

MRTEMPO

The Calorie & Macro Guide

A no-nonsense guide to understanding your numbers.
No obsessive tracking. No complicated maths. Just clarity.

01 **What Are Calories & Macros**
The basics, explained simply

02 **Finding Your Numbers**
Your calories, protein, and how to set them

03 **What A Day Actually Looks Like**
Real meals, real numbers

04 **Tracking Without Losing Your Mind**
When to track, when to stop, how to eyeball

05 **Adjusting As You Go**
What to do when progress stalls

@MrTempoFitness

What Are Calories & Macros

Before you do anything else, you need to understand what these two words actually mean. Not the science textbook version — the version that actually matters for losing fat.

Calories — Your Energy Budget

A calorie is just a unit of energy. Every food and drink you consume gives your body energy, measured in calories (kcal). Your body then burns that energy to keep you alive — breathing, thinking, walking, training, everything.

Think of it like a bank account. Money in, money out. If you eat more calories than you burn, the excess gets stored as fat. If you eat fewer than you burn, your body pulls from its fat reserves to make up the difference. **That's fat loss.**

Macros — Where Your Calories Come From

Macros (macronutrients) are the three types of nutrient that make up every food you eat. Each one provides a different amount of energy:

| Macro | Calories per gram | What it does |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Protein | 4 kcal | Builds and protects muscle. Keeps you full. Highest priority. |
| Carbohydrates | 4 kcal | Your body's main energy source. Fuels training and daily activity. |
| Fats | 9 kcal | Supports hormones, brain function, and absorbs vitamins. |

Notice that fat has more than double the calories per gram compared to protein or carbs. That's why a handful of nuts (mostly fat) can have the same calories as a full chicken breast (mostly protein). This doesn't make fats bad — it just means you need to be aware of portions.

The Two-Number Approach

You don't need to obsess over all three macros. For fat loss, just nail two numbers:

- 1. Your calorie target** — this creates the deficit.
- 2. Your protein target** — this protects your muscle.

Get these right and split the remaining calories between carbs and fats however you prefer. Love pasta? Eat more carbs. Prefer avocados and cheese? Go higher fat. It doesn't matter.

SECTION 02

Finding Your Numbers

Here's how to work out your calorie and protein targets. It takes about 60 seconds. No complicated formulas, no apps needed.

Step 1: Estimate Your Maintenance Calories

Your maintenance calories (also called TDEE) is how many calories you'd eat to stay the same weight. Take your body weight in kg and multiply it based on your activity level:

| Your Activity Level | Multiply by |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Sedentary — desk job, barely move | 28 - 30 |
| Lightly active — walk a bit, 1-2 gym sessions | 30 - 32 |
| Moderately active — 3-5 sessions per week | 32 - 35 |
| Very active — 6+ intense sessions, active job | 35 - 38 |

Example: You weigh 85kg and you train 4 times a week (moderately active).
 $85 \times 33 = 2,805$ calories. Round to 2,800. That's roughly your maintenance.

Step 2: Create Your Deficit

To lose fat, eat **20% below your maintenance**. This is the sweet spot — aggressive enough to see results every week, but moderate enough that you're not starving, your training doesn't suffer, and you can actually stick to it.

Example: $2,800 \times 0.80 = 2,240$ calories per day. Round to 2,250. Done.

Step 3: Set Your Protein

Protein is the most important macro when you're in a deficit. It protects your muscle mass, keeps you feeling full for longer, and burns the most calories during digestion (the thermic effect). Your target:

2g

per kg
body weight

85kg person = 170g of protein per day.

That's your non-negotiable. If you only track one thing in your entire diet, make it this. Everything else is secondary.

Step 4: Fill The Rest

Once calories and protein are set, you've got remaining calories to split between carbs and fats. Here's the honest truth: **for fat loss, this split barely matters.** What matters is total calories and total protein. Fill the rest with whatever you prefer.

If you do want a starting point: aim for roughly **25-30% of calories from fats** and let carbs fill the rest. But don't stress over it. Eat the foods you enjoy.

Tip: Use the free MrTempo Calorie Calculator at macros.mrtempofitness.com to get your numbers instantly — just plug in your details and it does the maths for you.

SECTION 03

What A Day Actually Looks Like

Numbers are useless if you can't picture what they look like on a plate. So here are two full example days — both hitting roughly the same targets but with completely different meals. Normal food. Nothing weird. All from Tesco.

Example Day 1 — 2,250 cals | 170g protein

| Meal | What You're Eating | Cals | Protein |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Breakfast | 3 scrambled eggs, 2 wholemeal toast, butter | ~450 | 28g |
| Snack | Greek yoghurt (200g) + scoop protein powder | ~230 | 38g |
| Lunch | Chicken wrap — grilled chicken, tortilla, salad, light mayo | ~430 | 38g |
| Snack | Protein bar (Grenade / Barebells) | ~220 | 20g |
| Dinner | Spaghetti bolognese — 5% lean mince, spaghetti, tomato sauce | ~520 | 42g |
| Evening | Protein shake with milk | ~200 | 30g |
| | TOTAL | ~2,050 | 196g |

That's a normal day of eating. Eggs and toast. A wrap. Spag bol. Nothing extreme. But you've hit 196g of protein and you're under 2,250 calories with room to spare for a biscuit or a bit of fruit. That's what eating in a deficit actually looks like.

Example Day 2 — 2,250 cal | 170g protein

| Meal | What You're Eating | Cals | Protein |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Breakfast | Overnight oats — oats, protein powder, yoghurt, banana | ~420 | 35g |
| Snack | 2 boiled eggs + rice cake with peanut butter | ~250 | 16g |
| Lunch | Chicken burrito bowl — chicken, rice, beans, salsa, cheese | ~530 | 45g |
| Snack | Cottage cheese (150g) + handful of grapes | ~140 | 16g |
| Dinner | Homemade burger — 5% mince, brioche bun, salad, wedges | ~560 | 38g |
| Evening | Beef jerky pack | ~180 | 22g |
| | TOTAL | ~2,080 | 172g |

Burrito bowl. A burger. Overnight oats. Beef jerky. None of this is diet food — it's just normal meals where you've prioritised protein and watched the portions. That's the whole game.

Tip: Notice neither day is exactly 2,250 calories. That's fine. If you're within 100 calories of your target most days, you're doing it right. Don't chase perfection — chase consistency.

SECTION 04

Tracking Without Losing Your Mind

Here's what nobody tells you about calorie and macro tracking: **you're not supposed to do it forever.** It's a tool, not a lifestyle. You use it to build awareness, then you put it down.

The Three Phases of Tracking

Phase 1: Learn (Weeks 1-4)

Track everything. Use an app like MyFitnessPal or just a notes app on your phone. Weigh your food. Be accurate. The goal here isn't perfection — it's education. You're learning what 170g of protein actually looks like. What 500 calories feels like. Most people are shocked by how much (or how little) they've been eating.

Phase 2: Simplify (Weeks 5-8)

By now you know roughly what's in your regular meals. Stop weighing everything. Eyeball your portions. Only log if you're eating something new or you're unsure about. Stick to your go-to meals most of the time — they become automatic.

Phase 3: Instinct (Week 9+)

You don't need the app anymore. You can look at a plate and roughly know the calories and protein. You've built the skill. Check in once a month or if progress stalls, but day-to-day? You've got this. Eat smart, live your life.

The Eyeball Method — Portions Without Scales

Once you're past Phase 1, you don't need kitchen scales. Use your hand:

| Your Hand | Portion Size | Example |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Palm | 1 serving of protein (~30g) | A chicken breast, a fillet of fish |
| Fist | 1 serving of carbs (~40g) | A portion of rice, pasta, or potatoes |
| Thumb | 1 serving of fats (~15g) | A thumb of peanut butter, oil, or cheese |
| Cupped hand | 1 serving of veg | Handful of broccoli, spinach, or salad |

Tip: A meal built with your hand: 2 palms of protein + 1 fist of carbs + 1 thumb of fats + 2 cupped hands of veg = roughly 500-600 calories with 40g+ protein. No app needed.

SECTION 05

Adjusting As You Go

Your numbers aren't set in stone. As you lose weight, your body burns fewer calories. As you get leaner, fat loss slows down. That's normal. Here's how to handle it.

When To Adjust

If your **weekly average weight** hasn't dropped in **2-3 weeks** — and you're being honest about what you're eating — it's time to make a small adjustment. Not before. Weight fluctuates daily (water, sodium, sleep, stress). Ignore daily swings. Look at the weekly trend.

How To Adjust

You've got two simple options. Pick one:

| Option | What To Do | Why It Works |
|----------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Option A | Reduce calories by 100-150 per day | Deepens the deficit slightly without crashing energy |
| Option B | Add 1,500-2,000 more daily steps | Burns extra calories through NEAT without touching food |

Small adjustments. Not dramatic ones. If you drop 500 calories overnight, you'll crash your energy, training will suffer, and you'll end up binge eating at the weekend. The tortoise beats the hare every time.

When To Take A Break

After 8-12 weeks in a deficit, it's smart to take a **diet break**. Eat at maintenance for 1-2 weeks. You won't gain fat — you'll just give your body a reset. Your metabolism recovers, hunger hormones normalise, and you'll actually lose more fat in the long run because you can sustain the next phase of the deficit.

The Adjustment Ladder

Stalled for 2-3 weeks? Try these in order:

1. Tighten up tracking — are you being accurate?
2. Add more daily steps (cheapest adjustment).
3. Cut 100-150 calories from your target.
4. If still stalled after 10+ weeks — take a diet break at maintenance.

Your Calorie & Macro Checklist

Keep it simple. These are the only things that matter:

- ✓ Work out your maintenance calories (bodyweight x activity multiplier)
- ✓ Set your deficit at 20% below maintenance
- ✓ Aim for 2g of protein per kg of bodyweight every day
- ✓ Split remaining calories between carbs and fats — your preference
- ✓ Track properly for 4 weeks to build awareness
- ✓ Transition to eyeballing portions by week 5-8
- ✓ Monitor your weekly average weight — not daily
- ✓ If stalled for 2-3 weeks: add steps or cut 100-150 cals
- ✓ Take a diet break after 8-12 weeks of consistent dieting

"Track to learn. Eyeball to live. Stay consistent to change."

Want the full system?

Training plans, meal prep guide, and more at mrtempofitness.com

@MrTempoFitness