

Hand-Sized Portion Guide

NAME

DATE



Your palm determines your protein portions



Your fist determines your veggie portions



Your cupped hand determines your carb portions



Your thumb determines your fat portions

This works well for many reasons.

First, hands are portable. They come with you to work lunches, restaurants, social gatherings, etc.

Second, hands are scaled to the individual. Bigger people need more food, and tend to have bigger hands, therefore getting larger portions. Smaller people need less food, and tend to have smaller hands, therefore getting smaller portions.

Third, it provides reasonable amounts of nutrient dense foods and their specific macronutrients (thus preventing deficiencies). It will help you meet your protein, vegetable, carb, fat, and calorie needs without having to count a gram or weigh a food.

Assuming you're active and eat about 4 meals per day, this is what we find to be a great starting point:

For each meal, men might begin by eating:

- 2 palms of protein dense foods;
- 2 fists of vegetables;
- 2 cupped handfuls of carb dense foods; and
- 2 thumbs of fat dense foods.

And for each meal, women might begin by eating:

- 1 palm of protein dense foods;
- 1 fist of vegetables;
- 1 cupped handful of carb dense foods; and
- 1 thumb of fat dense foods.

It's important to note a few things here.

To start, men don't need twice as much food as women. And women don't need half as much food as men. These per-meal numbers simply make it very easy to appropriately portion out a meal. But they don't necessarily provide perfect total daily intakes for everyone.

When you do out the math, our hand-size portion guidelines come out to 8 daily servings of each food group for men (2 servings of each per meal x 4 meals). And 4 daily servings of each food group for women (1 serving of each per meal x 4 meals).

Some men need less calories than the 8 daily servings of each food group provided by the per-meal template, and some women need more calories than the 4 daily servings of each food group provided by the per-meal template.

In reality, most active men likely need a total daily intake like this:

- 6-8 palms of protein dense foods
- 6-8 fists of vegetables
- 6-8 cupped handfuls of carb dense foods
- 6-8 thumbs of fat dense foods

And most active women likely need a total daily intake like this:

- 4-6 palms of protein dense foods
- 4-6 fists of vegetables
- 4-6 cupped handfuls of carb dense foods
- 4-6 thumbs of fat dense foods

It is important that you be aware of this. And to always keep in mind that even these are just starting points. They are to help you more easily meet their protein, vegetable, carb, fat, and calorie needs without having to do kitchen math. But they aren't immutable.

You should adjust actual portion sizes up or down, depending on your unique needs and goals. For example:

Men who want to gain lean mass or with very high activity levels might need to add 1-2 cupped handfuls of carbs and / or 1-2 thumbs of fats to a few meals.

Women who want to gain lean mass or with very high activity levels might need to add 1/2-1 cupped handfuls of carbs and / or 1/2-1 thumbs of fats to a few meals.

Men who want to lose body fat or with very low activity levels might need to remove 1-2 cupped handfuls of carbs and / or 1-2 thumbs of fats from a few meals.

Women who want to lose body fat or with very low activity levels might need to remove 1/2-1 cupped handfuls of carbs and / or 1/2-1 thumbs of fats from a few meals.

Of course, just like any other form of nutrition planning – this meal template is just a starting point. So stay flexible and “steer dynamically”.

Adjust portions based on hunger, fullness, preferences, goals, overall activity level, and most importantly, results. Start with the basic template and then adjust portions at any time using outcome-based decision-making.