

The Protein Timing Plan

For anyone trying to hold onto muscle who wonders whether when they eat protein matters as much as how much. Every line below restates a claim verified against Tier-1 medical sources. Nothing here is invented, and nothing is for sale.

✓ CHECKED AGAINST CLEVELAND CLINIC · HARVARD HEALTH

1

Daily total is the main lever

Hitting enough protein across the whole day matters more than the exact minute you eat it. (Cleveland Clinic)

2

Spread it across meals

Harvard suggests roughly 25 to 30 grams of protein at each meal rather than loading one. (Harvard Health)

3

Older adults need more

To counter age-related muscle loss, healthy older adults benefit from about 1.0 to 1.2 grams per kilogram of body weight per day. (Harvard Health)

1. Set your daily total first

This is the number that moves muscle.

WHY THIS WORKS

Harvard reports that healthy older adults benefit from about 1.0 to 1.2 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight per day to counter lost muscle, more than the baseline RDA. Work out your target before worrying about timing.

SOURCE: HARVARD HEALTH

DO THIS WEEK

- ☐ Estimate your target in grams per day
- ☐ Weigh yourself to set the kg figure
- ☐ Track one normal day of protein
- ☐ Compare the total to your target

2. Spread it evenly across meals

Even beats loading one big dinner.

WHY THIS WORKS

Harvard suggests aiming for roughly 25 to 30 grams of protein per meal. Muscle protein synthesis is maximized by about 20 to 25 grams of high-quality protein at a sitting, so even distribution helps more of what you eat go toward muscle.

SOURCE: HARVARD HEALTH

DO THIS WEEK

- ☐ Aim for 25 to 30 grams per meal
- ☐ Do not save protein for dinner
- ☐ Include a source at every meal
- ☐ Add a snack if a meal falls short

3. Anchor breakfast

The meal most people under-eat protein at.

WHY THIS WORKS

Cleveland Clinic notes most people back-load protein toward dinner and eat little at breakfast. Front-loading some protein early gives your muscles material to work with across the day rather than in one evening spike.

SOURCE: CLEVELAND CLINIC

DO THIS WEEK

- ☐ Add eggs, dairy, or a shake at breakfast
- ☐ Aim for 25 to 30 grams before noon
- ☐ Pair protein with fiber to stay full
- ☐ Keep it quick so it actually happens

4. Use a fast, complete protein to fill gaps

Food first, supplement second.

WHY THIS WORKS

Whole foods come first: eggs, dairy, fish, poultry, and legumes. When a meal or a busy day falls short, a fast, complete protein such as whey is a convenient way to hit the per-meal target, and it is rich in leucine, the amino acid that signals muscle building.

SOURCE: CLEVELAND CLINIC

DO THIS WEEK

- ☐ Cover most protein from whole foods
- ☐ Keep a complete protein for gaps
- ☐ Use it around training or busy mornings
- ☐ Do not let it replace real meals

EVERY CLAIM ABOVE, TRACED TO ITS SOURCE

Cleveland Clinic, When You Should Drink a Protein Shake · <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/when-to-drink-protein-shakes>

Harvard Health, Building Blocks (protein per meal) · <https://www.health.harvard.edu/womens-health/building-blocks>

Harvard Health, The Power of Protein · <https://www.health.harvard.edu/healthy-aging-and-longevity/the-power-of-protein>

Harvard Health, Are You Eating Enough Protein? · <https://www.health.harvard.edu/diet-and-nutrition/are-you-eating-enough-protein>

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