

- BEGINNER'S GUIDE -

# FITNESS & EXERCISE



# INTRO- WHY FITNESS MATTERS

This is the start of the new you, your life's healthy and fulfilling chapter.

Personally, I think health & fitness are essential for many reasons.

Money can't buy good health and a good body, but if you take care of it, you'll have it forever; no one can take that away from you.

Working out will improve your mood, energy, strength, vitality, mentality, and overall health. Paired with proper nutrition, you'll feel like a whole new person.

Remember, you only get 1 body; it's important you take care of it.

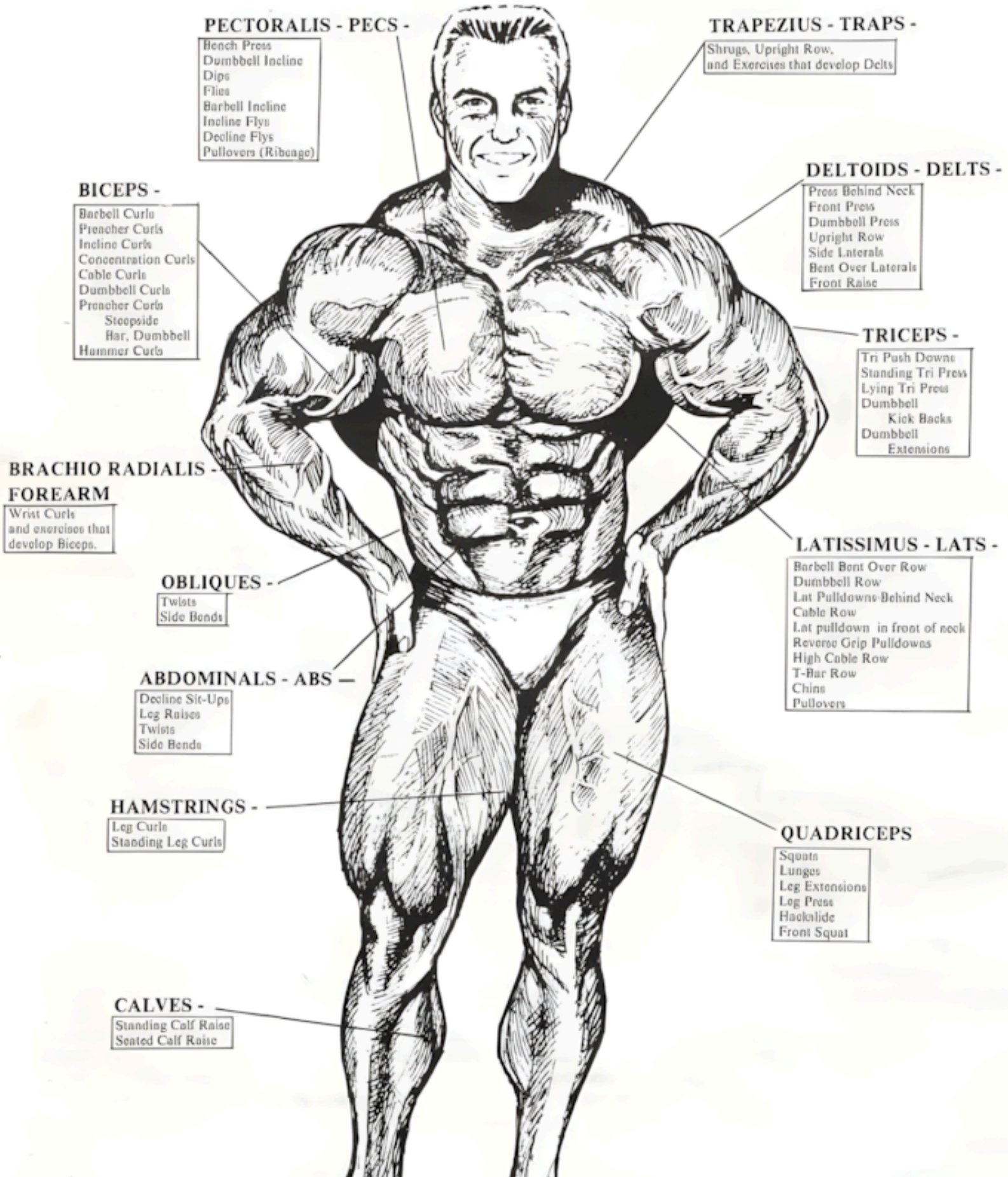
This book is aimed at beginners and will cover foundational concepts that will help you get started. Let's get into it.

# **BASICS OF EXERCISE**



# MUSCLE CHART

NAMES — BODYBUILDING TERMS — EXERCISES THAT DEVELOP



# MAIN MUSCLE GROUPS

There are over 600 muscles in the human body.  
Let's simplify it in terms of the gym:

- Biceps (short, long head)
- Triceps (long, lateral, medial head)
- Forearms
- Chest (upper, mid, lower chest)
- Shoulders (front, middle, rear delts)
- Lats
- Mid back (rhomboids)
- Traps
- Lower back
- Quads
- Hamstrings
- Glutes
- Calves
- Abs (upper abs, lower abs, obliques)

# MUSCLES GROUPED TOGETHER

Now let's group these together into common groups:

## **UPPER BODY**

chest  
shoulders  
arms

## **LOWER BODY**

legs  
glutes  
calves

## **CORE**

abs  
lower back

OR (for Push Pull Legs)

## **PUSH**

chest  
shoulders  
triceps

## **PULL**

back  
biceps

## **LEGS**

quads  
hamstrings  
glutes  
calves

# STRENGTH TRAINING

There are many different ways to train and exercise the muscles.

for example, a chest press can be done in all these different ways:

- pushup
- dumbbell press
- bench press
- machine press
- cable press
- band chest press

They all train the same muscle groups (chest & triceps), but each carries their benefits and drawbacks.

Despite the differences, it doesn't matter too much as long as you're doing it right.

Choose what you like and are comfortable with to start.

A great training program will use each of these according to your specific goals & needs in the gym.

Next page are the differences explained:

# EXERCISE EQUIPMENT

<b>type</b>	<b>notes</b>	<b>PROS</b>	<b>CONS</b>	<b>beginner friendly?</b>
<b>Bodyweight movements</b>	anything that doesn't use weights ex: pushups to bodyweight squats to situps	-great for beginners helps you activate the muscles properly and not cheat	-harder to progress -can't train well all body (like shoulders)	<b>YES</b>
<b>Dumbbell</b>	very useful and a great tool for all levels ex: db rows, db curls, db shoulder press	-easy to go up/down in weight -trains both sides and helps show muscle imbalances	-higher risk of injury -requires lots of dumbbells -easier to cheat on reps -uneven resistance during movement	<b>YES</b>
<b>Barbell</b>	similar to dumbbell but trains both sides at the same time ex: bench press, bar squats, deadlift	-awesome for building raw strength -can easily stack weight for strong movements -feels good to move heavy weight	-higher risk of injury -good form is crucial -more limited than other -easier to cheat on reps -uneven resistance during movement	<b>DEPENDS</b>
<b>Machines</b>	there exist lots of machines that let you perform specific movements	-can help practice good form and technique -you can go heavy with less risk of hurting yourself -easy to lower/add weight	-limited to single movements -can allow bad form -can only use what your gym has available	<b>YES</b>
<b>Cables</b>	cables are great for almost any body part as it lets you focus on the movement with accurate movement ex: cable curls	-lots of variety to train almost any body part -even resistance during the whole movement -plenty of attachment options	-can be complicated for beginners -tricky setups at times -not all cables follow the same weight grade	<b>DEPENDS</b>
<b>Bands</b>	bands come in varying weights just like dumbbells and can be used for a long list of movements	-great for warmups -awesome for small muscles -can be done almost anywhere -increasing resistance	- can't go heavy on bands -limited by exercise selection -bands lose tension over time	<b>YES</b>

# CARDIO

Let's be honest, cardio is not fun. Cardio isn't required for fat loss and muscle gain, but it can help tremendously to burn extra calories.

There's a very common myth that intense hours of cardio are the only way to shred body fat: this is not true.

The key to losing fat is being in a calorie deficit (we will cover this later), and strength training builds muscle, boosting your metabolism. If you enjoy cardio, feel free to add it, but focus on consistency with strength training for the best results.

My secret for cardio: do something you actually enjoy. here are some examples that don't suck

- boxing (my favourite)
- going for a run somewhere nice
- doing it with a buddy
- listening to a show/video while doing your cardio
- playing sports
- biking

# WARMUP

Warmups are important and can prevent strains amongst even worse injuries. It's important to warm up. Avoid the mistake of having a warmup that's too long and actually hinders your workout.

Warmups should be short and to the point.

A proper warmup can even be the doing small mobility movements or active stretches followed by a very light warmup weight of the exercises you are about to perform.

Say you're about to bench, move your shoulders around using bands or no weight, swing your arms around and start with the bar for about 10 reps, followed by 1-2 sets of lightweight to avoid hurting an otherwise 'cold' shoulder and rotator cuff.

# TRAINING 101



# BASICS OF TRAINING

There are many exercises and an endless number of training programs but the best program is one that is made for you. Every program is unique and does not follow a strict guideline.

- try to have either a 7-day week planned OR a rotation of 3-4 days set
  - ex: Monday: chest shoulders, Tuesday: back arms, ...
  - ex: PUSH, PULL, LEGS rest, repeat
- the general rule of thumb is to hit each body part x2 a week OR once really hard
- workouts should be around 30 mins-2 hours depending on the frequency and plan
- have a rest day x2-3 a week OR every 2-3 days
- you should do cardio x2-7 days a week
- you should stick to a plan from 4-16 weeks
  - usually, workouts are blocked of 4 weeks
- change is good in workouts over time, but don't do different stuff every week
  - you won't see as much progress if you're always changing workouts

# BASICS OF TRAINING

Building a proper program can be hard, which is why seeking out the help of a personal trainer can be a game changer.

Having not only someone who knows how to push you and plan for your goals but also someone you have to be accountable to can be a strong motivating factor.

For a free consultation with a certified personal trainer, visit: <https://victrx.ca/start-now/>

# PROGRESSIVE OVERLOAD

Progressive overload simply means adding more (something) over time to get stronger, faster, etc. If you do the same thing every week at the same weight the same number of times you will not improve. The goal is to raise the intensity over time and add more stimulus to grow and become stronger the next time.

This can be done in many different ways:

- adding more weight
- adding more sets
- adding more reps
- increasing the range of motion
- increasing the time under tension (length of the movement)
- pre-exhausting the muscle (training the same muscle before)
- supersets (doing an exercise immediately after another one)
- dropsets (after finishing a set dropping to a lower weight and doing another set)

There are many ways of progressing in all exercises.

Progressive overload allows you to become stronger and see real gains over time.

# REST & RECOVERY

Recovery is just as important as training. When you exercise, you put stress on your muscles, causing tiny tears. It's during rest that your muscles repair and grow stronger. Without enough rest, you risk overtraining, injury, and stalled progress.

## **REST DAYS**

Rest days allow your muscles to recover and prevent overtraining: aim for 1-2 rest days per week.

On rest days, try low-intensity activities like walking, stretching, or swimming. These help keep blood flowing to muscles, reduce soreness, and aid in recovery. To make progress, it's important to balance hard training with proper recovery. This avoids burnout, build strength, and stay motivated for the long haul.

## **SLEEP**

Sleep is essential for muscle recovery: it repairs tissue, helping you recover faster.

Poor sleep can affect performance, making workouts harder and less effective. Aim for 8 hours of sleep per night.

# TRAINING TIMES

The time that you train doesn't really matter as both have their pros and cons. The best time is when you have the most energy and time to train properly.

Experiment with different times according to your schedule.

## - advantages -

### MORNING

- boost your metabolism
- a good way to start the day
- gives your energy for the day
- helps reduce stress for the day

### EVENING

- more energy if you've eaten
- a good way to break up the day
- hormones are higher in the evening

### NIGHT

- gym is less busy
- good way to end the day
- easier to fit in your schedule
- perfect way to de-stress after a long day

## - disadvantages -

### MORNING

- gym could be busy
- not everyone can wake up early
- might have less energy early in the morning

### EVENING

- peak gym hours
- could be fatigued mid-day
- hard to fit into a busy day

### NIGHT

- not everyone has energy after a long day
- workouts too late can interfere with sleep

# SETTING FITNESS GOALS



# WHY DO GOALS MATTER?

If you don't have goals, then what are you working towards? Setting goals will keep you motivated every time you step into the gym

Make sure your goals are S.M.A.R.T.:

- **Specific:** Your goal should be clear and well-defined. A specific fitness goal answers the following questions:
  - What exactly do you want to achieve and how?
- **Measurable:** You need a way to track your progress and determine when you've achieved your goal
  - Quantify the goal so you can measure your improvements over time
- **Achievable:** Your goal should be realistic and attainable given your current fitness level, resources, and time
  - Setting a goal that is too hard can lead to quitting, while a goal that's too easy may not be motivating
- **Relevant:** Your fitness goal should align with your long-term objectives and overall lifestyle
  - It should be something that truly matters to you and fits with your priorities
- **Time-bound:** Every goal should have a specific time frame for completion
  - A deadline creates a sense of urgency and helps you stay motivated
  - It also allows you to evaluate progress at regular intervals

# S.M.A.R.T. GOAL EXAMPLES

here are some examples of S.M.A.R.T. goals:

Weight Loss Goal:

"I want to lose 10 pounds in 3 months by working out 3 times per week."

Strength Goal:

"I want to be able to bench press 135lbs in a row in 2 months."

There are several ways to track progress like as using a fitness app, writing in a journal, or taking progress photos. Tracking progress is important since it lets you know if you're moving forward or backward toward said goals.

# CUTTING VS BULKING

**CUTTING** = Losing weight

**BULKING** = Gaining weight

Choosing between cutting or bulking should be determined by your goals: if you're aiming to lose weight, then you are cutting and if you want to gain weight, you are bulking.

The main difference between cutting and bulking really comes down to what you eat. We will cover what practices to use based on these differences in the next section of Nutrition 101.

In terms of training, doing more cardio will definitely help you lose more weight as it burns calories very efficiently. Higher rep counts that exert you more are also a plus (think 8-15 reps/set). For gaining weight and muscle mass, pivoting towards a more hypertrophy & strength-based programming with fewer reps works (think 6-12 reps/set).

Tracking progress will ensure that you are making progress toward your goal of gaining or losing weight. Obviously, if you are aiming to cut but you are gaining weight, something is off and you should take a new approach to your training and diet.

# NUTRITION 101



# MAINTENANCE CALORIES

**calories in:** eating food

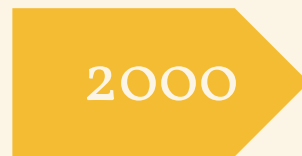
**calories out:** spending calories / energy

*for our example, the maintenance calories are 2000 / day*

**Caloric  
Maintenance**



*calories in*



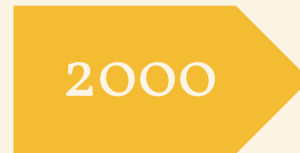
*calories out*

**No Change**

**Caloric Deficit**



*calories in*



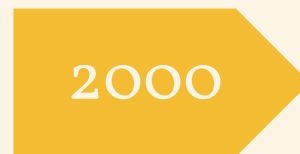
*calories in*

**Weight Loss**

**Caloric Surplus**



*calories in*



*calories in*

**Weight Gain**

# EXPLAINING CALORIES

## **Why are calories so important?**

Calories are important because they fuel your workouts and help with recovery. If you consume too few, you'll feel fatigued and struggle to build muscle or strength and too many calories can lead to fat gain. The right balance helps you perform well, recover faster, and reach your fitness goals—whether that's building muscle, losing fat, or improving endurance.

## **Now how does eating affect our weight?**

Simply put:

**If you eat more calories than you use in a day, you gain weight.**

you eat *OVER* your maintenance calories = *you gain weight*

you eat *UNDER* your maintenance calories = *you lose weight*

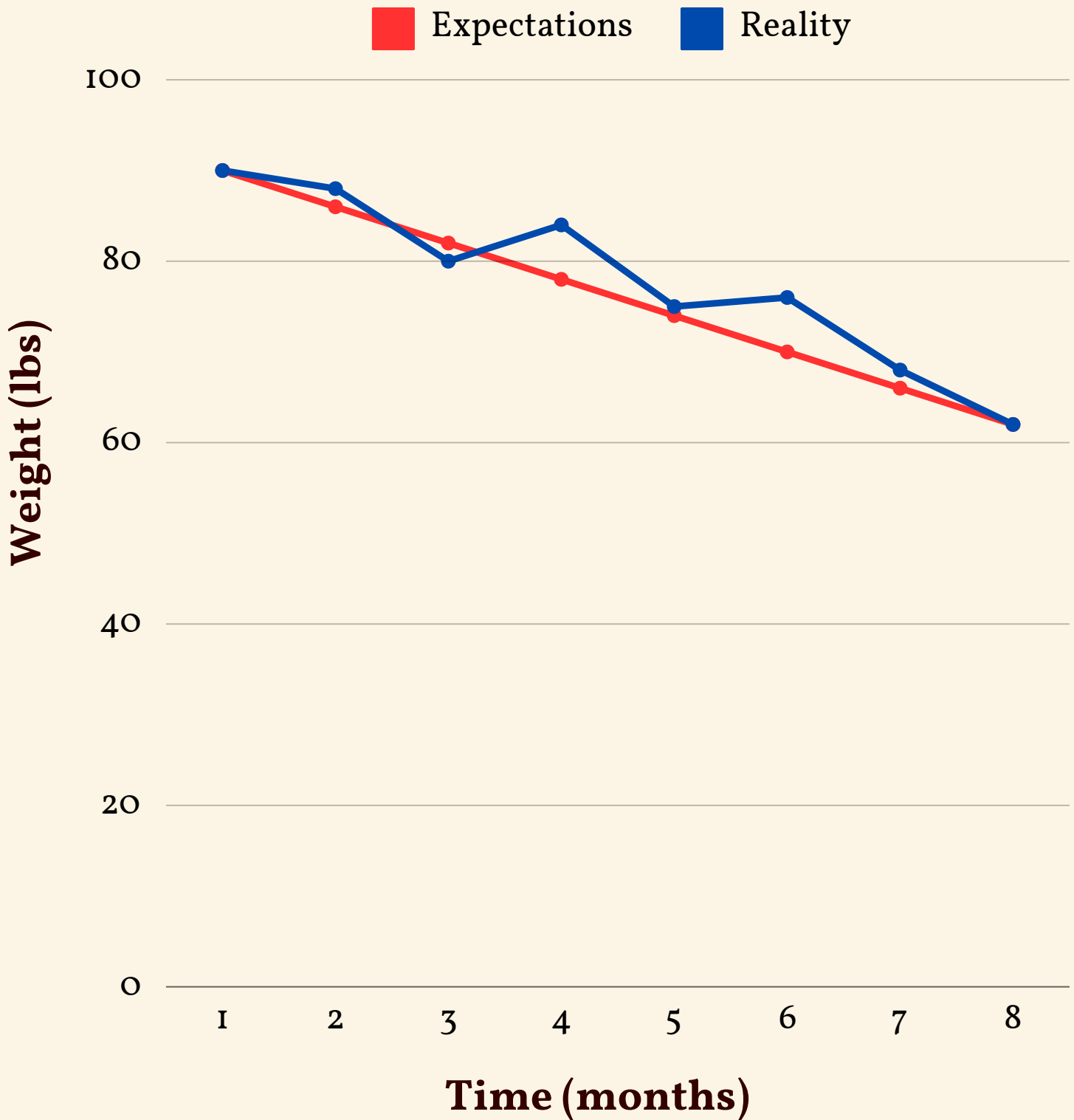
## **What are 'Maintenance Calories'?**

Maintenance calories are the number of calories you need to consume each day to keep your weight stable—neither gaining nor losing. It's the energy your body requires for all daily activities, including basic functions (like breathing and digestion) and physical activity.

here's a free online tool to roughly calculate your maintenance calories: <https://www.calculator.net/macro-calculator.html>

# EXPECTATIONS VS REALITY

Many believe that weight loss follows a gradual and steady path, the reality is it doesn't.



# WHAT ARE MACROS?

Nutrition can be a complicated and intimidating subject, but I will do my best to explain it in a way that makes sense and gives you the basic knowledge you need regarding training. Simply put: our body needs fuel and runs on food for energy. That's why they say you are what you eat.

**If you eat like shit, you'll feel like shit.**

Understanding both how calories and your macros work is key to eating for the body you want.

Let's talk about macronutrients first—carbohydrates, fats, and proteins: what they do and why they're essential for your body.

Macros are the nutrients your body needs in larger amounts to stay healthy and energized. Carbs provide quick energy, protein helps build muscles and repair tissue, and fats keep you full and healthy.

# CARBOHYDRATES (Carbs)

- **What They Are:** Carbs are sugars, starches, and fiber. They come from foods like bread, pasta, rice, fruits, vegetables, and sweets.
- **Why They're Important:** Carbs are your body's main source of energy. When you eat carbs, your body breaks them down into glucose (sugar), which your muscles and brain use to fuel you throughout the day.
- **Types of Carbs:**
  - **Simple Carbs:** These are quick sources of energy, like candy, soda, and white bread. They can cause your blood sugar to spike and crash.
  - **Complex Carbs:** These are slower-digesting carbs, like whole grains, brown rice, and veggies. They give you more sustained energy.
- **How Many Calories:** 1 gram of Carbs = 4 calories

# FATS

- **What They Are:** Fats are nutrients that come from foods like oils, butter, avocado, nuts, and fatty fish. There are different types of fats, some better for you than others.
- **Why They're Important:** Fat is essential for your body to absorb vitamins (like A, D, E, and K), keep your skin healthy, and give you long-lasting energy. It also helps protect your organs.
- **Types of Fats:**
  - **Healthy Fats:** These come from sources like avocados, olive oil, and fatty fish (salmon). These fats are good for your heart.
  - **Unhealthy Fats:** These are trans fats and some saturated fats found in processed foods like fast food, cookies, and chips. Too much of these can harm your health.
- **How Many Calories:** 1 gram of Fat = 9 calories

# PROTEINS

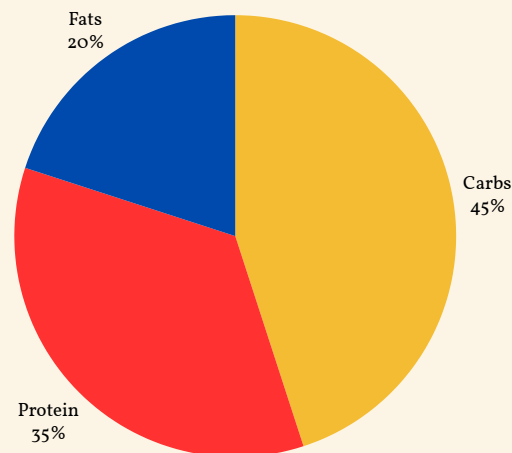
- **What They Are:** Proteins are made up of smaller units called amino acids, which help build and repair things in your body, like muscles and tissues. Protein comes from foods like chicken, beef, meat, eggs, beans, and nuts.
- **Why They're Important:** Protein is super important for muscle growth, repairing tissues, and making things like enzymes and hormones. So, if you're active, eating enough protein helps your muscles recover after workouts.
- **Types of Proteins:**
  - **Complete Proteins:** Contains all 9 essential amino acids. Found in animal products (meat, fish, eggs, dairy) and some plants (quinoa, soy)
  - **Incomplete Proteins:** Missing one or more essential amino acids. Found in most plant sources (beans, lentils, nuts). Combining them (e.g., rice and beans) can form a complete protein.
- **How Many Calories:** 1 gram of Protein = 4 calories

# BALANCING YOUR MACROS

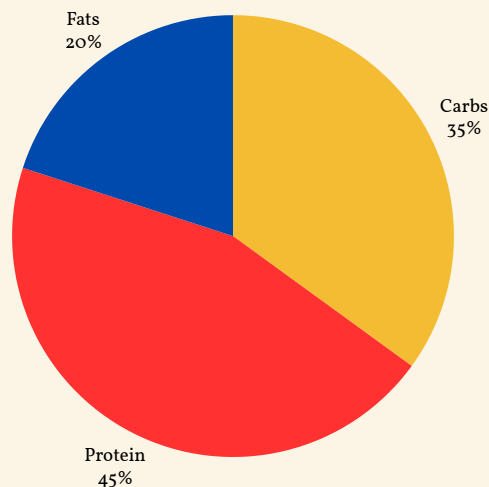
To stay healthy and feel good, you need a good balance of these three macros. The right balance can vary depending on things like your age, activity level, and fitness goals. Here are some loose guidelines:

- **For General Health:** A common recommendation is something like 40% carbs, 30% protein, and 30% fat.
- **For Building Muscle:** You might eat more protein to help your muscles grow and repair after workouts.
- **For Weight Loss:** You might adjust your carb and fat intake to create a calorie deficit (eating fewer calories than you burn).

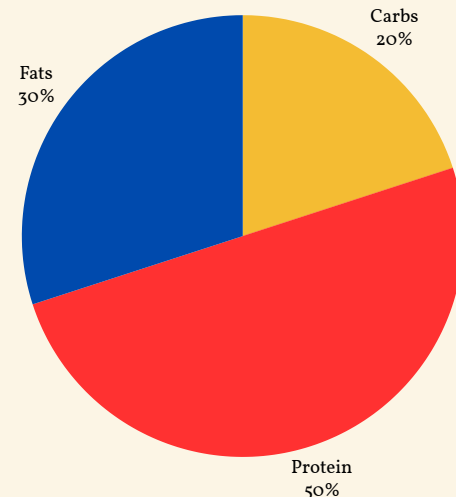
## Maintenace



## Building Muscle



## Weight Loss



# WHAT TO EAT FOR THE GYM

## **BEFORE WORKOUT**

before a workout, your body will need fuel and nutrients to maximize energy & performance

### **what to eat:**

- Carbs: the body's main energy source during exercise
  - helps ensure that your muscles have enough fuel (glycogen) to perform at their best
  - Focus on complex carbs (like whole grains or fruits) for sustained energy, or fast-digesting carbs (like bananas or apples) if you're closer to workout time
- Protein: eating before a workout can kickstart muscle recovery and help prevent muscle breakdown during exercise.
  - Aim for a moderate amount, as too much can slow digestion
- Fats: provide sustained energy, which is useful for endurance workouts.
  - just be sure to consume them in moderation, as they digest slower than carbs.

## **AFTER WORKOUT**

after a workout, your body needs to recover.

### **what to eat:**

- Protein is the most important macro after a workout
- A hearty meal rich in protein and carbs or a protein shake if you don't have the time
  - steak, chicken, pork, potatoes, rice

## **HYDRATION**

Drinking water is important for anyone, especially if they workout.

Aim for about 2.7 liters (91 oz) of water daily for women and 3.7 liters (125 oz) for men, including all beverages and food.

Make sure to bring water for your workout.

# OVERCOMING CHALLENGES



# TIME CONSTRAINTS

You hear this a lot because it's true: **CONSISTENCY IS KEY.** Nothing great comes fast it takes patience, hard work, and persistence to achieve something meaningful.

Making the gym a habit is a great way to stay on track and consistent. The reality is everyone is busy and finding time to spend over an hour in the gym is not possible for everyone every day. Making your training a priority or training at the same time of day like a routine can make this much easier on you and your schedule. If you don't make something a priority in your life it most likely will not get done.

Sometimes even doing a shorter version of a workout is better than not doing it at all.

**Remember:** progress takes time and consistency, and it's important to stay patient and trust the process.

# PLATEAUS / ROADBLOCKS

Seeing progress stall or stop can be a heartbreaking feeling. This does not necessarily mean something is wrong with you, it most likely happened because you've gotten stronger.

Your body has adapted to your training and needs a new stimulus to grow more; harder workouts.

It's normal for progress to slow down over time. Like I've mentioned in the **Progressive Overload** section, aim to get stronger and better every week by adding, reps, sets, weights, etc to your workouts to challenge yourself further.

Sometimes simply setting new goals and changing programming can be enough to help you push more in the gym.

# LACK OF MOTIVATION

Lack of motivation is the **#1 reason** I see people quitting the gym.

Some easy ways to find new motivation are:

- working out with a buddy
- getting a coach
- workout at the same time every day
- trying new exercises
- changing your workout plan
- training at a different time
- rewarding yourself after every workout

The easiest way to stay motivated and hold yourself accountable is to hire a personal trainer. Having a coach by your side who not only creates workout & meal plans tailored to you and your goals but holds you accountable to not miss training and stay on track is like a cheat code.

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# FAQ



**Q: How many days should my first training program be?**

A: The biggest mistake people make starting out is actually overtraining. For a beginner aiming to lose fat and gain muscle, starting with 3-4 days per week is a great approach. This allows enough time to work all your major muscle groups while giving your body time to recover. As you progress, you can adjust the frequency based on how your body responds.

**Q: Should I change my exercise or stick to a program? If so for how long?**

A: As a beginner, it's best to stick with a program for about 4-8 weeks. This gives your body time to adapt and start building strength and muscle. Once you've mastered the basics, you can change your exercises to keep things interesting, prevent plateaus, and challenge your muscles in new ways. Just be sure to focus on progressive overload, meaning gradually increasing the weight or reps over time to keep making progress.

**Q: I am getting very sore/injured from my workouts. Should I skip the gym until I am not sore?**

A: When you start the program, you may feel extra soreness as your body adapts to new exercises. Training while sore is fine as long as it doesn't risk injury. If pain is preventing you from performing an exercise properly or completing the full range of motion, skip it. For mild soreness, just warm up a bit longer and focus on avoiding injury. An extra rest day won't set you back, but an injury could.

**Q: I am not getting sore from my workouts. Is the program not working?**

A: Muscle soreness usually comes from exercises that involve stretching or lengthening the muscle, especially during the lowering part of a movement. While soreness (DOMS) isn't necessary for muscle growth, some muscle damage might help growth. However, training's main goal is to build strength, not to make you feel sore. If you feel less sore over time, it means your body is recovering and getting stronger, which is a sign that you're making good progress.

**Q: What gym equipment should I use?**

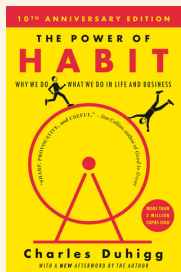
A: Gym equipment is optional as there are no required pieces of equipment to gain muscle and increase strength. With that being said, investing in a lifting belt, knee sleeves, and straps can be beneficial in allowing you to lift more weight for certain exercises once you reach a heavy enough weight.

**Q: Should I be using supplements?**

A: While supplements are not essential, some can definitely help you out when paired with a good diet. Things like caffeine, creatine, protein powder, various vitamins, etc can help you but will not work if you don't eat or train correctly.

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

here's a list of some personal favorites that relate not only to fitness but personal growth in general:



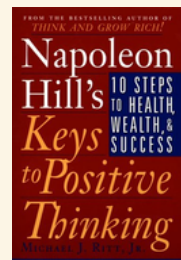
The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business

- Charles Duhigg



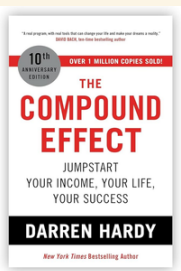
The 1% Rule: How to Fall in Love with the Process and Achieve Your Wildest Dreams

- Tommy Baker



Napoleon Hill's Keys to Positive Thinking: 10 Steps to Health, Wealth, and Success

- Napoleon Hill



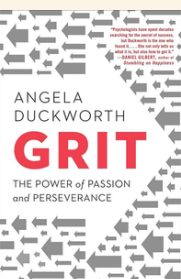
The Compound Effect: Multiply Your Success One Simple Step at a Time

- Darren Hardy



Peak Performance: Elevate Your Game, Avoid Burnout, and Thrive with the New Science of Success

- Brad Stulberg & Steve Magness



"Grit"

- Angela Duckworth

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

If you're looking for more help from a professional, I do offer 1-1 coaching, online personal training, custom workout plans and meal plans for all training levels.

Feel free to fill out a 5 minute questionnaire to get started:

<https://victrx.ca/start-now/>

or send us an email over at  
[victrxfitness@gmail.com](mailto:victrxfitness@gmail.com)

**THANK YOU FOR READING**