

**WORKING AGAINST GRAVITY**

# **MACRO CALCULATION CHEAT SHEET**

**Learn how to calculate your macros based on your  
unique goals, preferences and body**



# Welcome to Working Against Gravity

If you were expecting a quick "enter my weight and get some numbers" calculator with no education, we're definitely **not** sorry to disappoint.

Sure, we could have created some tech that spits macro numbers at you (trust us, we know some *great* tech guys). But at WAG Nutrition, our goal is to educate you so you can make the most confident, informed food decisions possible in any situation.

## Enter—the WAG Macro Calculation Cheat Sheet.

Follow the steps outlined below and you'll learn where macro calculations come from so you can insure that your macros are unique to your body, goals, lifestyle, and preferences. When your macros are personalized to *you*, there is a much higher chance you'll stick with them, create consistency, and get the results you're after.

Finding your initial set of macros is a starting point based on formulas that have been widely researched and concluded as safe for the average healthy human.

**But, setting starting macros is still an art.** WAG coaches have worked with over 25,000 people and have extensive experience taking the information we're about to share with you and applying it to our members' unique circumstances.

The “magic” in tracking macros is in paying close attention to how your body responds to a given set of targets and knowing when and how to make adjustments for continued progress.

On the last page of this guide, you'll find a [calculation worksheet](#). Fill it out as you work through the step-by-step instructions to set your macros.

**Let's get started.**

MACRO CALCULATION CHEAT SHEET

STEP 1: DETERMINE BASELINE CALORIES

First, you need to determine your estimated “maintenance calorie level”. This is the number of calories you would need to consume to maintain your current weight. **Start by determining your activity level.** This will tell you which calorie multiplier to use.

*Note: Women or those with a "slower" metabolic rate should use the lower value, and men or those with a "faster" metabolic rate should use the higher value.*

ACTIVITY MULTIPLIER GUIDE

ACTIVITY LEVEL	DESCRIPTION	CALCULATION
BELOW AVERAGE	Minimal Exercise + Normal Activity	Body Weight (lbs) x 12-14 calories
AVERAGE	1 Hour of Exercise 4-5x/Week + Normal Daily Activity	Body Weight (lbs) x 14-16 calories
ABOVE AVERAGE	2-3 Hours of Exercise 4-5x/Week + Normal Daily Activity	Body Weight (lbs) x 16-18 calories
EXTREME ATHLETE	Extremely competitive athletes or those exercising more frequently than "Above Average"	Body Weight (lbs) x 18+ calories

**Don't forget:** No matter what equation you use, this is still a "best guess estimation" and appropriate changes (we'll chat about this towards the end of the course), when needed, creates results.

## CASE STUDY

Follow along with our case study, Jane, as we calculate her calories, deficit, and unique starting macros. **Here are her stats:**

- 160lb female
- 30 years old
- Approximately 30% body fat
- Attends CrossFit 5x per week
- Sits 8-9 hours per day at her desk
- Moderate stress
- New to tracking and prefers Paleo-style eating
- **Goal: Lose 15-20lbs and improve her CrossFit performance**

### DETERMINE JANE'S BASELINE CALORIES

Because Jane is female and exercises 5x a week, we'll choose 14 as a multiplier

$$160\text{LBS} \times 14 \text{ CALORIES PER LB} = 2240 \text{ CALORIES}$$

## STEP 2: CONSIDER YOUR GOAL

Next, determine your primary goal. Do you want to get leaner (lose body fat)? Add muscle? Your goal will affect how you should adjust your maintenance level calories.

## DEFICIT / SURPLUS GUIDE

GOAL	DEFICIT/SURPLUS
BUILD MASS	<p>Increase estimated maintenance calories.</p> <p><b>Start with a 10-15% increase</b></p>
LOSE BODY FAT	<p>Choose an appropriate deficit. This will depend on factors such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timeframe (making weight for a competition, an upcoming event etc...)</li> <li>• Performance goals in the gym</li> <li>• Your current body weight and composition.</li> </ul> <p><i>Further instructions on how to choose your calorie deficit in step three.</i></p>
OTHER	<p>If you are looking for a lifestyle shift or improvements in your gym performance. You may choose to begin with maintenance-level calories and see how you feel after a week or two!</p>

## CASE STUDY

Jane's primary goal is to lose body fat and she doesn't have a specific timeframe so we'll start her in a calorie deficit. We'll take this into account when we determine her deficit and set her initial macros.

## STEP 3: CHOOSE YOUR DEFICIT

If your goal is to lose body fat, you will need to consume fewer calories each day than you are burning. This is called a **calorie deficit**.

A deficit could be anywhere from 10-30% (or more) of your maintenance-level calories. The right deficit for you depends on the factors outlined below. Make sure to read the pros and cons of each deficit before making a decision and ask yourself if you identify with a specific "WHO IS IT BEST FOR?" characteristic.

### SMALL DEFICIT (10-15% below maintenance calorie levels)

#### PROS

- This deficit can be accomplished with very small qualitative changes.
- Smaller changes are generally less intrusive and may be easier to stick to.
- A small deficit involves less overall restriction, which can lead to better long-term adherence (and results!)
- Your chance of performance hindrance is lower which is important to keep in mind if you're an athlete.

#### CONS

- Progress is slower than with a moderate or large deficit.
- A higher degree of precision is needed. With a small deficit, small mistakes with food tracking or regularly going over your targets add up much faster and can often negate the deficit altogether!

#### WHO IS IT BEST FOR?

- Someone who is already lean with little fat to lose.
- A meticulous individual who measures everything they eat to the gram.
- People with a high level of macro-tracking experience.
- Athletes who are very serious about their training and dietary intake.

## MACRO CALCULATION CHEAT SHEET

### MODERATE DEFICIT (20-25% below maintenance calorie levels)

#### PROS

- Faster average fat loss for most people.
- Does not require massive food restrictions or increases in your activity to achieve.
- Faster fat loss means your goal is often reached in a shorter timeframe.
- It is harder to eliminate the deficit completely by tracking mistakes or macro overages.

#### CONS

- You may feel more restricted in terms of food choices and intake than with a smaller deficit.
- Your body may "fight back" to some degree with hormonal and metabolic changes.
- For individuals who have a significant amount of weight to lose, this may still take an extended amount of time.

#### WHO IS IT BEST FOR?

- Anyone looking for slow and steady progress without feeling incredibly restricted.
- Patient and goal-oriented individuals.
- The majority of the population will work best on a moderate deficit.

### LARGE DEFICIT (More than 25% below maintenance calorie levels)

#### PROS

- The fastest rate of fat loss and a quick initial drop in weight
- For those under a time constraint (making weight for a meet, wedding, special event, vacation) this may be the "only option".
- With appropriate protein intake and weight training, muscle loss can be minimized (but not altogether avoided)
- It is difficult to offset the deficit with tracking mistakes.

#### CONS

- Without adequate protein intake and weight training muscle loss is more likely.
- There is very little food flexibility and it is common to feel very restricted and hungry. This can lead to low long-term adherence.
- Can negatively impact training/recovery. Increased exercise during a large deficit will cause more problems.

#### WHO IS IT BEST FOR?

- Impatient people who are motivated by quick weight loss.
- Anyone who MUST lose fat for a specific event in a short timeframe.
- Athletes who are willing to take a step back from their training regimen. (ex: 2 weeks in a large deficit with a cut to training may be better than 10 weeks on a moderate deficit)

## MACRO CALCULATION CHEAT SHEET

If your goal is to gain muscle, we recommend starting with a 10-15% increase above your baseline calories. Gaining muscle without putting on fat mass is a long, intentional process that requires a complementary training program.

### CASE STUDY

We'll choose a moderate deficit of 20% for Jane. It is deep enough to bring about results relatively quickly without requiring significant food restrictions. We also don't want her deficit to impact CrossFit performance.

$$2240 \text{ CALORIES} \times 20\% \text{ DEFICIT}$$
$$2240 \times 0.2 = 448 \text{ CALORIE DEFICIT}$$

$$2240 - 448 \text{ CALORIES} = 1792 \text{ CALORIES}$$

### GET A WAG COACH

Wondering "what is best for me" can take a lot of mental time and energy. [A WAG coach](#) will help you take the guesswork out of your nutrition so you can focus on building habits and putting our nutrition recommendations into action. Through weekly check-ins and unlimited messages, your coach will get to know you, provide feedback and support, and make personalized macro changes based on your goals and needs.



## MEET YOUR COACH

Get support from our team with a customized nutrition plan and unlimited messaging

[JOIN WAG](#)

MACRO CALCULATION CHEAT SHEET

**STEP 4: DETERMINE YOUR MACROS**

Now that you've determined the deficit and starting calories that are right for you, it's time to figure out what those calories are made up of. We're going to determine your unique macro breakdown. When determining macros, begin with protein then move on to fats and save carbs for last.

**MACRO #1: PROTEIN**

The current recommended dietary allowance (RDA) for protein in healthy adults is 0.4 grams per pound of body weight. However, if you exercise regularly, there is a high risk of consuming insufficient amounts of protein. This can lead to impaired recovery and even muscle loss. We recommend starting between 0.7-1 gram of protein **per pound** (yep, you read that right, *pound!*) of body weight.

**PROTEIN REQUIREMENTS**

ACTIVITY TYPE	PROTEIN NEEDS
ENDURANCE	0.7 - 1.2g / lb body weight
STRENGTH & POWER	0.9 - 1.3g / lb body weight (if athlete is looking for extreme leanness, protein needs may extend above 1.3g/lb)
MIXED (CrossFit, MMA, Field Sports)	0.8 - 1.3g / lb body weight
ELITE	Extremely competitive athletes will be at the higher end of these ranges

# MACRO CALCULATION CHEAT SHEET

**Note:** If you struggle to consume enough protein, start on the lower end of these ranges and work on building protein habits and feeling successful at a lower target. Then, slowly increase protein intake to more "ideal" levels as your confidence and habits build.

## CASE STUDY

Jane participates in CrossFit which is considered a mixed sport. She has never tracked her food before, so she *may* find it challenging to consume a high quantity of protein at the beginning of her program. But, she enjoys eating a paleo diet so we will start her within the .8-1.3g range for mixed sport athletes with the hope of raising her protein intake in the future.

**0.8g/lb x 160 lbs = 128g Protein**

To keep things simpler (and memorable for Jane) we'll round this up to 130g

**JANE'S STARTING PROTEIN INTAKE: 130G/DAY**

## MACRO #2: FATS

Fat is an essential nutrient, which means that it is crucial for normal body function. Fat supplies you with energy and also makes it possible for other nutrients in your body to do their jobs.

As a general rule of thumb, a minimum of 20 – 30% of your calories should come from fat. The specific amount of fat that is right for you will depend on your preferences. Do you tend to prefer higher-fat foods or higher-carb foods? If you prefer fats, set your fats on the higher end (closer to 30 percent of total daily calories).

**IMPORTANT:** We recommend starting **AT OR ABOVE 25% OF TOTAL CALORIES**. Starting lower than 25% will not speed up fat loss or muscle gain—especially in women. Fats place a crucial role in hormone balance and intakes under 25% are typically used for very lean men at high-calorie intakes.

## CASE STUDY

Jane currently eats Paleo-style which typically involves a higher fat intake. So, we'll start her on the higher end of the 20-30% range.

$$1792 \text{ CALORIES} \times 30\% = \text{CALORIES FROM FAT}$$

$$1792 \text{ CALORIES} \times 0.3 = 537.6 \text{ CALORIES}$$

Each gram of fat has 9 calories so we need to divide 537.6 calories by 9 to find out the grams of fat Jane needs to eat each day.

$$537.6 / 9 = 59.6 \text{ GRAMS (round up to 60g)}$$

### MACRO #3: CARBOHYDRATES

Carbs are the most readily used source of energy in your body. Your digestive system breaks down carbohydrates into glucose (blood sugar) and uses it to energize cells, tissues, and organs. Any extra sugar is stored in your liver and muscle for when it is needed.

Excess calories from carbohydrates (and other macronutrients) can be shuttled into fat stores and lead to an increase in body fat. The goal is to find the right amount of carbohydrates to provide energy for the body without providing *too much*. Once you calculate your protein and fat targets, the rest of your calories will go toward carbs.

#### What about Fiber?

We recommend getting at least 10-15 grams of fiber for every 1000 calories you consume. Treat your fiber target as a minimum. If you eat more than 10-15g per 1000 calories because you're consuming lots of high-fiber foods, that is totally fine! Pay attention to uncomfortable changes in your digestion to assess when you may be getting too much.

## MACRO CALCULATION CHEAT SHEET

### CASE STUDY

Use Jane's protein and fat targets to determine how many calories remain for carbohydrate intake

**130g PROTEIN X 4 CALORIES PER GRAM = 520 CALORIES**

*\*There are 4 calories per gram of protein*

**60g FAT X 9 CALORIES PER GRAM = 540 CALORIES**

**520 CALORIES + 540 CALORIES = 1060 CALORIES**

**1792 CALORIES - 1060 CALORIES = 732 CALORIES**

*\*Remember, Jane's starting calories are 1792/day*

**732 CALORIES / 4 CALORIES PER GRAM = 183 GRAMS**

*\*There are 4 calories per gram of carbohydrates. We will round 183 down to 180.*

**JANE'S INITIAL MACROS ARE:**

130P | 60F | 180C | 25g FIBER

### WORK WITH WAG

Our coaches are masters in accountability, habit-building, and nutrition science. Using our one-of-a-kind coaching software, Seismic, we'll help you track metrics, assess progress, and make needed macro changes to help you reach your goals. Take the guesswork out of your nutrition and [meet your coach today](#).



**BUILD THE LIFE OF YOUR DREAMS**

**& THE BODY TO SUPPORT IT**

**START NOW**

MACRO CALCULATION CHEAT SHEET

Walk through Jane's macro math below!

**STEP 1: DETERMINE YOUR BASELINE CALORIES**

$$\frac{160}{\text{YOUR WEIGHT}} \times \frac{14}{\text{YOUR MULTIPLIER}} = \boxed{2240} \text{ YOUR BASELINE CALORIES}$$

**STEPS 2 & 3: CONSIDER YOUR GOAL & CHOOSE YOUR DEFICIT**

$$\frac{2240}{\text{YOUR BASELINE CALORIES}} - \frac{484}{\text{YOUR DEFICIT OR SURPLUS}} = \boxed{1792} \text{ YOUR STARTING CALORIES}$$

**STEP 4: DETERMINE YOUR MACROS**

PROTEIN

$$\frac{160}{\text{YOUR BW (LBS)}} \times \frac{0.8}{\text{YOUR PROTEIN MULTIPLIER}} = \boxed{130g} \text{ YOUR STARTING PROTEIN (GRAMS)} \times 4 = \frac{520}{\text{CALORIES FROM PROTEIN}}$$

FATS

$$\frac{1792}{\text{STARTING CALORIES}} \times \frac{0.3}{\text{FAT MULTIPLIER}} = \frac{540}{\text{YOUR STARTING FAT (CALORIES)}} \div 9 = \boxed{60g} \text{ YOUR STARTING FATS (GRAMS)}$$

CARBS

$$\frac{1792}{\text{STARTING CALORIES}} - \left( \frac{540}{\text{CALORIES FROM FAT}} + \frac{520}{\text{CALORIES FROM PROTEIN}} \right) = \frac{732}{\text{CALORIES FROM CARBS}} \div 4 = \boxed{180g} \text{ YOUR STARTING CARBS (GRAMS)}$$

MACRO CALCULATION CHEAT SHEET

Use this blank worksheet to determine your starting macros!

**STEP 1: DETERMINE YOUR BASELINE CALORIES**

$$\frac{\text{YOUR WEIGHT}}{\text{YOUR MULTIPLIER}} \times = \boxed{\text{YOUR BASELINE CALORIES}}$$

**STEPS 2&3: CONSIDER YOUR GOAL & CHOOSE YOUR DEFICIT**

$$\frac{\text{YOUR BASELINE CALORIES}}{\text{YOUR DEFICIT OR SURPLUS}} + / - = \boxed{\text{YOUR STARTING CALORIES}}$$

**STEP 4: DETERMINE YOUR MACROS**

PROTEIN

$$\frac{\text{YOUR BW (LBS)}}{\text{YOUR PROTEIN MULTIPLIER}} \times = \boxed{\text{YOUR STARTING PROTEIN (GRAMS)}} \times 4 = \frac{\text{CALORIES FROM PROTEIN}}$$

FATS

$$\frac{\text{STARTING CALORIES}}{\text{FAT MULTIPLIER}} \times = \frac{\text{YOUR STARTING FAT (CALORIES)}}{9} = \boxed{\text{YOUR STARTING FATS (GRAMS)}}$$

CARBS

$$\frac{\text{STARTING CALORIES}}{4} - \left( \frac{\text{CALORIES FROM FAT}}{9} + \frac{\text{CALORIES FROM PROTEIN}}{4} \right) = \boxed{\text{YOUR STARTING CARBS (GRAMS)}}$$

# 18 TIPS & TRICKS

TIPS FROM EXPERIENCED WAG  
COACHES TO MAKE MACRO  
TRACKING WORK FOR YOU



# TIPS THAT TRANSLATE

There is a plethora of information available when it comes to nutrition and having an abundance of (conflicting) resources available can get overwhelming quickly.

With so much information to sift through, how can you know what works best for you and YOUR goals?

Whether you prefer flexible dieting, keto, paleo, plant-based, or another style of eating, counting macronutrients ensures your body processes the proper ratio of fats, carbs, and protein to maintain energy, muscle growth, and overall health.

We're sharing our **top 18 Tips and Tricks** to help you keep it simple. After all, the simpler things are the more sustainable (and enjoyable) they'll feel. This is the trick to ultimate success.

Lasting change requires work and effort, but it can be done and you don't need to do it alone. At WAG, we know that it isn't necessary to reinvent the wheel to make an impact. We're here to share what has worked for thousands of our clients so you can try these strategies out for yourself.

**Using these tips and tricks can directly translate into progress toward your goals.**

## GET CONNECTED

Join our free Mighty Networks community and connect with like-minded people to grow your nutrition knowledge, get access to our latest posts & and be the first to know about WAG news & promos!

[JOIN NOW](#)

# OUR TOP 18 TIPS

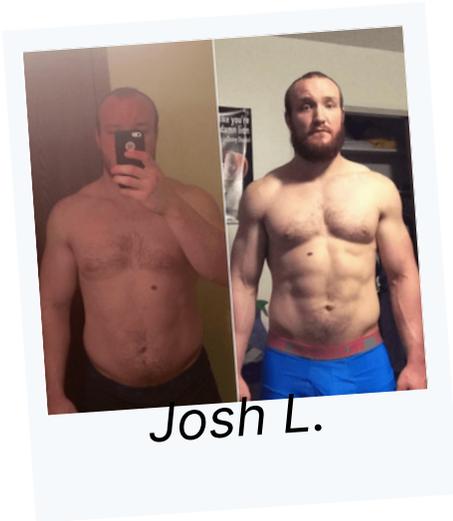
- 1.** Always have foods in the house that are primarily made up of protein, carbs, or fats to make building balanced meals even easier.
- 2.** Never grocery shop hungry. Planning a meal or snack ahead of time can be a game changer when it comes to sticking to your list.
- 3.** Set your environment up for success! Keep tempting foods off the counters and in the back of the fridge.
- 4.** Using your phone while you cook can be a pain, so write the ingredients and weights on a sticky note so you can input them all in MyFitnessPal later.
- 5.** The tare/zero button will save your life. Hit it to subtract the weight of your bowl after adding ingredients so you don't have to use separate bowls (or too much math).
- 6.** If the amount of food you plan to eat each day feels overwhelming, divide it evenly through your meals.
- 7.** Cooking food in bulk and using a calculator to figure out the macros? Try using masking tape to write the macros on and stick them on your Tupperware containers.
- 8.** If you're struggling with hunger, try eating fewer, larger meals instead of smaller frequent ones to achieve a genuine sense of fullness.
- 9.** Find a few "go-to" meals closest to the 3 places you spend the most time (your "food radius" - often work, school, gym, and/or home) so you're never without a backup plan when you need to grab something in a pinch.
- 10.** Plan one day that fits your macros then recreate those meals by copy-and-pasting to the next day rather than having to re-enter it or guess what portions work best.



*Niki H.*

*"Macro counting had been something I had heard about for a while before looking into but I just wasn't sure if I wanted the commitment and it sounded really hard and tedious...After starting WAG my food world completely changed and I felt so free... [WAG] was teaching me how to make appropriate choices in the real world doing real life things."*

# TOP TIPS CONT.



*"Before starting WAG I thought it was going to be way to hard and unrealistic to weigh everything and have different foods everyday. I was sooooo wrong. The first week or so was a learning experience but now it's become habit. Weighing my food and figuring what I can and can't have is incredibly easy now."*

**11.** Have one meal each day that you can easily manipulate. Deli Turkey wraps, chicken soft tacos, etc. Add more meat for more protein, more avocado/mayo/guac for more fat, more veggies/shells, or a side for more carbs.

**12.** When traveling, call ahead to hotels and request a mini fridge and a microwave to have more variety for snacks or meals.

**13.** To weigh small amounts of something that's in a container - put the **WHOLE** jar on the scale, press tare, and then take out the serving you want - the scale will then show your serving as a negative number.

**14.** Practice guessing what your food weighs before putting it on the scale to build confidence in your estimating.

**15.** When scanning entries into MyFitnessPal, make sure the entry matches the nutrition listed on the package and verify the serving size. Packaging can change and serving sizes can be sneaky!

**16.** Make sure your food diary reflects the way **YOU** eat. Change the number of meals your food diary has and change the meal labels to reflect your day of eating.

**17.** If hunger is an issue, try not to drink your macros (ex: protein shakes, coconut water, kombucha, juice etc.). Volume (and chewing and swallowing your food) will almost always be more satisfying.

**18.** Drink lots of water as you eat and throughout the day. Aim for 1 oz. per pound of body weight. Most people overestimate this so it may be helpful to track your fluid intake.

# READY TO DIVE IN?

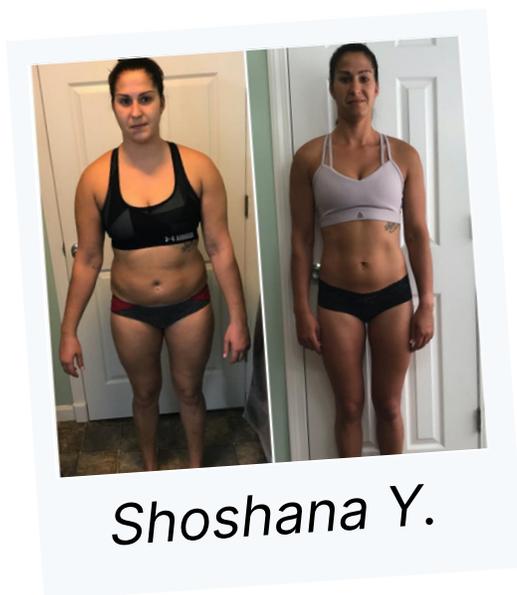
There you have it! Our top 18 Tips and Tricks! Whether you take BIG or small steps, **getting started** is the most important part.

There is no right or wrong way to make a lifestyle change and the best plan is the one that works for you. These tips can come in handy whether you're just getting started, need a refresher, or if you're a seasoned pro.

Your coach will create a program specifically designed for your lifestyle. Through weekly check-ins and unlimited messages, you'll work together to figure out strategies and skills that work best for you and your goals.

**Our coaches are experts on a range of nutrition styles and are ready to work together to find what works best for you.**

## GET A COACH



*"Words cannot describe how much this program has changed my life. I joined WAG because I could not, for the life of me, lose weight. I was unaware of what a huge journey I had just started. I not only lost the weight I wanted to, I learned that there is so much you can do with nutrition!"*

*My coach has been beyond amazing in motivating me, supporting me, and challenging me both physically and mentally to be the best version of myself I can be. The advice, tips, tricks, and patience that the WAG coaches provide is a recipe for success. My success has not only been physical, but mental and emotional as well. My quality of life has been better than it ever has been since joining WAG and I can't wait to see where this journey continues to take me!"*