

# What is Habit-Based Nutrition Coaching?

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“Weight loss is similar in the short-term for diet-only and combined behavioural weight management programs but in the longer-term weight loss is increased when diet and physical activity are combined. Programs based on physical activity alone are less effective than combined BWMPs in both the short and long term.”

Diet or Exercise Interventions vs Combined Behavioral Weight Management Programs: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Direct Comparisons

[David J. Johns](#), PhD, RD,\*\* [Jamie Hartmann-Boyce](#), [Susan A. Jebb](#), PhD, and [Paul Aveyard](#), PhD, Behavioural Weight Management Review Group



# Nutrition and fitness go hand-in-hand in helping your clients maximize their results.

What can you do to help keep them on track, without crossing any lines with scope of practice?

# Nutrition 101

Some basic background on macronutrients and hydration needs



# Protein

- ▶ Building blocks of the body, used to
- ▶ Not an energy provider, but essential for recovery post-workout
- ▶ How much do you need?
  - ▶ % of total intake (higher ranges with higher activity level)
  - ▶ 0.8 - 1.0 g/lb of body weight
  - ▶ Aim for 25-30 grams per meal at minimum (palm-sized amount)



**PROTEIN**

# Protein

30 grams/meal is the “sweet spot” according to years of research.

- ▶ Threshold to stimulate protein synthesis (recovery and growth)
- ▶ Consuming more than 30 grams/meal will not further increase protein synthesis, *but* will make you feel fuller, which can help with weight loss



**PROTEIN**

# Protein

What happens when you don't get enough?

- ▶ Inability to properly recover - extra muscle soreness post-activity
- ▶ Can lose muscle mass!
  - ▶ Even more important as we age, and our ability for growth and repair diminishes...can be at higher risk for injury

Most people *know* they need more protein in their diet, but can't seem to execute.

# Protein - common sources

- ▶ Chicken
- ▶ Turkey
- ▶ Beef
- ▶ Pork
- ▶ Bison
- ▶ Salmon
- ▶ Tuna
- ▶ Shrimp
- ▶ Eggs
- ▶ Greek Yogurt
- ▶ Milk
- ▶ Cheese
- ▶ Nuts/Nut Butters
- ▶ Legumes
- ▶ Soy Products (ie. Tofu)
- ▶ Quinoa
- ▶ Buckwheat
- ▶ Whey/Casein Supplements
- ▶ Vegan Protein Supplements (typically soy/rice/pea based)

While all of the above foods are good options to get our protein in, not all of them will provide us with *enough* protein per serving size.

# Carbohydrates

- ▶ Supply energy for daily activities and workouts
  - ▶ As intensity of activity increases, so does reliance on carbs as fuel
- ▶ How much do you need?
  - ▶ About 45-65% of your daily intake - depending on goals and activity level
  - ▶ Aim for at least a fist-sized portion of vegetables, and at least a cupped handful of starchy carbs/fruit at each meal
- ▶ Not all carbs are created equal!
  - ▶ 12-15% of daily intake should come from vegetables and fruits (load up your plate!)
  - ▶ Avoid sugary, processed options
  - ▶ Include some whole grains, legumes, and starchy vegetables



VEGETABLES



CARB

# Carbohydrates

What happens when we don't get enough?

- ▶ Can negatively impact your performance and wellbeing
- ▶ Lack energy to finish workouts, or excessive exhaustion after workout
- ▶ Decreased speed, endurance, and strength over time
- ▶ Frequent colds/illness
- ▶ Hard to fall asleep and stay asleep
- ▶ Irritability

There is no doubt that some of your favorite foods are composed primarily of carbohydrates, and enjoying your food is important to sustainable fitness.

Remember, **you don't get extra credit for suffering!** So, beyond fruits and vegetables, your diet should likely include carbohydrate-dense foods such as

# Carbohydrates - What's the deal with fiber?

- ▶ Except for fiber, carbs are broken down into sugars to be used by your cells for energy
- ▶ We cannot digest fiber, thus carbohydrate dense foods that are high in fiber are digested more slowly than those that contain less fiber
- ▶ This translates to stable blood sugar levels rather than peaks and valleys
- ▶ Low blood sugar is also a major initiator of our

Apart from stabilizing blood sugar levels, diets rich in high fiber foods have been associated with lower BMI, smaller waist circumference, lower body fat and weight reduction over time. Conversely, a diet rich in low fiber carbohydrates, which cause those highs and lows in blood sugar, has been related to excess weight gain and a larger waist circumference.

# Carbohydrates - High vs. Low Fiber

## High Fiber/Slow-Digesting

- ▶ Pumpnickel Bread
- ▶ Oatmeal (Steel-Cut or Rolled)
- ▶ Oat Bran
- ▶ Muesli
- ▶ Whole Grain Pasta
- ▶ Brown, Wild, or Basmati Rice
- ▶ Couscous or Bulgur
- ▶ Bean or Lentils
- ▶ Sweet Potato or Yam
- ▶ Corn

## Low Fiber/Fast-Digesting

- ▶ Fruit Juices
- ▶ Ice Cream
- ▶ White Bread or White Rice
- ▶ Corn Flakes or Bran Flakes
- ▶ Puffed Rice or Rice Cakes
- ▶ Instant Oatmeal
- ▶ Popcorn
- ▶ Crackers
- ▶ Kraft Dinner-style Macaroni

# Fats

Important in our diet for:

- ▶ Skin Health
- ▶ Hormone Production
- ▶ Vitamin Transport
- ▶ Satiety
- ▶ Energy Supply

How much do you need?

- ▶ About 20-35% of daily intake
- ▶ Aim for at least one thumb's worth per meal



**FAT**

# Fats - Saturated vs Unsaturated

Neither type of fat is dangerous on its' own; high, unbalanced saturated fat intake has been associated with health risks, however, stearic acid (found in ) can actually lower blood cholesterol levels.

## Saturated:

- ▶ Animal Fats
- ▶ Coconut Oil
- ▶ Palm Oil
- ▶ Palm Kernel Oil

## Monounsaturated:

- ▶ Olive Oil
- ▶ Avocado
- ▶ Peanuts
- ▶ Pecans
- ▶ Almonds

## Polyunsaturated:

- ▶ Omega 3 & 6
- ▶ Flax
- ▶ Hemp
- ▶ Fish
- ▶ Canola
- ▶ Safflower

# Fats

“*Healthy fats*” typically refer to foods containing omega 3 & 6, and monounsaturated fats. These can benefit blood triglyceride levels, inflammation, and metabolism.

Omega 6 fatty acids are found in corn oil, safflower oil, and many meats (from animals that are corn-fed). Omega 3 fatty acids are primarily found in fish oils, flax, and walnuts.

In an ideal world, we'd have balance at a 1:1 ratio of omega 6 and omega 3 fats, but in the modern diet, we typically take in about 16-20 times more omega 6 fatty acids as compared to omega 3.

Low intake of omega 3's is associated with memory loss, difficulty concentrating, Alzheimer's, and mood problems.

# Hydration

Water makes up approximately 60% of your total body weight and is key to many vital body functions, such as:

- ▶ Acts as a solvent, to dissolve and transport nutrients throughout the body
- ▶ Acts as a catalyst to allow reactions to happen in the body, or to speed up reactions
- ▶ Mineral source - typically fluoride, calcium, and magnesium
- ▶ Lubricates joints to allow free movement and prevent injury
- ▶ Shock absorption for eyes, spinal cord, and fetus in pregnancy (amniotic fluid)
- ▶ Temperature regulation - when you get too hot, you sweat, the sweat pools on your skin, and the process of evaporation helps to cool the body
- ▶ Important in synthesizing macronutrients (fats, proteins, and carbs) for growth and energy production

# Hydration

Your total body water carried at any given time will fluctuate, depending on body composition and transient hydration status (how hydrated you are at that exact moment).

Different body tissues carry different amounts of water - this is how Bioelectrical Impedance scales are able to estimate your body fat percentage just by sending a small (imperceptible) electric shock through your body. Tissues carrying more water, like your muscle, will slow the electric current less than tissues that carry less water, like adipose (fat stores).

Approximate water volumes in different tissues are:

- ▶ Bone: %
- ▶ Adipose: %
- ▶ Muscle: %
- ▶ Blood: %

# Balancing Fluid Intake vs. Output

- ▶ We lose fluids throughout the day from body waste (feces/urine), sweat, and breathing; these losses are sped up during exercise, as we sweat more and our breathing rate increases.
- ▶ We take in approximately 1 litre of water each day from the foods that we eat - assuming we are matching the portion sizes and types of foods recommended for a healthy diet.
  - ▶ We also store water differently depending on how much of our food we are storing in the body - high amount of stored carbs or diets high in sodium will cause us to retain additional water (3-4 grams of water per gram of stored carbs), which is why at the beginning of restrictive diets (where starchy carbs and high sodium foods are the first thing to go) it can sometimes seem like a lot of weight is lost initially; most of it being less retained water. Diets that are very high in protein can cause a small increase in water loss over the short term, as the kidneys work harder to break down and digest the proteins.
- ▶ When it comes to beverages, we aim to take in as much water as possible, but all beverages count towards our fluid intake. Water will have the most “rate of return” on volume consumed vs volume of fluid able to be absorbed and used by the body - but your kidneys are able to filter sugary beverages to still extract and use water contained in them.

# What about caffeine and alcohol?

Studies have found that caffeine does **not** dehydrate you, as once thought.

- ▶ Consuming caffeine in moderate amounts (up to regular size cups of coffee or mg caffeine per day) actually has a net hydrating effect!

Alcohol, on the other hand, will have a negative impact on your body's ability to regulate hydration.

- ▶ Although alcohol itself does not suck the water out of you, it inhibits the release of hormones that send thirst signals and regulate how much body water is retained; so we end up losing more fluids through urine and not realizing through thirst signals that we need more water intake.

# Dehydration

Warning signs include:

- ▶ Headache
- ▶ Fatigue
- ▶ Low blood pressure
- ▶ Dizziness
- ▶ Fainting
- ▶ Nausea
- ▶ Thirst
- ▶ Flushing
- ▶ Increased heart rate
- ▶ Constipation

Along with a lack of intake or fluid balance, some larger causes of dehydration can be:

- ▶ Vomiting
- ▶ Diarrhea
- ▶ Fever and sweating
- ▶ Dialysis or kidney failure
- ▶ Burns
- ▶ Trauma
- ▶ Use of diuretics for medical reasons
- ▶ Diabetic complications

# Hydration - How much do we need?

There are two widely accepted formulas to estimate our fluid needs, depending on which you find easier to measure for yourself.

- ▶ For every kg of bodyweight, you should consume \_\_\_\_\_ mL of water.
- OR
- ▶ You should consume approximately half your bodyweight (in pounds), in ounces of water.

As a general estimation for everyone, we tend to say approximately 3 litres of water per day (approx. 1 litre from food and 2 litres purposeful fluid intake). This amount will of course be affected by body size, climate, and activity levels.

- ▶ In a warm climate, we typically need 2 additional cups of water per day, even if we are not active. When combining intense exercise and warm climate, double your fluid intake (6 L or 24 cups)!
- ▶ During any exercise, avoid losing fluids by “pre-loading” about \_\_\_\_\_ mL of fluid, 30 minutes before you begin activity. During exercise, replace about \_\_\_\_\_ mL every 15 minutes of activity, and after exercise, continue to replenish about 500 mL - 1 litre of fluids within the first hour after activity

Why Going “All In”  
Usually Ends Up “All Out”

# Avoid the Perfection Mindset

- ▶ Trying to change too much, too quickly will almost always result in a backslide
- ▶ There's no such thing as "perfect" nutrition - just what works best for us and our goals
- ▶ We can work to improve our habits, but we must understand there isn't really an end to that improvement

# Avoid the Perfection Mindset

Let's think of healthy eating in terms of a continuum:



The only thing we need to focus on is moving towards the right side of the continuum, one step at a time. This is how we find change that can be sustainable, rather than trying to do a complete overhaul of our diet. When we try to take too many steps at once, when we aim for perfection, that is when we fail.

# Using a Habit-Based Approach

Turn the focus to what you can control; set behaviour-based goals rather than outcome-based goals.

Break it up into smaller, sustainable changes!

# Working With Your Client

- ▶ Ask good questions and then
- ▶ Acknowledge concerns, reframe obstacles, and plan to overcome them
- ▶ Educate, don't dictate!
- ▶ Look at it as an experiment - there are no certainties, only strategies to test out and find what works for the individual
- ▶ Choose ONE habit to work on at a time, until mastered
- ▶ Offer social support
- ▶ Track adherence
- ▶ Celebrate successes
- ▶ Clean Slate policy

# The Food Log

- ▶ A brief window into your client's routine
- ▶ Get a better glimpse for how things actually play out, rather than the good intentions they set out with
- ▶ Can track many aspects:
  - ▶ Food types
  - ▶ Portion sizes
  - ▶ Meal timing
  - ▶ Hunger levels
  - ▶ Fullness
  - ▶ Emotions
  - ▶ Awareness
- ▶ Remember: the food log is a baseline measurement, not a judgement!

# What topics/habits can we work on?

- ▶ Eating breakfast regularly
- ▶ Reducing/Increasing total daily intake
- ▶ Including protein at each meal
- ▶ Including vegetables at each meal
- ▶ Including healthy fats at each meal
- ▶ Including smart carbs at each meal
- ▶ Drinking eight glasses of water each day
- ▶ Proper portion sizes
- ▶ Eat slowly until 80% full
- ▶ Planning meals ahead of grocery trip
- ▶ Meal prepping
- ▶ Planning healthy snacks
- ▶ Kitchen pantry makeover - keep the junk out of the house!
- ▶ Reducing high-calorie beverages
- ▶ Healthy “convenience” plans
- ▶ Reducing meals out
- ▶ ....the options are endless

# Summary:

- ▶ Most clients need to focus on simple, small changes, not radical overhauls
- ▶ Think long term, sustainable change