

How to quickly determine "protein needs" and assess your "protein intake"

You could be losing muscle. How to calculate if you're getting enough protein (baseline protein) to stay in positive nitrogen balance. This applies if you are exercising 3 days per week, exercising strenuously, and WANT RESULTS!

CALCULATE MINIMUM PROTEIN REQUIREMENTS

1. Determine bottom range (MINIMUM) daily protein needs. Choose formula a,b, or c based on goals

- A. LOSE FAT: Your Weight (pounds) x.65= Protein Grams
- B. GAIN STRENGTH/maintain weight: Your Weight (pounds) x.8= Protein Grams
- C. GAIN STRENGTH AND WEIGHT: Your Weight (pounds) x1= Protein Grams

(The above formula is the **minimum** amount of protein to stay out of negative nitrogen balance. A negative nitrogen balance is where you are losing more nitrogen than you are taking in. This leads to a loss in lean body mass.

2. Determine how many daily exchanges (units) of protein you need per day.

Daily Protein Grams / 7 (protein grams in 1 exchange) = Protein Exchanges

ASSESS CURRENT PROTEIN INTAKE

3. ASSESS protein intake over the last 24 hours. Work backwards starting from last meal, moving into yesterday. Use HPT quick protein exchange chart to calculate meal exchanges

Meal	Amount	Animal Protein Source	Exchange Equivalent

total exchanges: Does this match goal exchanges?

Quick Protein Exchange Chart (commit to memory)

1 protein exchange (7 grams of protein)	Visual references	
	Hand	Common Objects
1 oz meat	1.5 fingers	4 dice (deck of cards is approximately 3 oz)
1 to 1.5 oz of fish	1.5 to 2 fingers	4 to 6 dice
1 oz cheese	thumb	3 dice
1/4 cup cottage cheese	palm of your hand	golf ball
1/4 cup greek yogurt	palm of your hand	golf ball
1 whole egg or 2 whites		
1/3 scoop of protein powder		

4. Determine how many protein containing meals you will eat per day (minimum= 4)

#Meals

5. Layout how many exchanges of protein you will need per meal in the chart below. Many options are available. Typically the snacks will be 1/3 to 1/4 smaller than the main meals.

Exchanges

Breakfast	
Morning snack	
Lunch	
Afternoon snack	
Dinner	
Even. Snack	
total	

Here's how to convert grams from a label into exchanges

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 stick (42g)

Amount per serving

Protein 14g

divided by 7 = 2 protein exchanges

Does the total match your goal exchanges?