



How Much Food Do You Need?

How much food does your body really need? Unfortunately, in today's world, it is hard to get a clear picture of how much we should be throwing down the ol' chute to keep us alive and kicking.

We live in a society of extremes. The first extreme, according to the Journal of the American Medical Association, sees our portion sizes dramatically increasing both inside and outside the home during the last two decades. The second extreme is the proliferation of diets pushing low calorie meal plans for weight loss and, more recently, to increase one's longevity on this planet.

So, "what gives?", you ask? What do we believe, and more importantly, what do we follow? Do we eat everything on our plates (which, by the way are 2-3 inches larger in diameter than they were when we were kids), or do we throw the plates away and start living off of lettuce and air for a svelte and longer-living figure? The contradictions out there are hard to keep up with, let alone follow.

I suggest that the first step you take in making sure your body is getting the right amount of food and energy is to find out how many calories you actually need in a day. The following is a formula to estimate your daily caloric requirement.

Formula	Example
1. To determine your resting metabolic rate (RMR), which is the number of calories the body needs for basic bodily functions, multiply your body weight by 10.	<i>135 pound person</i> $135 \times 10 = 1350 \text{ calories (RMR)}$ <i>1350 calories</i> are approximately what is needed for the functioning of the vital organs, such as the heart, lungs, brain and the rest of the nervous system, liver, kidneys, sex organs, muscles and skin
1. Determine how many calories you will need for your daily activity level.	<i>Sedentary: 20-40%</i> <i>Moderately Active: 40-60%</i> <i>Very Active: 60-80%</i> An individual between moderate and very active $60\% \times 1350 \text{ calories} = 810 \text{ calories}$ <i>810 extra calories</i> are needed to fuel the body for walking, talking, exercising and all other movements not associated with the body's resting metabolic rate (RMR).
1. Add the answers to steps 1 and 2 for an estimate of your daily calorie requirement.	$1350 \text{ (RMR)} + 810 \text{ activity calories} =$ <i>2160 calorie requirement</i>

Once you have determined your caloric requirement for the day, you can then make adjustments to your diet. These adjustments could be due to the fact that you may want to gain, maintain or lose weight. If you wish to lose weight, experts suggest taking no more than 20% off of your total calorie requirement. Any more calories subtracted from your daily diet and you run the risk of slowing down your body's metabolism, as well as not providing enough food to satisfy or energize you.

Does this mean that counting calories is back? I hope not, especially since numbers are not my thing. However, what this formula can assist you with is providing you with an estimate of the number of calories needed to fuel your body and a starting number to make any necessary adjustments according to your own personal health and fitness goals.

Find out more nutrition information, as well as the best exercises you should be doing for your body, under your own trainer. Join today and not only reach your fitness goals, but crush them out of the park!