel that application of education is the key to achieving and maintaining fitness goals. That is why I created ShapingYourself.com. I want to give everyone access to credible information from a professional in the field of health and exercise science. I encourage teachers to use all of this information in the class room and to become an interactive member of the [Shaping Yourself Nation](http://ShapingYourselfNation.com) community.

If you have been contemplating changing your life to a healthy and more active one, I urge you to take that path. If I can assist you in any specific way to please do not hesitate to contact me via the social media links on the footer of this eBook. Shaping yourself starts now!

Thank you for your time and consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justin Glenn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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Nutrition and Meal Planning Made Simple

Most of the questions I receive are about diet and nutrition. Many nutritionists and fitness professionals convey a message that nutrition is a crazy, intricate science. They make it seem so in depth that it discourages people from trying to eat healthy before they even start. In reality, managing your diet and constructing healthy meals is quiet simple to do. With this eBook you will understand how to meal plan, how to construct meals, and how to apply all of the information to your life. It's time to start shaping yourself!

What are Calories?

Calories are measurable units of energy stored in food. Three macro-nutrients contribute to caloric intake: fats, protein, and carbohydrates.

Fats: Fats play an essential role in the body and each gram of fat is equivalent to 9 calories. In reference to diet and exercise, fats are considered stored

long-term energy.

Protein: Each gram of protein is equivalent to 4 calories. Protein is considered to be the “building block” of the body. It helps to rebuild and repair tissue and can only be stored in the body as muscle. Excess protein that is consumed is converted and stored as fat or glycogen or is released from the body in the form of waste.

Carbohydrates: Carbohydrates, like protein, are equivalent to 4 calories per gram. Carbohydrates are stored in the body as glycogen and used as the body’s immediate energy source.

Meal Breakdown

For this plan we are going to avoid the tedious task of counting calories.

Calorie counting is long and boring and often seems to be troublesome and cumbersome to most people. Don't get me wrong, counting calories is something that you can use to assist you in something like competition body building for example, but for the average person it just overwhelms them and discourages them from eating healthy long term.

That's not to say you shouldn't read nutritional labels. You should become familiar with the contents of the foods you are consuming, but don't go crazy over calorie counting. Instead, your diet will be regulated by the types of foods eat and portion control.

There are three very important questions to ask yourself when constructing a meal.

What will be my protein source?: When selecting a source for protein, you want to choose a meat that is lean and low in fat. Some good choices here include: Chicken, lean cuts of pork, fish, turkey, and lean cuts of beef.

It is best to always choose fresh, natural protein sources. Look at the ingredient. If your ingredients list only says "Turkey" then that is natural. If it lists 10 other food items and some you cannot even pronounce, stay away from it.

When choosing a portion size, most people will ideally consume approximately the size of a hockey puck (20-30 gs of protein). If your protein needs are a bit higher (30-50 gs) adjust the portion size accordingly.

Some alternative sources of protein would be soy, Greek yogurt, cottage cheese, eggs and legumes (beans).

What will be my source of carbohydrates?: When selecting a carbohydrate source it is usually best to choose starches and whole grains. These would include whole grain pastas, breads, and rice. Some people have problems digesting these types of foods. If you have this issue, you can also consume foods like sweet potatoes and white potatoes. These foods have high levels of carbohydrates and fiber so they are a great alternative. Sweet potatoes are a personal favorite of mine. You can check out how I cook them in the microwave by clicking [HERE](#). It is very simple and time efficient.

For most people, your serving size of carbohydrates will be approximately 1-2 handfuls. Again, if your carbohydrate needs are more demanding increase them accordingly.

What will be my vegetable?: The best choice for a vegetable would be a dark, leafy green vegetables like spinach, romaine lettuce, kale, broccoli, collard and mustard greens . These vegetables are packed with vitamins and

minerals. They also are a great source of antioxidants. Some other great choices for the vegetable category would include peppers, lima beans, asparagus, beans, tomatoes, cauliflower, and brussels sprouts. In terms of quantity, the vegetable section should be your biggest serving of any given meal.

Fruits and Dairy: These foods are in their own section for a few reasons. Both of these foods can be high in sugar and some dairy products can be high in fat. You want to eat dairy products that have high fat content sparingly. Low fat cheeses, milks and yogurts are available as good, lean dairy choices. Fruits are great for breakfast and both pre and post workout.

The reason fruits are great for breakfast is because your body has just been in a fasting state for 6-8 hours. By consuming these quick absorbing carbohydrates, your body quickly gets out of that fasting state and your metabolism picks back up again. Pre and post workout are also ideal times to consume fruits because your body will be utilizing the natural sugars in these foods for both energy and to repair the body. So to make it clear I am not saying to avoid fruits but be smart about it. The calories and sugar can add up.

The Rules

Drink water!: ALL DAY! The body is made up of over 65% water and all of the body's processes need water. This includes the process of converting stored body fat into energy! Without the proper amount of water in your system the body becomes inefficient.

An added benefit to being hydrated is that and you will feel less hungry during the day. In fact, many people mistake thirst for hunger. There are so many benefits to drinking water that an entire eBook could be written just on this topic. Bottom line, DRINK WATER!

Eat every 3-4 hours: It has been the popular belief that increased meal frequency can increase your metabolism but this has been proven to be false. But, that does not mean that an increased meal frequency isn't beneficial.

Here is why you should eat smaller, more frequent meals.

- *You never become extremely hungry:* When people go long periods of time without food they tend to get extremely hungry. When people feel extreme hunger they tend to eat more food in a sitting and have a higher

tendency to binge eat. Eating more frequently alleviates this problem.

- *Regulates Insulin Levels:* When you go long periods without eating you become lethargic and your insulin levels drop significantly. This is not a good feeling. Eating more frequently alleviates this spiking and dropping of insulin.
- *Increased Absorption and Assimilation:* Depending on your body weight and exercise intensity, your caloric needs will vary. The body absorbs and assimilates best in moderate quantities. For example, the body can only absorb and assimilate between 30-50 grams of protein efficiently, so breaking these doses of protein into smaller portions allows for better utilization. This also applies to your micronutrients (vitamins and minerals)

Here is an example of an eating schedule that you could (but don't have to) follow.

7:00 am: Breakfast

10:00 am: Snack

1:00 pm: Lunch

4:00 pm: Snack

7:00 pm: Dinner

10:00 pm: Snack

Prepare food with health in mind: This means do not fry foods or add a lot of excess fat in preparation. Also, try to avoid cooking vegetables if you can. Eating your vegetables raw and cooking foods in healthful ways such as baking, broiling, grilling or sautéing will preserve the nutritional value of the food items you are eating.

Add spices not sauces: The foods you consume will have natural fats and sugars in them. Adding extra fats and sugars through sauces and dressings is a recipe for disaster. (notice the pun!) Instead, learn how to use spices to your

advantage.

Spices add tons of flavor to food while adding little to no calories. Some spices also have great nutritional and antioxidant properties. If you do decide to add dressings and sauces, make sure you are aware of what you are adding. Choose dressings like balsamic vinaigrette, light Italian, and other oil based dressings. Avoid sugary or creamy dressings and sauces because of their high fat content.

Do not add sugars: The carbohydrates and natural sugars in the fruits you consume will give you the energy you need. Adding extra sugars will simply increase your calorie intake in a way that is not beneficial and will result in the storage of fat.

Avoid processed foods and fast food: Processed foods are stripped of both their natural form and nutrients. Most processed foods are high in sodium and preservatives. You can check if a food is highly processed by looking at the ingredients list. If you see a list of chemicals and words you can barely pronounce, don't eat it. Instead of eating these processed foods eat fresh, natural foods as often as possible.

Application

To apply this information we need to take into consideration one more thing: your schedule. Everyone's daily schedule is different. You need to adjust your schedule and diet to your lifestyle. This is sometimes easier said than done, but here are some application ideas that will assist you in your journey.

How to Adjust Meal Frequency: Eating every 3-4 hours is ideal, but if this is not practical for you apply this as best as possible. It is not set in stone that you **MUST** eat every three hours. Don't lose your head over this. Simply adjust accordingly and eat when you can.

Prepare foods before hand: Preparing foods in bulk when you have free time and is a great way to make sure you have healthy foods readily available. This cuts down on preparation time when you are busy and allows you to always have a quick snack or meal available when time is not plentiful.

Invest in a cooler and tupperware: These two things are absolutely necessary for a healthy diet. A cooler helps make your prepared foods mobile so you can take them with you where ever you go. How convenient!

Schedule meals around your workout: You always want to consume a snack or meal approximately an hour or two before your work out. Also, you want to consume a high protein snack along with simple sugars immediately following your work out.

A good example of a post workout meal would be a glass of milk with an apple. For individuals with increased protein needs, a better option might be a full meal of chicken breast with rice and green beans. Protein shakes can also be a beneficial and convenient post workout meal.

Scheduling your meals and snacks around your workout will allow you to maximize your results. Remember, work smarter not harder!

Calorie Deficit

Once you have mastered meal planning and healthy eating, you can then get into understanding and applying calorie deficit. This is where things get a bit more complicated and math based. An individual can live a healthy, fit and trim lifestyle without ever having to count calories but if you are a fitness

model or someone who strives to lose that last bit of body fat this can surely apply to you.

A caloric deficit is when a person is burning more calories on a daily basis than they are consuming. The body compensates for this deficit by using stored fat as energy. This results in losing stored body fat.

Keep in mind this is a slow process.

You did not gain all this weight in three months so why would you lose the weight in only three months? In actuality, unless a person is obese, only 1-2 lbs of stored body fat can be burned as energy per week. A person can lose more weight than 1-2 lbs a week, but the weight they are losing will come from muscle and the loss of water and glycogen stores.

This is NOT ideal because losing muscle will slow your metabolism down to a crawl. This will make it much more difficult to lose weight over time and increase the chance of gaining weight in the future. This is actually the number one reason for Yo-Yo dieting.

Shows like the *Biggest Loser* give the public a false perception of weight loss. The individuals on that show are morbidly obese and are dropping their calorie intake extremely low while doing intense exercise. Because of this, they are losing dramatic amounts of weight on a weekly basis. When people see this they then think they can also lose 10-15 lbs a week but that is just simply not reality.

Most people are not nearly as obese as the people on that show. When someone is that obese their body can convert fat into energy more rapidly. Sadly, because of propaganda by the fitness industry and TV programs like this a lot of people believe that malnourishment is the solution to their weight problems. It also gives people a false perception that they can lose 10 pounds a week. This is not true.

I
n actuality, the ideal goal when losing body fat is to retain as much muscle as possible while being in a caloric deficit. This is done by dropping calorie intake gradually, not quickly. Never lose sight of this goal, be patient and consistent.

This is NOT an instant gratification type of experience. No weight loss journey is and if someone tells you it is they are lying.

Rant over...

With that said, a pound of stored body fat is equivalent to 3,500 calories. So if you reduce your caloric intake by 500 calories a day you will have a deficit of 3,500 calories at the end of the week.

(500 calories less per day X 7 days=3,500). This will result in losing one pound of stored body fat that week.

This deficit does not come from a reduction in calorie intake (food consumption) alone. A person should use exercise to burn extra calories to make this deficit greater.

Keep in mind that the biggest benefit from exercise (in terms of body composition) is increase of metabolism, not the actual calories you burn

during that workout. With a more efficient metabolism you burn more calories throughout the entire day! Burning more calories while doing nothing? Sign me up!

I cannot stress the importance of exercise enough. You **NEED** to exercise!

Exercise will only make your job easier. Check out my other eBooks and articles on exercise for more details on this. (<http://shapingyourself.com>)

Diet Analysis

Before you get into a calorie deficit plan, you have to know the how many calories you are currently consuming per day. This is where those sick individuals who love to count calories will thrive.

To do this, write down everything you put into your mouth and swallow. I mean **EVERYTHING**. If you grab a handful of chips **WRITE IT DOWN**, half a glass of juice **WRITE IT DOWN**, a handful of candy **WRITE IT DOWN!** Write down

EVERYTHING.

If you do not have the nutritional facts for the foods readily available you can check online for the macro nutrient count and calorie levels. Once this number is computed, you can substitute or eliminate food items from your diet. The changes you make have to reduce your total consumed calories by 500 a day.

This might sound like a daunting task but in reality it is quite simple. The best way to accomplish this is to keep the integrity of your diet as it stands and replace high calorie foods with a similar, lower calorie versions of that same food.

For example, egg whites have fewer calories than whole eggs. Using egg whites can shave calories off of your total caloric intake but you can still have your morning egg sandwich. Also, using leaner cuts of meat and choosing lower calorie dressings or spreads will help aid in calorie reduction. There are also low calorie breads and wrap options.

Conclusion

If a person understands how to construct a healthy meal it will set them up to live a long, healthy and happy life. Eating well will make a person more active, give them extra energy, increase the results of their workouts, and will flat out improve a person's quality of life. Maximize your gains through your diet and be the person you always dreamed of being. You deserve it.