MUSCLE MEALS

15 RECIPES FOR BUILDING MUSCLE, GETTING LEAN, AND STAYING HEALTHY

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Michael Matthews

oculus

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Specific results mentioned in this book should be considered extraordinary and there are no "typical" results. As individuals differ, then results will differ.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hi,

I'm Mike and I've been training for nearly a decade now.

I believe that every person can achieve the body of his or her dreams, and I work hard to give everyone that chance by providing workable, proven advice grounded in science, not a desire to sell phony magazines, workout products, or supplements.

Through my work, I've helped thousands of people achieve their health and fitness goals, and I share everything I know in my books.

So if you're looking to get in shape and look great, then I think I can help you. I hope you enjoy my books and I'd love to hear from you at my site, www.muscleforlife.com.

Sincerely,

Mike

MUSCLE MEALS

BUILD MUSCLE AND LOSE FAT BY EATING TASTY, NUTRITIOUS FOOD 1

Dieting to put on lean mass or strip away fat is SO much more pleasurable hen you can enjoy your food.

IT'S TIME TO ESCAPE THE DREADED DIET TRAPS 3

Nothing is worse than having to starve yourself to lose weight.Well, you don't have to ever again!

HOW TO EAT RIGHT WITHOUT OBSESSING OVER EVERY CALORIE 5

You can look and feel great without breaking out a calculator every time you eat.

LET'S GET COOKING 19

Before we get to the recipes…

THE RECIPES 20

Baked Raisin Oatmeal

Breakfast Pita Wrap

Sweet Potato Protein Pancakes

Lean and Mean Zucchini Hash

Zucchini Frittata

Chicken Stroganoff

Mexican Meatloaf

Super-Fast Chicken Salad Sandwich

Chicken Fettuccine with Mushrooms

Korean BBQ Beef

Lemon-Garlic Shrimp

Roasted Garlic Twice-Baked Potato

Squash & Broccoli Stir-Fry

Kiwi-Banana-Mango Monster Shake

Protein Pudding

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ALSO BY MICHAEL MATTHEWS

More practical health and fitness advice to help you get into the best shape of your life.

BUILD MUSCLE AND LOSE FAT BY EATING TASTY, NUTRITIOUS FOOD

I used to hate cooking because I sucked at it.

Literally everything I made tasted horrible—and it took way too long.

To make things worse, I'm into weight lifting and had to eat a lot of that crappy food every week.

When I was eating to gain muscle, I couldn't really enjoy it because I didn't know how to make tasty meals that gave me enough calories and macronutrients (protein, carbs, and fats). I basically felt like a farm animal hitting the daily troth of chicken, eggs, oatmeal, brown rice, and potatoes.

When I was dieting to lose weight, well, I cringe when I think of the bland, plain chicken breasts and vegetables that I used to force down every day for months (I became quite a connoisseur of hot sauce, but eventually even that couldn't redeem the food). I would get excited over the banana I got to have with my afternoon shake. My buddies joked that I had the palate of a Rottweiler.

Finally, after years of desensitizing myself to food, I decided to figure out how to cook fast, healthy meals that tasted good and also met my nutritional needs. I wanted to look forward to hearty, nutritious meals when eating to gain muscle, and I wanted to enjoy some of what I got to eat while losing weight.

This book is a compilation of 15 of my favorite recipes that fit the bill. Every recipe in this book is designed to help you build lean muscle or lose fat while actually getting healthier (because who cares if you look great but feel like crap?). And they all TASTE GOOD.

So why download this book?

Because following a diet, whether to get bigger or lose fat, is SO much more pleasurable when you can enjoy your meals. I think this book will become a good friend.

IT'S TIME TO ESCAPE THE DREADED DIET TRAPS

As you probably know, you *must* eat properly to see good results from working out. You can grind away on the treadmill and pound weights until the cows come home and still see little to no results if you don't know how to support those activities with the right nutrition.

Muscles can't grow unless the body has the right nutrients to repair the damage caused by lifting weights. Eat too little, and you can not only fail to make gains, but you can actually lose muscle.

Your body can't lose fat unless you make it operate at just the right deficit of calories. Eat just a few hundred too many calories per day, and you'll find yourself stuck in the miserable rut of feeling like you're "on a diet" without losing any weight.

That being said, many diet plans out there exist in a vacuum. That is, they assume that eating conditions will always remain the same. They don't take into account the fact that most people can't stomach the same handful of food options every day, or that being severely restricted in one's diet can lead to all-out splurging, which then leads to the dreaded weight yo-yo.

What's needed is *balance*—a diet that allows for a variety of foods and that allows you to indulge now and again. It also has to be simple and practical so as to fit in with the craziness of our daily lives. And last but not least, it needs to enhance your overall health by incorporating healthy carbs and fats instead of the junk found in most people's fridges.

Well, that's what *Muscle Meals* is all about. If you follow the advice given in this book, you'll not only find it easy to follow diets to gain muscle or lose fat, but you'll also be able to actually enjoy them.

So yes, this is a cookbook, but it's also going to teach you a bit about how to use these recipes to get bigger, leaner, and stronger...*and* healthier.

HOW TO EAT RIGHT WITHOUT OBSESSING OVER EVERY CALORIE

I have good news.

You can look and feel great without breaking out a calculator every time you eat.

Getting proper nutrition is a precise science, but it doesn't have to be agonizing. In fact, I recommend a more laid-back approach. If you make planning or tracking meals too complicated, you'll have trouble sticking with it.

That being said, in order to lose fat, you must keep your body burning more energy than you're feeding it, and the energy potential of food is measured in calories. Eat too many calories—give your body more potential energy than it needs—and it has no incentive to burn fat.

In order to gain muscle, your body needs a surplus of energy to repair and rebuild itself (along with plenty of protein). Thus, you need to eat slightly more than your body burns to get bigger.

In this chapter I'm going to share some simple rules that you can follow to eat right. Just by following these rules, you'll find that you can lose or gain weight when you want to and that you'll feel healthy and vital.

1. MAKE SURE YOU EAT ENOUGH

A calorie is a measurement of the potential energy found in food, and your body burns quite a bit of energy every day. Everything from the beating of your heart to the digestion of your food requires energy, and your body has to get it from the food you eat.

Thus, it's important that you feed your body enough, and that's especially true when you work out. If you underfeed your body, don't be surprised if you don't have the energy to train hard or if you feel generally exhausted.

If you exercise at least three times per week, use the following formula to ensure you're feeding your body enough to repair itself.

- Eat 1 gram of protein per pound of body weight per day.
- Eat 1.5 grams of carbs per pound of body weight per day.
- Eat 1 gram of healthy fats per 4 pounds of body weight per day.

That's where you start. For a 200 lb woman, it would look like this:

- 200 grams of protein per day
- 300 grams of carbs per day
- 50 grams of fat per day

That's about 2,500 calories per day, which should work for making slow, steady muscle and strength gains without any fat added along the way (which really should be the goal of "maintenance"—not staying exactly the same).

If your priority is to gain muscle, then you need to add about 500 calories per day to your "maintenance" diet. The easiest way to do this is to bump up your carbs by about 50 grams per day, and your fats by about 30 grams per day.

If you're trying to lose fat, then you need to subtract about 500 calories per day from your maintenance diet. To do this, drop your carbs by about 100 grams per day and your fats by about 10 grams per day.

It's also important that you consume high-quality calories. Junk food

calories, such as white bread, pastas, chips, juice and soda, will make you look and feel like crap, while good calories, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins, will keep you in tip-top shape.

2. EAT ENOUGH PROTEIN

If you work out, you need more protein than someone who doesn't work out. Why? Because exercise causes muscle damage.

With every rep you perform, you're causing "micro-tears" in your muscle fibers, and your body needs protein to fully repair this damage. The body doesn't just repair them to their previous state, however; it builds them bigger and stronger so it can better handle the stress of exercise.

So, in order to get the most out of your workouts, you need to eat enough protein. And that doesn't mean just eating a lot after working out. It means having protein 4-6 times per day with a few hours in between each meal.

By doing this, you can keep your body in an "anabolic" state, which means a state in which it is building muscle and repairing tissue. If you fail to feed your body enough protein, it will fall behind in the muscle breakdown and repair cycle, and your body will go into a "catabolic" state, meaning that it will actually break down muscle and other tissue despite exercise.

There are two main sources of protein out there: whole food protein and supplement protein.

Whole food protein is, as you guessed, protein that comes from natural food sources, such as beef, chicken, fish, etc. The best forms of whole food protein are chicken, turkey, lean red meat, fish, eggs, and milk.

If you're vegetarian, your best options are eggs, low-fat cottage cheese (Organic Valley is my favorite brand), low-fat European style (Greek) yogurt (0% Fage is my favorite), tempeh, tofu, quinoa, almonds, rice, and beans.

While we're on the subject of vegetarianism, some people claim that you must carefully combine your proteins if you're vegetarian or vegan to ensure your body is getting "complete" proteins (all of the amino acids needed to build tissue). This theory and the faulty research it was based on was thoroughly debunked as a myth by the American Dietetic Association, yet it still hangs around. While it's true that some

sources of vegetable protein are lower in certain amino acids than other forms of protein, there is no scientific evidence to prove that they lack them altogether.

Protein supplements are powdered or liquid foods that contain protein from various sources, such as whey (a liquid remaining after milk has been curdled and strained in the process of making cheese), egg, and soy—the three most common sources of supplement protein. There are also great plant-based supplements out there that are a blend of high-quality protein sources such as quinoa, brown rice, peas, hemp, and fruit.

You don't NEED protein supplements to eat well, but it can be impractical for some to try to get all their protein from whole foods considering the fact that you will be eating protein 4-6 times per day.

Now, there are a few things you should know about eating protein. First is that your body can only digest and absorb so much in one sitting. According to various studies, this ranges between 30-60 grams depending on your metabolism and digestive tract. To be safe, you can assume your body can absorb 40-50 grams per meal. That means that if you miss a few meals in which you were supposed to eat 30 grams of protein, you can't just "make it up" by eating 90 grams in your next meal. Your body won't be able to absorb it all.

Another thing to know about protein is that different proteins digest at different speeds, and some are better utilized by the body than others. Beef protein, for example, is digested quickly, and 70-80% of what's eaten is utilized by the body (the exact number varies based on what study you read, but they all fall between 70-80%). Whey protein is also digested quickly and its "net protein utilization" (NPU) is in the low 90% range. Egg protein digests much slower than whey and beef, and its NPU also falls in the same range.

NPU and digestion speeds are important to know because you want to rely on high-NPU proteins to meet your daily protein requirement, and you want a quick-digesting protein for your post-workout meal, and a slow-digesting protein for your final meal before you go to bed (to help you get through the fasting that occurs during sleep).

I could give you charts and tables of the NPU rates of various proteins, but I'm going to keep it simple. In order to meet your daily protein requirements, here are your choices:

Whole Food Proteins

Lean meats (beef, pork, chicken, and turkey)

Fish

Eggs

Vegetarian sources noted above

Protein Supplements

Egg

Whey

Casein

In case you're wondering why I left soy protein off the list of recommended supplements, it's because it's just a bad protein source. To start, most soy protein supplements use genetically modified soybeans (which is a very dangerous trend encroaching further and further into the world of agriculture), and studies have shown that too much soy can increase estrogen levels and inhibit your body's testosterone production (due to a plant estrogen found in soybeans). Just stay away from it.

3. EAT HEALTHY FATS

Fats are the densest energy source available to your body. Each gram of fat contains over twice the calories of a gram of carbohydrate or protein. Healthy fats, such as those found in olive oil, avocados, flax seed oil, many nuts, and other foods, are actually an important component for overall good health. Fats help your body absorb the other nutrients that you give it; they nourish the nervous system, help maintain cell structures, regulate hormone levels, and more.

Saturated fats are a form of fat found mainly in animal products such as meat, dairy products, and egg yolks. Some plant foods, such as coconut oil, palm oil, and palm kernel oil, are also high in saturated fats. While it's commonly believed that eating saturated fat harms your health, the opposite is actually true. Recent studies have shown that including saturated fats in your diet can reduce your risk of heart disease.

Trans fats are scientifically modified saturated fats that have been engineered to give foods longer shelf lives. Many cheap, packaged foods are full of trans fats (such as run-of-the-mill popcorn, yogurt, and peanut butter) as are many frozen foods (such as frozen pizza, packaged pastries, cakes, etc.). And fried foods are often fried in trans fats. These fats are bad news, and eating too much of them can lead to all kinds of diseases and complications. They have no nutritional value for the body and thus should be avoided altogether.

Most people eat more fat than is necessary, thus adding lots of unnecessary calories to their daily intake. Getting enough healthy fats every day is pretty simple. Here's how it works:

- Keep your intake of saturated fats relatively low (below 10% of your total calories). Saturated fat is found in foods like meat, dairy products, eggs, coconut oil, bacon fat, and lard. If a fat is solid at room temperature, it's a saturated fat.
- Completely avoid trans fats. Trans fats are found in processed foods such as cookies, cakes, fries, and doughnuts. Any food that contains "hydrogenated oil" or "partially hydrogenated oil" likely contains trans fats, so just don't eat it. (Sure, having a cheat here and there that contains trans fats won't harm anything, but you definitely don't want to eat them regularly.)
- Get at least half of your daily fat from unsaturated fats such as olive oil, nuts, peanut oil, avocados, flax seed oil, safflower oil, or sesame oil. If a fat is liquid at room temperature, it's an unsaturated fat.

By simply sticking to the recipes in this book, you'll avoid unhealthy fats and include healthy fats without even trying.

4. EAT GOOD CARBS

The carbohydrate is probably the most misunderstood, maligned, and feared macro-nutrient. Thanks to the scores of bogus diet plans and suggestions out there, many people equate eating carbs with getting fat. While eating TOO MANY carbs can make you fat (just as eating too much protein or fat can), carbs are hardly your enemy. They play an essential role in not only muscle growth but in overall body function.

Regardless of what type of carbohydrate you eat—broccoli or apple pie—the body breaks it down into two substances: glucose and glycogen. Glucose is commonly referred to as "blood sugar," and it's an energy

source used by your cells to do the many things they do. Glycogen is a substance stored in the liver and muscles that can be easily converted to glucose for immediate energy. When you lift weights intensely, your muscles burn up their glycogen stores to cope with the overload.

Now, why is broccoli good for you but apple pie isn't? Because your body reacts very differently to broccoli than to apple pie. You've probably heard the terms "simple" and "complex" carbs before and wondered what they meant. You might have also heard of the glycemic index and wondered what it was all about.

These things are actually pretty simple. The glycemic index is a numeric system of ranking how quickly carbohydrates are converted into glucose in the body. Carbs are ranked on a scale of 0 to 100 depending how they affect blood sugar levels once eaten. A GI rating of 55 and under is considered "low GI," 56 to 69 is medium, and 70 and above is high on the index. A "simple" carb is one that converts very quickly (is high on the glycemic index), such as table sugar, honey, and watermelon, while a "complex" carb is one that converts slowly (is low on the glycemic index), such as broccoli, apple, and whole-grain bread.

It's very important to know where the carbs you eat fall on the index, because studies have linked regular consumption of high-GI carbs to increased risk for heart disease, diabetes, and obesity.

The amount of carbohydrates that you should eat every day depends on what you're trying to accomplish. Building muscle requires that you eat a substantial amount of carbs, while dieting to lose weight requires that you reduce carbs.

Regardless of how many carbs you need to eat per day, there's a simple rule to follow regarding high-, medium- and low-glycemic carbs.

Eat carbs in the medium–high range of the glycemic index (60-90 is a good rule of thumb) about 30 minutes before you exercise, and again within 30 minutes of finishing your workout.

The reason you want some carbs before training is that you need the energy for your training. The reason you want them after is that your muscles' glycogen stores are heavily depleted, and by replacing glycogen quickly, you actually help your body maintain an anabolic state and not lose muscle tissue.

My favorite pre- and post-workout carbs are bananas and rice milk, but other good choices are baked potato, instant oatmeal, and fruits

that are above 60 on the glycemic index, such as cantaloupe, pineapple, watermelon, dates, apricots, and figs. Some people recommend eating foods high in table sugar (sucrose) after working out because it's high on the GI, but I stay away from processed sugar as much as possible.

All other carbs you eat should be in the middle or at the low end of the glycemic index (60 and below is a good rule of thumb). It really is that simple. If you follow this rule, you'll avoid many problems that others suffer from due to the energy highs and lows that come with eating high-GI carbs that burn the body out.

Below is a list of common snack foods with corresponding average GI scores. The GI scores vary a bit from brand to brand, but not by much. Stay away from these carbs at all costs.

(The following information is sourced from the University of Sydney, the University of Harvard, and Livestrong.com.)

FOOD	GI
White bread bagel	72
Corn chips	63
Pretzels	83
Candy bar	62-78
Wheat or corn cracker	67-87
Rye cracker	64
Rice cake	78
Popcorn	72
White rice	64
Pizza	80
Raisins	64
Whole wheat bread	71
White bread	70
Baguette	95
English muffin (white bread)	77
Baked potato	85
Muesli	66

So, forget stuff like sugar, white bread, processed, low-quality whole wheat bread, bagels, junk cereals, muffins, white pasta, crackers, waffles, rice cakes, corn flakes, and white rice. I wouldn't even recommend eating these things often as pre- or post-workout carbs because they're just not good for your body.

Even certain fruits, such as watermelon and dates, are bad snack foods because of where they fall on the glycemic index. If you're unsure about a carb you like, look it up to see where it falls on the glycemic index. If it's above 60, just leave it out of your meals that aren't immediately before or after working out.

5. EAT YOUR FRUITS AND VEGGIES

Your body requires many different things to function optimally. It can't look and feel great on protein and carbs alone. You need calcium to ensure your muscles can contract and relax properly. You need fiber to help move food through the digestive tract. You need iron to carry oxygen to your cells and create energy.

There are many other "little helpers" that your body needs to perform its many physiological processes, and fruits and vegetables contain many vital nutrients that you can't get from vitamin supplements. By eating 3-5 servings of both fruits and vegetables per day, you enjoy the many benefits that these nutrients give to your body, such as lowering your risk of cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and many other diseases.

This isn't hard to do, either. A medium-sized piece of fruit is one serving, as is half a cup of berries. A cup of greens is a serving of vegetables, as is half a cup of other vegetables.

Fruit *juices*, however, are another story. While they may seem like an easy way to get in your daily fruits, they are actually not much more than tasty sugar water. Not only do most fruit juices have sugar added, but the juice has also been separated from the fruit's fibrous pulp, which slows down the metabolism of the sugars. Without that, the juice becomes a very high-glycemic drink. You're better off drinking water and eating whole fruit.

The exception to this is creating juice using a juicer or blender to grind up the entire piece of fruit, removing nothing. This, of course, is no different than chewing up the fruit in your mouth.

Fruits widely recognized as the healthiest are apples, bananas, blueberries, oranges, grapefruit, strawberries, and pineapples.

Vegetables often recommended as the healthiest are asparagus, broccoli, spinach, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, carrots, onions, and eggplant.

6. PLAN AND PROPORTION YOUR MEALS PROPERLY

Many people's meal plans are engineered for getting fat. They skip breakfast, eat a junk food lunch, come home famished, have a big dinner with some dessert, and then have a snack like chips or popcorn while watching TV at night.

I like to make breakfast my largest meal of the day, and my meals get progressively smaller as the day goes on. This is because your metabolism is slowest while you're sleeping, and you want to use your breakfast to speed it up.

Generally speaking, my breakfast usually contains about 30% of my total daily calories.

PROTEIN

You should be eating protein every 3-5 hours. You never want to go more than 5 hours without eating protein, as studies have shown that the body's anabolic response to protein consumption lasts about 5 hours. This means you'll need to eat protein 4-6 times per day, and enough each meal to meet your dietary targets.

CARBOHYDRATES

Much of your daily carbohydrates should come before and after training, when your body needs them most. I eat about 10-15% of my daily carbs before training, and about 30-40% after, in my post-workout meal.

It's also important when dieting to lose weight to not eat carbs within several hours of going to bed. This advice has been kicking around the health and fitness world for quite some time, but usually with the wrong explanation.

There's no scientific evidence that eating carbs at night or before bed will lead to gaining fat, but it can *hinder* fat loss. How?

The insulin created by the body to process and absorb carbs eaten stops the use of fat as an energy source. Your body naturally burns the most fat while sleeping, and so going to sleep with elevated insulin levels interferes with fat loss.

Related to this is the fact that studies have indicated that the production and processing of insulin interferes with the production and processing

of growth hormone, which has powerful fat-burning properties. Your body naturally produces the vast majority of its growth hormone while sleeping, so again, if your body is flushed with insulin when you go to sleep, your growth hormone production will suffer, which in turn robs you of its fat-burning and muscle-building benefits.

So, as a general rule, when you're dieting to lose weight, don't eat any carbs within 4-5 hours of bedtime. You should only consume lean proteins after dinner. I follow this rule when bulking too, not because I'm worried about fat burning (you don't burn fat when bulking), but because I don't want to stunt my growth hormone production.

FATS

You can spread your fats throughout the day. I like to start my day with 1-2 tablespoons of a 3-6-9 blend (a combination of essential fatty acids, which are fats vital for the proper function of every cell, tissue, gland, and organ in your body), but you don't have to get one if you don't want to. You can simply stick to the sources of healthy fat given earlier.

7. DRINK A LOT OF WATER

The human body is about 60% water in adult males and about 70% in adult females. Muscles are about 70% water. That alone tells you how important staying hydrated is to maintaining good health and proper body function. Your body's ability to digest, transport, and absorb nutrients from food is dependent upon proper fluid intake. Water helps prevent injuries in the gym by cushioning joints and other soft-tissue areas. When your body is dehydrated, literally every physiological process is negatively affected.

I really can't stress enough the importance of drinking clean, pure water. It has zero calories, so it will never cause you to gain weight regardless of how much you drink. (You can actually harm your body by drinking too much water, but this would require that you drink several gallons per day.)

The Institute of Medicine reported in 2004 that women should consume about 91 ounces of water—or three-quarters of a gallon—per day, and men should consume about 125 ounces per day (a gallon is 128 ounces).

Now, keep in mind that those numbers include the water found in food. The average person gets about 80% of their water from drinking

it and other beverages, and about 20% from the food they eat.

I've been drinking 1-2 gallons of water per day for years now, which is more than the IOM baseline recommendation, but I sweat a fair amount due to exercise and I live in Florida, which surely makes my needs higher. I fill a one-gallon jug at the start of my day and simply make sure that I finish it by dinner time. By the time I go to bed, I'll have drank a few more glasses.

Make sure the water you drink is filtered, purified water and not tap water. There's a big difference between drinking clean, alkaline water that your body can fully utilize and drinking polluted, acidic junk from the tap or bottle (which is the case with certain brands such as Dasani and Aquafina).

8. CUT BACK ON THE SODIUM

The average American's diet is so over-saturated with sodium it makes my head spin.

The Institute of Medicine recommends 1,500 milligrams of sodium per day as the adequate intake level for most adults. According to the CDC, the average American aged 2 and up eats *3,436 milligrams* of sodium per day.

Too much sodium in the body causes water retention (which gives you that puffy, soft look) and it can lead to high blood pressure and heart disease.

Frozen and canned foods are full of sodium, as are cured meats like bacon and sausage (one slice of bacon contains *1,000 milligrams* of sodium!).

Whenever possible, I chose low- or no-sodium ingredients for the recipes in this book. When you need to add salt, I recommend sea salt or Himalayan rock salt (sounds like fancy BS, but it's actually great stuff) because it has many naturally occurring minerals, whereas run-of-the-mill table salt has been "chemically cleaned" to remove "impurities," which includes these vital elements.

9. CHEAT CORRECTLY

Many people struggling with diets talk about "cheat days." The idea is that if you're good during the week, you can go buck wild on the weekends and somehow not gain fat. Well, unless you have a very fast metabolism, that's not how it works. If you follow a strict diet and

exercise, you can expect to lose 1-2 pounds per week. If you get too crazy, you can gain it right back over a weekend.

So don't think cheat DAYS, think cheat MEALS—meals where you eat more or less anything you want (and all other meals of the week follow your meal plan). When done once or twice per week, a cheat meal is not only satisfying, but it actually can speed up your metabolic rate. Scientists aren't sure why, but it might have to do with a similar factor of muscle growth: overload. By "overloading" your metabolism occasionally, you make it work extra hard, and it has to always be ready to handle a large influx of calories.

I would recommend, however, that you don't go too overboard with your cheat meals—don't eat 2,000 calories of junk food and desserts and think it won't do anything.

How many cheat meals you should eat per week depends on what you're trying to accomplish.

When you're eating to stay lean and gain muscle slowly, two cheat meals per week is totally fine. When you're dieting to lose weight, you can have one cheat meal per week.

THE BOTTOM LINE

You may find this chapter a bit hard to swallow (no pun intended). Some people have a really hard time giving up their unhealthy eating habits (sugar and junk food can be pretty addictive). That being said, consider the following benefits of following the advice in this chapter:

1. If this is a completely new way of eating for you, I *guarantee* you'll feel better than you have in a *long* time. You won't have energy highs and lows. You won't feel lethargic. You won't have that mental fogginess that comes with being stuffed full of unhealthy food every day.
2. You will appreciate "bad" food so much more when you only have it once or twice per week. You'd be surprised how much better a dessert tastes when you haven't had one in a week. (You may also be surprised that junk food that you loved in the past no longer tastes good.)
3. You will actually come to enjoy healthy foods. I *promise*. Even if they don't taste good to you at first, just groove in the routine, and soon you'll crave brown rice and fruit instead of doughnuts and bread. Your body will adapt.

This chapter teaches you all there really is to eating properly so you can build muscle or lose weight on demand, all while staying healthy.

LET'S GET COOKING

Getting lean, while still feeding your muscles and body what they need, can be tough. That's why I wrote this book, and I'm confident that you'll be able to find the right recipes to fit your needs.

Nothing in this book is fancy or hard to make, yet many of the recipes are quite delicious. I'm sure that you'll find some new staples for your diet in this book.

For most of these recipes all you'll need is a couple pots and pans, and maybe a blender. The instructions are easy to follow, the prep times are minimal, and the ingredients are easy to find. Cooking doesn't get much simpler than this.

I recommend that you pick out a week's worth of recipes and then go shopping for the ingredients. Many of the recipes use the same ingredients, which will save you money and time.

So, let's get started!

BAKED RAISIN OATMEAL

Servings	1
Calories	399
Protein	38 grams
Carbohydrates	42 grams
Fat	8 grams

1 teaspoon vegetable oil

1/2 teaspoon stevia or other sugar alternative

2 egg whites

2 tablespoons skim milk

1/8 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon baking powder

1/2 cup quick cooking oats

1 scoop chocolate or vanilla whey protein powder

1 tablespoon raisins

1/2 teaspoon brown sugar

1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon

> In a large mixing bowl, beat together the oil and stevia, slowly mix in the egg whites, skim milk, salt, baking powder, oats, protein powder, and raisins. Top with the brown sugar and cinnamon and place in refrigerator overnight.

> Heat the oven to 350°F, bake until firm, around 35 minutes.

BREAKFAST PITA WRAP

Servings	1
Calories	452
Protein	31 grams
Carbohydrates	49 grams
Fat	20 grams

4 white mushrooms, sliced

1 tablespoon onion, chopped

1 tablespoon red bell pepper, chopped

pinch of ground black pepper

1 large egg

3 egg whites

1/2 small tomato, seeded and chopped

3 tablespoons skim milk

1 whole grain pita (choose the brand with the lowest fat and sodium), halved and toasted

1/2 avocado, sliced

> Coat a pan with cooking spray and cook the mushrooms, onion, and bell pepper on medium heat. Cook for 3-4 minutes. Add black pepper.

> Mix the egg, egg whites, tomato, and skim milk in a bowl and beat until frothy.

> Pour the egg mixture into the pan and cook for 3-4 minutes, stirring until firm.

> Fill each pita half with half of the egg mixture and half the avocado.

SWEET POTATO PROTEIN PANCAKES

Servings	1 (2 pancakes per serving)
Calories	358
Protein	24 grams
Carbohydrates	59 grams
Fat	3 grams

1 medium-sized sweet potato

1/2 cup old-fashioned oats

1 large egg

4 egg whites

1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/4 cup fat-free plain yogurt

> Puncture the sweet potato several times with a fork. Wrap it in a paper towel and microwave it for 5 minutes on high. Run it under cool water and then remove the skin with a knife.

> Blend the oats until they are a powder and dump into a bowl. Blend the sweet potato until smooth and place it into the bowl with the oats. Stir in the egg, egg whites, vanilla extract, cinnamon, and yogurt. Mix well until it forms a smooth batter.

> Coat a pan with cooking spray and wipe away the excess with a paper towel. Save this for wiping the pan after cooking each pancake. Heat the pan on medium-low heat.

> Spoon about 1/2 cup of batter into the pan and cook for 1-2 minutes or until golden brown. Flip the pancake and cook for 30 seconds to 1 minute or until golden brown and firm. Put the pancake on a plate and wipe the pan with the paper towel.

> Repeat step 4 with the rest of the batter.

LEAN AND MEAN ZUCCHINI HASH

Servings	1
Calories	202
Protein	15 grams
Carbohydrates	11 grams
Fat	11 grams

2 large eggs

1 cup zucchini, grated

1/4 cup onion, diced

1/4 teaspoon garlic powder

1/4 teaspoon onion powder

salt and ground black pepper, to taste

> Mix all the ingredients together in a bowl.

> Heat a pan on high and then lower to medium heat.

> Spray some cooking spray into the pan and spoon the mixture into it. Cook about 5 minutes and flip. Cook another 5 minutes.

ZUCCHINI FRITTATA

Servings	1
Calories	214
Protein	31 grams
Carbohydrates	8 grams
Fat	7 grams

1/4 cup onion, chopped

1/2 cup zucchini, shredded

6 egg whites

1 large egg

salt and ground black pepper, to taste

1 tablespoon low-fat cheddar cheese, shredded

> Preheat the oven to 350°F.

> Coat an 8-inch oven-proof skillet in cooking spray and place over medium heat. Add the onion and zucchini and sauté for 2-3 minutes.

> In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the eggs. Pour over the top of vegetables, sprinkle with salt and pepper. Cook until almost set, about 6-7 minutes. Sprinkle the cheese on top and transfer to the oven. Bake for 4-5 minutes or until the cheese is melted.

CHICKEN STROGANOFF

Servings	4
Calories	245
Protein	50 grams
Carbohydrates	11 grams
Fat	3 grams

4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (6 ounces each), rinsed, dried, trimmed of fat, sliced

salt and ground black pepper, to taste

1 medium onion, chopped

2 tablespoons garlic, minced

2 tablespoons dried tarragon

2 1/2 cups fresh mushrooms, sliced

3/4 cup low-sodium chicken broth

1/2 container (8 ounces) fat-free sour cream

> Coat a 12-inch skillet with cooking spray and place over medium-high heat. Add salt and pepper to your chicken breast and place into skillet. Cook until golden on one side, about 2 minutes, turn and repeat.

> Push the chicken pieces to one side of the skillet. Add the onion to the other side and sauté until softened. Stir in the garlic, tarragon, and mushrooms and cook for 2 more minutes.

> Add the chicken broth and stir, lower the heat to medium-low. Add the sour cream and mix the chicken in well with the rest of the sauce. Simmer for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally, until sauce slightly thickens.

MEXICAN MEATLOAF

Servings	8
Calories	285
Protein	32 grams
Carbohydrates	36 grams
Fat	3 grams

1 pound lean ground turkey

1 pound lean ground chicken

1 can (15 ounces) black beans, rinsed and drained

1 can (15 ounces) whole kernel corn, drained and rinsed

1/2 can (4 ounces) fire-roasted diced green chilis

1 cup mild chunky salsa

1 package (1 ounce) dry taco seasoning mix

3/4 cup plain bread crumbs

3 egg whites

1 can (28 ounces) enchilada sauce, divided

salt and ground black pepper to taste

> Preheat the oven to 400°F. Coat a 9 x 13 inch baking dish with cooking spray.

> In a large mixing bowl, combine the ground turkey, ground chicken, black beans, corn, green chilies, salsa, taco seasoning, bread crumbs, and egg whites and mix thoroughly.

> Form the mixture into a loaf shape and place inside the prepared baking dish, top with half of the enchilada sauce and place in the oven for 45 minutes.

> Remove from the oven and top with the remaining enchilada sauce, return to the oven and bake until the meatloaf is no longer pink inside, about 10-15 minutes. A thermometer inserted into the center should read at least 160°F.

SUPER-FAST CHICKEN SALAD SANDWICH

Servings	2
Calories	299
Protein	30 grams
Carbohydrates	30 grams
Fat	7 grams

2 cans (3 ounces each) chunk chicken, rinsed and drained twice

1 celery stick, finely chopped

1 tablespoon onion, finely chopped

1 tablespoon pine nuts

1 heaping teaspoon spicy brown mustard

1 heaping teaspoon fat-free sour cream

1 heaping teaspoon fat-free plain yogurt

pinch of ground black pepper

4 slices whole grain bread

2 leaves lettuce

> In a bowl, mix the celery, onion, pine nuts, mustard, sour cream, yogurt, and pepper. Mix in the chicken.

> Spread half of the mixture on a slice of bread. Top with a lettuce leaf and then with another slice of bread. Repeat with the rest of the mixture to make a second sandwich.

CHICKEN FETTUCCINE WITH MUSHROOMS

Servings	4
Calories	403
Protein	34 grams
Carbohydrates	38 grams
Fat	12 grams

8 ounces whole grain fettuccine

2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (6 ounces each), rinsed, dried, trimmed of fat, cut into strips

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

3 cloves garlic, minced

2 ounces (around 1 to 1 1/2 cups) shiitake mushrooms, stemmed and sliced

2 tablespoons lemon juice

2 teaspoons lemon zest

salt and ground black pepper, to taste

1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, grated

1/2 cup fresh basil, chopped

> Cook pasta according to package directions. When you drain the pasta, save 1/2 cup of the pasta water.

> Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add the sliced chicken and cook for 3-4 minutes, add the garlic and mushrooms. Cook, stirring occasionally for 4-5 minutes or until the mushrooms are nice and tender. Stir in the lemon juice, lemon zest, salt, and pepper and remove from the heat.

> Add the pasta, 1/2 cup of pasta water, Parmesan, and basil to the skillet and toss.

KOREAN BBQ BEEF

Servings	4
Calories	307
Protein	39 grams
Carbohydrates	6 grams
Fat	13 grams

1 1/2 pounds lean flank steak, thinly sliced

1/3 cup low-sodium soy sauce

1 tablespoon stevia or other sugar alternative

1/4 cup scallions, chopped

2 tablespoons garlic, minced

2 tablespoons sesame seeds

1 tablespoon sesame oil

1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper

> In a small mixing bowl, combine the soy sauce, stevia, scallions, garlic, sesame seeds, sesame oil, and ground black pepper. Mix well.

> Place the beef in a large ziplock bag or container, pour the soy sauce marinade over it and seal. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour.

> Lightly coat a large skillet in cooking spray and place over high heat. Add the beef and sauté until cooked through, 1-2 minutes per side.

LEMON-GARLIC SHRIMP

Servings	4
Calories	205
Protein	30 grams
Carbohydrates	15 grams
Fat	4 grams

1 pound raw shrimp

2 red bell peppers, seeded and diced

2 pounds asparagus, cut into 1-inch pieces

2 teaspoons lemon zest

1/2 teaspoon salt

2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil

5 cloves garlic, minced

1 cup low-sodium chicken broth

1 teaspoon cornstarch

2 tablespoons lemon juice

2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped

> Coat a large nonstick skillet with cooking spray and place over medium-high heat. Add the bell peppers, asparagus, lemon zest, and 1/4 teaspoon of the salt. Sauté until vegetables begin to soften, about 6 minutes. Transfer vegetables to a bowl, cover, and set aside.

> Add the oil and garlic to the pan and sauté for 30 seconds. Stir in the shrimp. In a small bowl, add the broth and cornstarch and whisk to combine. Pour in the broth mixture and remaining 1/4 teaspoon of salt and stir.

> Cook, stirring frequently, until the sauce thickens and the shrimp are pink and cooked through, about 2-3 minutes. Remove from the heat, add the lemon juice and parsley, mix together, and serve the shrimp over the vegetables.

ROASTED GARLIC TWICE-BAKED POTATO

Servings	6
Calories	216
Protein	6 grams
Carbohydrates	39 grams
Fat	5 grams

6 medium-sized baking potatoes

1 whole garlic bulb

1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil

2 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened

1/2 cup skim milk

1/2 cup low-fat buttermilk

1 1/2 teaspoons fresh rosemary, minced

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper

dash of paprika

> Place the potatoes on a baking sheet and bake at 400°F for 45-55 minutes, or until tender.

> Meanwhile, remove the outer papery skin from garlic, drizzle with oil and wrap in 2 sheets of heavy-duty foil. Add the garlic to the oven for 30-35 minutes or until softened. Let garlic and potatoes cool for about 10 minutes.

> Once cool enough to handle, cut a thin slice off the top of each potato and discard. Scoop out the pulp until just a thin shell remains, place the pulp in a large mixing bowl, add the softened butter and mash.

> Cut the top off of the garlic head, leaving the root intact, and squeeze the softened garlic into the bowl with the potatoes, add the milk, buttermilk, rosemary, salt, and pepper and mix well.

> Spoon the potato mixture back into the shells and place back on the baking sheet. Bake at 425°F for 20-25 minutes, or until heated through. Remove from oven and add a dash of paprika to each top.

SQUASH & BROCCOLI STIR-FRY

Servings	6
Calories	82
Protein	2 grams
Carbohydrates	15 grams
Fat	3 grams

1 pound butternut squash, peeled, seeded and cut into 1/4-inch slices

1 garlic clove, minced

1/4 teaspoon ground ginger

1 cup broccoli florets

1/2 cup celery, thinly sliced

1/2 cup onion, thinly sliced

2 teaspoons honey

1 tablespoon lemon juice

2 tablespoons sunflower kernels

> Coat a large skillet with cooking spray and place over medium-high heat. Add the squash, garlic, and ginger and stir-fry for 3 minutes. Add the broccoli, celery, and onion, and continue to stir-fry for 3-4 minutes or until all the vegetables are tender.

> Meanwhile, in a small bowl, combine the honey and lemon juice and mix well.

> Place the vegetables in a large serving dish and pour the honey mixture over, toss to coat. Sprinkle the sunflower kernels on top.

KIWI-BANANA-MANGO MONSTER SHAKE

Servings	1
Calories	459
Protein	35 grams
Carbohydrates	78 grams
Fat	2 grams

1/2 medium kiwi, peeled and sliced

1/2 medium banana, sliced

1/2 medium mango, peeled and diced

1/2 cup fresh or canned pineapple, diced

1 scoop vanilla whey protein powder

1 cup skim milk

1/2 cup papaya, diced

1 lemon, juiced

1/2 tablespoon clover honey

1 packet (1 gram) stevia or other sugar alternative

> Place all of your ingredients in a blender, blend on high until desired consistency.

PROTEIN PUDDING

1 package sugar-free fat-free pudding

2 cups skim milk

2 scoops chocolate or vanilla whey protein powder (use same flavor as pudding)

Servings	2
Calories	266
Protein	32 grams
Carbohydrates	31 grams
Fat	1 gram

> Place all of your ingredients in a medium-sized bowl, stir together to combine everything, then mix with an electric hand mixer until it starts to thicken. Place in the refrigerator for at least 20 minutes to set.

BONUS REPORT

12 HEALTH & FITNESS MISTAKES YOU DON'T KNOW YOU'RE MAKING

- Do you believe that your genetics are preventing you from making great gains in the gym?
- Do you do certain exercises because they're supposed to "shape" your muscles?
- Do you stretch before lifting weights to prevent injury or increase strength?
- When doing cardio, do you shoot for a "target" heart rate zone to burn the most fat possible?

If you answered "yes" to any of those questions, you're in good company as most people do the same.

But here's the kicker: *There's NO science behind any of it.*

Quite to the contrary, however, science actually disproves these things.

If you want to learn the truth about these myths and 8 others that ruin people's efforts to get fit, click the link below to download a free bonus report that I put together for you called *12 Health & Fitness Mistakes You Don't Know You're Making.*

Click here to get this report now!

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