

# The Protein Plan

For anyone past midlife who is eating the same as always and losing ground anyway. Every line below restates a claim verified against Tier-1 medical sources. Nothing here is invented, and nothing is for sale.

✓ CHECKED AGAINST HARVARD HEALTH PUBLISHING · CLEVELAND CLINIC

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## The RDA is a floor

0.8 g per kg of body weight is the level set to prevent deficiency, not the level linked to better muscle. (Harvard Health)

2

## Older adults need more

Many experts recommend 1.0 to 1.2 g per kg daily, an intake linked to better muscle mass, strength and function. (Harvard Health)

3

## Most people miss it

In a study of nearly 12,000 adults aged 51 and older, about 46% did not meet daily protein recommendations. (Harvard Health)

## 1. Work out your real daily target

The number you were taught is the minimum, not the goal.

### WHY THIS WORKS

Sarcopenia, age-related muscle loss, reaches nearly 50% of adults above 80 and raises the risk of frailty and losing independence. Harvard Health reports that intakes above the RDA, in the 1.0 to 1.2 g per kg range, are linked to better muscle mass, strength and function in older adults.

SOURCE: HARVARD HEALTH PUBLISHING

### DO THIS WEEK

- ☐ Multiply your weight in kg by 1.0 and by 1.2 to get your range
- ☐ Write the number down where you plan meals
- ☐ If you have kidney disease or a history of kidney stones, set the target with your doctor instead

## 2. Put 20 to 30 grams into breakfast

This is the meal where the gap almost always sits.

### WHY THIS WORKS

Cleveland Clinic suggests aiming for at least 20 grams of protein per meal. Most people load nearly all of their protein into dinner, which leaves the first two-thirds of the day short. This step costs nothing.

SOURCE: CLEVELAND CLINIC

### DO THIS WEEK

- ☐ Pick two breakfasts that clear 20 g: eggs, Greek yogurt, or cottage cheese
- ☐ Use a palm-sized portion as your rough serving guide
- ☐ Run it for two weeks before buying any supplement

## 3. Spread protein across the day, do not stack it

Your body can only use so much at one sitting.

### WHY THIS WORKS

Cleveland Clinic notes the body uses roughly 25 to 40 grams of protein per sitting. The same daily total split across three meals does more for muscle than one large evening meal.

SOURCE: CLEVELAND CLINIC

### DO THIS WEEK

- ☐ Aim for a protein source at each meal, not just dinner
- ☐ Check that no single meal is carrying more than about 40 g
- ☐ Add a protein-containing snack if a meal runs light

## 4. Lift twice a week, then judge the protein

This is the half of the pair most people skip.

#### WHY THIS WORKS

Harvard Health reports that protein combined with heavy resistance exercise produces the most improvement in muscle mass and strength in healthy older adults. Protein on its own is the weaker half.

SOURCE: HARVARD HEALTH PUBLISHING

#### DO THIS WEEK

- ☐ Book two resistance sessions into the week ahead
- ☐ Judge progress over 4 to 8 weeks on strength, not on the scale
- ☐ Keep protein steady across the same period so you can read the result

## 5. If you add a powder, screen it properly

This category is loosely regulated, so certification is the shortcut.

#### WHY THIS WORKS

Harvard Health notes protein powders are classified as dietary supplements and are not held to the same standards as food or medicine, and that added sugar varies widely by brand. Harvard also reports whey appears particularly effective for muscle in older adults, more so than plant protein or casein.

SOURCE: HARVARD HEALTH PUBLISHING

#### DO THIS WEEK

- ☐ Look for independent certification such as NSF Certified for Sport
- ☐ Read the sugar line on the panel before the claims on the front
- ☐ Use it to cover the days food does not reach your target, not to replace meals

### EVERY CLAIM ABOVE, TRACED TO ITS SOURCE

Harvard Health Publishing, Muscle loss and protein needs in older adults · <https://www.health.harvard.edu/healthy-aging-and-longevity/muscle-loss-and-protein-needs-in-older-adults>

Cleveland Clinic, How to Choose the Best Protein Powder for You · <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/7-tips-choosing-best-protein-powder>

Cleveland Clinic, What Are Complete Proteins? · <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/do-i-need-to-worry-about-eating-complete-proteins>

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