



HALLMARK COACHING
THE JOURNEY IS THE STANDARD

VOL. I · THE HALLMARK LIBRARY

Nutrition That Actually Sticks

Everything that matters. Nothing that doesn't.

A no-nonsense walk through how nutrition really works - how to find your numbers, build your meals, and keep it all going when life gets in the way. Built on the fundamentals, backed by free calculators to do the maths for you.

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THROUGHOUT THIS GUIDE

Look for these boxes - they point you to **free calculators** that do the maths for you at hallmarkcoaching.co.uk/tools

Most people don't fail because they lack willpower. They fail because they were handed a plan built for someone else - too strict, too complicated, impossible to sustain. This guide fixes that by teaching you the principles, so you can make your own smart decisions for life.

01

Energy Balance

Every diet that has ever worked - keto, fasting, calorie counting, "clean eating" - works for one reason: it changes your energy balance. Master this one idea and everything else clicks into place.

It comes down to energy in versus energy out. Whatever you eat is either burned for fuel or stored. That's it.

- Deficit (eat less than you burn) - your body tops up from its own stores, so fat and weight come down.
- Surplus (eat more than you burn) - the extra gets stored, and weight goes up.
- Balance (eat what you burn) - weight holds steady.

What "energy out" is made of

The calories you burn each day - your Total Daily Energy Expenditure (TDEE) - come from three places:

COMPONENT	WHAT IT IS	SHARE OF DAILY BURN
Resting metabolism	Energy just to keep you alive at rest	50-70%
Digestion	Energy to break down and process food	6-10%
Movement	All activity - training, walking, fidgeting	20-40%

Notice that movement is the part you control most. That's why steps and daily activity matter so much - more on that later.

THE MINDSET SHIFT

There are no "fattening" foods - only total intake over time. This is why all-or-nothing dieting fails, and why flexibility wins. You never need to fear a single meal.

Finding Your Numbers

To eat with intention, you need a starting point - roughly how many calories keep you where you are (maintenance), so you can then eat below or above it for your goal. Here's how it's done.

Step 1 - Estimate your resting metabolism (BMR)

Your Basal Metabolic Rate is what your body burns at complete rest. A lab measures it in a fasted, resting state - not practical for most people, so we estimate it with the Mifflin-St Jeor equation, the most accurate for modern populations:

SEX	MIFFLIN-ST JEOR BMR EQUATION
Men	$(10 \times \text{kg}) + (6.25 \times \text{cm}) - (5 \times \text{age}) + 5$
Women	$(10 \times \text{kg}) + (6.25 \times \text{cm}) - (5 \times \text{age}) - 161$

Step 2 - Scale it for your activity

Nobody lies still all day, so multiply your BMR by an activity factor to get your maintenance calories:

ACTIVITY LEVEL	MULTIPLIER
Sedentary (little or no exercise)	$\times 1.2$
Lightly active (1-3 days/week)	$\times 1.375$
Moderately active (3-5 days/week)	$\times 1.55$
Very active (6-7 days/week)	$\times 1.725$
Extra active (hard daily / physical job)	$\times 1.9$

WORKED EXAMPLE — 30-YEAR-OLD MAN, 80KG, 178CM, TRAINS 4×/WEEK

BMR: $(10 \times 80) + (6.25 \times 178) - (5 \times 30) + 5$ **1,767 kcal**

Maintenance: $1,767 \times 1.55$ (moderate) **2,740 kcal**

Step 3 - Set your goal

From your maintenance, adjust for what you want:

- Fat loss: eat 300–500 kcal below maintenance. Roughly 1 lb of fat equals 3,500 kcal, so a 500/day deficit is about 1 lb per week.
- Muscle gain: eat 200–300 kcal above maintenance - enough to build, without piling on fat.
- Maintenance: eat at your number - for diet breaks or holding your shape.

THE SAFETY GUARDRAIL

Don't crash it. Avoid dropping more than 500 kcal below maintenance, or eating below your BMR. Bigger deficits cost you muscle, energy and sanity - and trigger the very "starvation" adaptations that stall progress.



FREE TOOL

Don't want to do the maths? The [Macro Calculator](#) runs this exact method - Harris-Benedict, your activity, your steps, your goal - and gives you calories and macros instantly. Just after your maintenance number? Use the [Maintenance Finder](#).

AN HONEST CAVEAT

These formulas are a starting point, not the full picture. They can't see your training history, your stress, your sleep, your hormones, or how your metabolism actually adapts as you diet. Two people with identical stats can need meaningfully different numbers. The real answer is found the same way it is in coaching: start from the estimate, track your weekly data, and adjust from how [your](#) body responds. That individualisation - reading the data and knowing which lever to pull - is precisely what you're getting when you're coached.

Protein - The One to Get Right

If you change one thing about how you eat, make it this. Protein is the most important macronutrient for anyone training, and the one most people fall short on.

Why it matters so much

- Preserves muscle in a deficit - so you lose fat, not muscle. The leaner you get and the harder you diet, the more this matters.
- Builds muscle when you're training and eating enough.
- Keeps you full - it's the most satiating macro, so you're less hungry.
- Costs energy to digest - your body burns more processing protein than carbs or fat.

How much you need

GOAL	DAILY PROTEIN
Fat loss (preserve muscle)	2.0-2.4g per kg
Building muscle	1.8-2.2g per kg
General health / maintenance	1.6-2.0g per kg
Endurance athletes	1.2-1.6g per kg

One important nuance: if you're carrying a lot of body fat, base this on your estimated **lean** mass rather than total weight - otherwise the number comes out unrealistically high, since fat tissue doesn't need the same protein support.

DISTRIBUTION MATTERS TOO

Spread protein across 3-5 meals at roughly 0.3-0.4g per kg each (around 25-35g for most people). Your body uses it better in regular hits than one big serving.



FREE TOOL

The **Protein Target** tool sets your daily number from your bodyweight, body-fat estimate, age and goal - and shows what it looks like in real food.

Fats & Carbs

Once protein is set, the rest of your calories are split between fats and carbs. Neither is the enemy - both do real jobs.

Fats - for your hormones

Dietary fat is essential: it supports hormone production (including testosterone and oestrogen), brain health, and absorption of vitamins A, D, E and K. Set fats at around 0.8–1.0g per kg of bodyweight, and never drop below roughly 0.6g/kg - go too low for too long and hormones and mood suffer.

Good sources: olive oil, oily fish, nuts, seeds, avocado, whole eggs. They're calorie-dense (9 kcal per gram, versus 4 for protein and carbs), so a little goes a long way.

Carbs - for your energy

Carbohydrates are your body's preferred fuel, especially for training. Your brain alone uses around 120g of glucose a day. Carbs also spare protein - with enough of them, your body won't break down muscle for energy.

After protein and fats are set, carbs fill the rest of your calories. Put more of them around training for performance and recovery. Favour whole sources - rice, potatoes, oats, fruit, wholegrains - for the fibre and micronutrients that come with them.

THE ORDER TO BUILD MACROS

Protein first (goal + bodyweight). Fats second (hormone health). Carbs fill whatever calories remain. That's the exact order a coach sets them - and what the calculator does for you.



FREE TOOL

The **Macro Calculator** builds all three in this order automatically - protein, then fats, then carbs to fill your target.

Building a Plate That Works

You won't weigh every gram forever. Once you know the shape of a good meal, you can build one anywhere - home, eating out, at a mate's.

- 1** Start with protein.
A palm-to-hand-sized portion - chicken, beef, fish, eggs, Greek yoghurt, tofu. Build the meal around this.
- 2** Fill half the plate with vegetables.
Volume, fibre and micronutrients for almost no calories - they keep you full.
- 3** Add a carb portion for energy.
A cupped hand of rice, potatoes, pasta or oats - more on training days.
- 4** Add a thumb of fats.
Olive oil, nuts, avocado, whole eggs. Modest portions - they're calorie-dense.

THE HAND METHOD - NO SCALES NEEDED

Palm of protein · fist of veg · cupped hand of carbs · thumb of fats. Scale up or down for your size, hunger and goal. Portable, simple, and sustainable for life.

The Quiet Multipliers

You can nail your calories and macros and still stall if these four are ignored. They're not glamorous - but they're what separate people who progress from people who plateau.

Fibre

Most people eat nowhere near enough. Aim for 25–35g a day from vegetables, fruit, wholegrains, beans and legumes. Fibre keeps you full, feeds your gut, steadies energy and supports digestion.

Water

Aim for 2–3 litres a day, more when training hard or in heat. Thirst is often mistaken for hunger - staying hydrated genuinely helps appetite, energy and performance.

Sleep

Under-slept people are hungrier, crave more sugar, and lose more muscle when dieting. Poor sleep raises hunger hormones and lowers the ones that keep you satisfied. 7–9 hours isn't a luxury - it's part of the plan.

Steps & daily movement

The biggest calorie burner for most people isn't the gym - it's everything else (remember: movement is 20–40% of your burn). A target of 8,000–10,000 steps a day does more for fat loss than most realise, and it's far easier to sustain than punishing cardio. If fat loss stalls, adding 2,000–3,000 steps usually beats cutting food further.



FREE TOOL

Wondering how long your goal should realistically take? The [Goal Timeline](#) tool gives you an honest estimate based on sustainable weekly rates.

Myths Worth Dropping

A few beliefs that quietly hold people back - and what the evidence actually says.

THE MYTH

"Carbs make you fat."

THE TRUTH

Excess **calories** cause fat gain - from any source. Carbs are your body's preferred training fuel. Amount and timing matter, not the carb itself.

THE MYTH

"Eating late ruins progress."

THE TRUTH

Your body has no clock that flips fat-storage on at 8pm. Total daily intake is what counts. Eat at times that suit your life.

THE MYTH

"You must detox or cut food groups."

THE TRUTH

Your liver and kidneys detox you constantly, for free. Cutting whole groups usually just cuts calories - and makes eating miserable to sustain.

THE MYTH

"Faster is better."

THE TRUTH

Crash diets cost muscle, energy and sanity, and rebound hard. Slower, steady loss holds onto muscle and actually stays off.

Making It Stick

Knowing the theory is the easy part. Here's what actually carries results over months - and the checklist that ties the whole guide together.

Judge the trend, not the day

Weight fluctuates daily with water, food and sleep. Weigh yourself in the same conditions and track a weekly average. Judge progress over 2–3 weeks, not morning to morning.

Adjust slowly

Your calculated numbers are a **starting point** - everyone responds slightly differently. Give any change 2–3 weeks of consistency before judging it, then adjust by 100–200 kcal if needed. This is exactly how a coach works: set the framework, then refine from real data.

Your checklist

- Know your maintenance and your goal target (use the calculators).
- Hit your protein - every day, spread across meals.
- Set fats for hormones; let carbs fill the rest.
- Build each plate: protein, veg, a carb portion, a little fat.
- 25–35g of fibre from whole foods.
- 80% whole foods, 20% for the things you enjoy.
- 2–3 litres of water a day.
- Protect your sleep - 7–9 hours.
- Walk 8,000–10,000 steps a day.
- Track the weekly average; adjust slowly.

THE ONE THAT MATTERS MOST

Consistency beats perfection every single time. A "good enough" plan you follow for months will change your body. A "perfect" plan you quit in two weeks won't. Aim for sustainable, not flawless.



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This is where it starts.

The journey is the standard.

You now understand more about nutrition than most people ever will. But understanding the principles and applying them to **your** life, your schedule and your body are two different things.

That's what coaching is for – taking these fundamentals and building them into a plan made for you, adjusted from your real results, with someone in your corner the whole way.

Apply for a free consultation

Free calculators anytime at hallmarkcoaching.co.uk/tools

This guide is for general education and reflects established, evidence-based nutrition principles. It is not medical or personalised dietary advice. If you have a medical condition, are pregnant, or have a history of disordered eating, consult a qualified healthcare professional before changing your nutrition.

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