

# Eating is Fundamental

by Chris Dixon, M.Ed.

A commercial begins where two men are standing at a meat counter in a grocery store. One man orders meat from the clerk. His friend says to him, “Hey, I thought you were vegan?” The man, without hesitation replies, “Yea, Paleo now...I’m flexible.” The friend displays a look of confusion and eventual acceptance. This advertisement is a perfect representation of diet culture in our society. People follow whatever is popular at the time regarding their nutrition. Having a fundamentally sound nutrition plan however can be your best ally when seeking to improve health and see better fitness results.

Having a plan for retirement or career goals is great but you should also have a plan for your diet. Understanding the fundamentals of nutrition can make life more simplistic and easier to manage once you know what to look for. Let’s discuss a few fundamentals to help you along the way.

- **Calories:** the amount of food you intake is important. Being aware of calories can help determine if you are eating the right amount. There are people who hate the concept of counting calories and that is reasonable. However, calories tell you how much fuel you are bringing into the body. I’m not keen on counting the dollars and cents in my back account but its imperative to ensure my account isn’t overdrawn.
- **Macros:** macronutrients are proportions of calories. The amount of carbohydrates, proteins, fats, and water you intake have a major effect on your body. Beyond calories, understanding your macros tells you in what ratios your calories are consumed. There are instances in which the amount of food (calories) a person is eating is not the problem rather the proportions of food are the issue. Being aware of and making changes to the macros can produce powerful results.
- **Portions:** For example, a serving of meat is 3-4 ounces.

Yet, when we order meat at a restaurant it is usually 12, 16 or even 24 ounces. This is 3-6 times a normal serving. Don't forget to add the salad or baked potato, etc. Even a well-balanced meal can be detrimental if the portions are too large.

- **Timing:** sometimes people eat sporadically and have large gaps in between meals. This can cause intense hunger, blood sugar fluctuations and mood disturbances (hangry?). Being more aware of meal timing can help control each of these symptoms. Many times, as people eat more frequently throughout the day, they eat less food. That's the sort of thing that can lead to weight loss.
- **Satisfaction:** though you may not get enjoyment from each meal, you should at least be satisfied. Consistently seeking enjoyment from eating can lead to food preoccupation that may not be healthy (read my blog "Love of Food"). Instead, focusing on satisfaction can be more

realistic when making changes to your diet.

Having a fundamentally sound nutrition plan can simplify life. Fad diets and celebrity-endorsed nutrition strategies will always exist, but the fundamentals never change. Finding a nutrition plan that is sustainable and leads to results is crucial for long-term health & weight management. Focus on the fundamentals.

