



FIRE FIGHTER nutrition

Eat for Health.
Eat for Life.
Eat for Real.

Tricks and Tips for Better Portion Control

For long-term health and happiness, you don't need to count calories to get the right portions for your goals. Instead, just use your hand to measure. This keeps meals simple and easy.

Portion sizes will change for someone who is more active or sedentary. Please note that portion sizes will vary depending on gender, physical activity, age and stress levels to name a few.



A portion of protein
1 palm



A portion of vegetables
1 fist



A portion of carbs
1 cupped hand



A portion of fats
1 thumb

Understand the difference between a serving and a portion. A serving is a standard unit of measure for the amount of food or drink served. A portion is the amount you actually consume. A portion may contain several servings. If portion control is more of an issue when you go out to eat, have a healthy snack or drink 8 ounces of water before you leave.

Focus on eating whole foods. Avoid pre-packaged, food-like substances as much as possible. Include protein, healthy fats and vegetables until you are satiated (that feeling where you are about 80% full). Don't deprive yourself since this always backfires, causing you to eat more food later in the day. Most processed foods have chemical additives that make it difficult for us to limit consumption.

Include healthy fats in your diet. This will help you feel satiated longer, which may help avoid overeating. Healthy fats also allow your body to absorb the fat-soluble vitamins your body needs. Ideas include avocado, nuts, seeds, olive oil, grass-fed butter and ghee. Having a salad? You'll feel full longer and absorb more nutrients if you add some fresh avocado or a dressing that includes a healthy fat, like olive oil.

Eat off smaller plates. When you put food on a large plate, you almost automatically want to try to fill it up and then feel like you need to finish it all. By using smaller plates (and bowls) you may find that you eat less but still feel comfortably full. Many restaurants have large portions. Ask for a to-go box right away and plan to take part of your meal home for leftovers. Get rid of the "I have to clean my plate" mentality, slow down and stop eating when you are comfortably full.

When snacking, place the snack on a plate (or bowl) rather than eating right out of the bag or container. This is a huge help as you're more aware of how much you are eating and can better manage portions this way. Plan ahead and have snacks that are portable, visible and readily accessible in the station. Portion them out into a small, single-serve-size container or Ziploc.

Be mindful and slow down. Mindful eating is when you pay close attention to the way you (and your body) feel before, during and after a meal or snack. By slowing down and enjoying your food more, you end up eating less. Remember to chew each bite more, relax and enjoy!

*Image credit: Precision Nutrition

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