SIEVEKING PLASTIC SURGERY | AGELESS SOLUTIONS | moreglow Med Spa at Sieveking Plastic Surgery

PROTEIN TARGETS for HEALTHY AGING

Your Weekly Newsletter by Dr. Nicholas Sieveking
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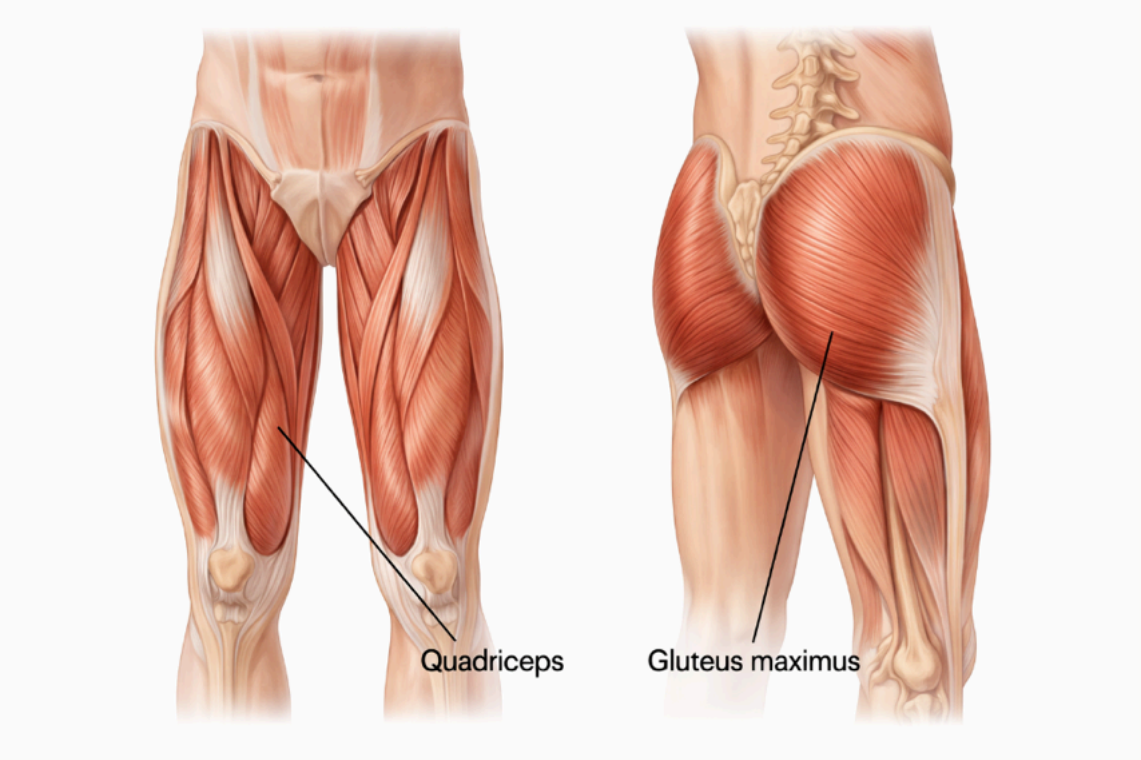
Do this right now: Reach down and squeeze the front of your thigh. That ***Quadriceps*** muscle (other than your ***Gluteus Maximus***…which you can squeeze too) is the largest muscle group in your body. In 60 days, that will be a brand-new muscle---totally rebuilt! All of our muscles are in a constant cycle of breakdown and rebuild. Over time, if you don't supply enough **protein**—and you don't challenge muscle with **resistance training**—you will lose lean muscle. That loss isn't cosmetic. It's metabolic and it accelerates aging.



Why Protein Matters More as We Age

Proteins are made of small building blocks called *Amino Acids*. Your body is always rebuilding proteins using a shared "amino acid pool" from a few sources:

- Recycled amino acids from normal muscle protein breakdown

- De novo production of “non-essential” amino acids from carbohydrates, fats, and proteins
- Dietary amino acids absorbed after meals

Even though recycling & de novo production contributes a lot, dietary protein is still required daily to prevent gradual muscle loss.

Amino Acids: What to Know

Non-essential amino acids are amino acids your body can make on its own (from other amino acids and metabolic intermediates), so you don’t have to get them strictly from food—as long as you’re healthy.

The 11 commonly listed non-essential amino acids

Alanine
Arginine*
Asparagine
Aspartic acid (Aspartate)
Cysteine*
Glutamic acid (Glutamate)
Glutamine*
Glycine*
Proline*
Serine
Tyrosine*

Essential amino acids (must come from diet) --Your body can’t make these in sufficient amounts:

9 Essential Amino Acids (Ones Your Body Can’t Make in Sufficient Amounts) are:

- Histidine
- Isoleucine
- Leucine
- Lysine
- Methionine
- Phenylalanine
- Threonine
- Tryptophan
- Valine

In real life, some “non-essential” amino acids become “conditionally essential” during growth, illness, injury, pregnancy, high stress, strenuous exercise and aging—meaning your body may not keep up with demand.

The Protein RDA (“Recommended Daily Allowance”) Is Outdated for Aging Muscles

The historical RDA for daily protein intake is 0.8 g/kg/day (based largely on old nitrogen balance studies that are over 70 years old). **0.8 g/kg/day** may (??) prevent deficiency, but for most adults—especially as we age—it falls short of what's needed to maintain lean mass, let alone build it.

"Medical Fact": More Lean Muscle = Better Aging

Maintaining & building muscle supports health and longevity by:

- Better glucose control (improves insulin sensitivity and reduces type 2 diabetes risk)
- More resilience during illness / injury / surgery (protein reserve, less frailty)
- Mobility and independence (balance, gait speed, fewer falls)
- Bone health (muscle loading supports bone density and posture)
- Lower inflammation / better metabolic signaling (****myokines** support vascular and metabolic health)
- Better cardiovascular capacity (enables activity; fitness is strongly linked to longevity)
- Brain benefits (resistance training is associated with improved cognition and mood and may reduce neuroinflammation and delay neurodegenerative disease onset)

****Myokines**=muscle "hormone-like" signals to the brain, Bones, heart, liver, blood vessels, immune system, and more…

And yes—**resistance training (i.e. "weight lifting)** is at least as important as **cardio** for longevity. The best results come from doing both, not choosing one => Don't just pump away on an elliptical trainer for an hour while watching your favorite Netflix series.

**We will publish a newsletter in the future about optical workout programs as we age and mixing resistance training and cardiovascular fitness training together. Suffice it to say, for this newsletter, weightlifting and protein intake are absolutely essential for health and longevity as we age.

One hour of workouts for 5 days per week=> MAKE IT COUNT!

Protein Targets that Actually Make Sense

For most adults focused on healthy aging:

- 1.2–1.5 g/kg/day is a practical target for maintaining/building lean mass
- If training consistently (especially strength training), many do well closer to:
    - 1.6–2.0 g/kg/day (individualized)

Example (150 lb. / 68 kg person):

- 1.2–1.5 g/kg → 82–102 g/day
- 1.6–2.0 g/kg → 109–136 g/day

**Heavier, more muscular, and more active individuals often need more.

Protein Targets by Body Weight

Daily grams of protein (rounded to nearest ~5 g)

Body weight	1.2 g/kg (baseline aging target)	1.5 g/kg (solid goal)	1.6 g/kg (training)	2.0 g/kg (hard training)
120 lb	65 g	80 g	85 g	110 g
140 lb	75 g	95 g	100 g	125 g
150 lb	80 g	100 g	110 g	135 g
160 lb	85 g	110 g	115 g	145 g
180 lb	100 g	120 g	130 g	165 g
200 lb	110 g	135 g	145 g	180 g
220 lb	120 g	150 g	160 g	200 g

Quick guidance: Most adults aging well land in the 1.2-1.5 g/kg columns. Consistent lifters often do best around 1.6 g/kg. The 2.0 g/kg column is typically for heavier training loads or very lean/active individuals.

Healthy Muscle as We Age Promotes:

- Strong bones
- Less Pain
- Better mobility
- Fewer Falls & Fractures
- ….. And so much more

ALERT!

In the United States, hip fractures are a major source of morbidity and mortality, leading to roughly 350,000 hospitalizations each year among older adults, most often after a fall. Outcomes are serious: about 1 in 4 patients die within a year of a hip fracture on average (with higher risk in the most vulnerable patients). The most effective prevention is fall prevention, and the cornerstone of that is maintaining strength and lean muscle mass (which promotes balance and increased bone density).

Protein in common foods (approx.):

- 16 oz ribeye (raw weight): ~75 g
- Mixed nuts (4 oz): ~20 g
- Lentils (4 oz cooked): ~10 g
- 6 oz salmon (raw): ~35 g
- 1 hard-boiled egg: ~6 g
- 8 oz chicken breast (raw): ~50 g

Best Protein Sources for Muscle Building

Generally, animal proteins are more efficient per serving for muscle gain because they:

1. Provide more **leucine** per serving (leucine helps “switch on” muscle protein synthesis)
2. Have a complete **essential amino acid** profile
3. Tend to be more digestible (more usable amino acids per gram)
4. Are less “protein-diluted” (less bulk/calories for the same protein dose)
5. Provide helpful compounds for training (creatine, taurine, carnosine, B12, heme iron)

That said: a well-planned plant-based diet can absolutely build muscle, but it usually takes:

- ~10–20% more total protein
- smarter choices (soy, blends)
- larger per-meal doses to match leucine & other “essential amino acids”

Best “Quality” Vegan Protein Staples

- Soy foods (top tier): tofu, tempeh, edamame, soy milk
- Seitan (very high protein; low lysine → pair with legumes sometime that day)
- Legumes: lentils, chickpeas, beans, split peas
- High-protein grains: quinoa, buckwheat, amaranth, oats
- Plant protein blends: pea + rice (or similar) can improve amino acid completeness

Buy organic! These vegan products have some of the highest pesticide residues in the agricultural world (Click **HERE to view our Glyphosate newsletters).

Bottom line: getting 120–150 g/day of protein can be harder than people think—and it can get expensive—so planning matters. High protein intake through regular meals can also add "unwanted" fats and carbohydrates and a load of dense calories that may be counterproductive to your fitness plan. Protein supplementation can be helpful.

Protein supplements (smart options):

- Whey powders
    - From milk

    - Fast-digesting
    - High in the “muscle-building” amino acid **leucine**
- Casein (slow digesting; often used at night)
    - From milk
    - Slow-digesting
    - Good for “before bedtime” supplementation
    - Rich in essential amino acids
- Plant blends (pea + rice, soy, etc.)
    - Low in leucine
    - Less digestibility => you need higher protein intake
    - More gastrointestinal issues—gas & bloating
- Ready-to-drink shakes
    - Often 20–42 g/serving
    - Careful with excess sugar or artificial sweeteners
    - Whey protein is the preferred for muscle building
- Greek yogurt / skyr / cottage cheese / ultra-filtered milk
- Protein bars
    - Watch sugar alcohols
    - Poor protein-to-calorie ratios
- Collagen peptides
    - Fine for collagen support => skin, hair, nails, etc.
    - NOT a complete muscle-building protein
    - Low in leucine and essential amino acids

Note on Protein Supplements—Protein needs to be sweetened. Avoid excess sugars and avoid artificial sweeteners such as **Aspartame**, **Sucralose**, **Saccharin**. The healthiest and safest natural sweeteners are **Stevia** and **Monk** Fruit. **Watch for a future Newsletter on Sugar and Sugar Substitutes.

This is my go-to protein supplement. It's sweetened with Monk fruit and contains all clean ingredients.

Caution with Kidney Disease

- Protein needs change with kidney function: Different degrees of renal insufficiency require adjusting daily protein intake.
- Mild to moderate renal insufficiency: 1.2 + g/kg/day should be safe
- Lab data needed to determine protein intake limits
    - eGFR (creatinine-based)
    - Urine albumin-to-creatinine ratio (UACR) (or urine protein/creatinine)
    - BUN
    - Serum bicarbonate / CO_2
    - Potassium
    - Phosphorus
- If you have lower kidney function, it's ALWAYS necessary to check with your kidney doctor when adding protein to your diet
- Be careful with protein supplements: many contain added sodium, potassium, and phosphorus.

The honest bottom line---If you care about aging well, you need a few things:

1. Lift weights consistently, **resistance training** builds lean muscle mass
2. Add some Zone 2 Cardio (heart up to 70% of max) 1 or 2 days per week
    - But shorter intervals
    - No need for hour-long cardio sessions if time in the gym is limited
3. Hit a meaningful daily protein target—usually 1.2–1.5 g/kg/day, and often higher if you train hard
4. Don't struggle against age-related hormone deficiencies => check your hormone levels and consider **Bio-Identical Hormone Replacement**

Therapy. Your muscles will love you! Click **HERE** to view our newsletter on hormones.

Special Note:
When using GLP-1 medications for weight loss, a major concern is loss of lean muscle mass - up to ~30% of the total weight lost can come from muscle. To protect muscle (especially if exercising), patients should prioritize adequate daily protein intake throughout treatment with GLPs.

Aim for 3-5 protein "hits" per day, each roughly 25-40g protein, spaced every 3-5 hours. If you're weightlifting to gain muscle mass, there is some science to taking a protein "hit" soon after exercise. Lifting weights turns muscle protein synthesis on. Added protein provides the amino acids necessary to build muscle.

REFER & WIN!

Love our weekly newsletter? Share it with friends and WIN BIG! From now through **January 29, 2026**, the subscriber submitting the **most referrals** to receive our weekly newsletter will win **one of three amazing prizes**.

--PRIZES--

1st Place: **LMNT Micro-pulse PBM Technology**™: An FDA-cleared, at-home energy-based device delivering red and infrared light therapy using clinically validated **830 nm and 633 nm wavelengths**. (Value - $700)

- Promotes skin elasticity and boosts collagen production
- Clinically shown to reduce fine lines by **10.05%**
- Increases collagen by **14.74%**
- Improves skin barrier function by **27.21%**
- FDA-cleared for the treatment of **acne and hair loss**

2nd Place: Two areas of BOTOX Treatment (Value - $560)

3rd Place: One Diamond Glow Facial Peel (Value - $225)

--HOW TO ENTER--

1. **Get your link:** Click the button below to generate your unique "Invite Link."
2. **Spread the word:** Copy that link and drop it in your group chats, email threads, or social media. However you want to share the link works!
3. **Watch the magic happen:** For every friend who joins us, you get a point towards our great prizes. We'll handle the tracking for you! The top three subscribers with the **most referrals** will win!

Winners will be announced after the contest on January 29, 2026. Start sharing today — the more you refer, the better your chances to win!

Get My Referral Link

- Reserve your appointment on **Friday, February 13**, between **11am - 3pm**. Limited spots!
- GLOW FACIAL: Dermaplane and Hydrating Mask or Glow Peel (beautiful glow with no downtime) PLUS complimentary red light therapy treatment for $125
- PUCKER UP: celebrate your valentine with Kysse-able lips - 0.5mL syringe for $350 or Botox lip flip for $75
- Enjoy $25 OFF Diamond Glow Facial and 30% OFF DEFY (Bio-regenerative face creme) & Bio-Kana (revitalizing night serum)
- Sips & light bites

Reserve Spot

STAY TUNED!

Be on the lookout for next week's newsletter, "Facial Moisturizing 101."

Newsletter Archives

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