

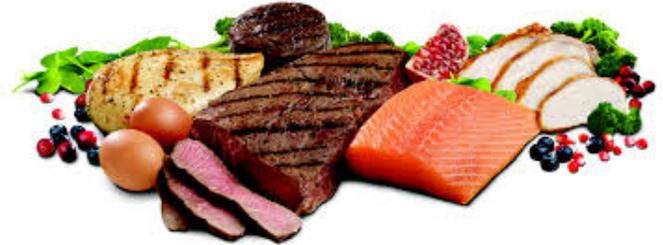


Protein On-The-Go For Busy People

How to Keep Energy Levels Steady When You Are Constantly Going

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Do you ever wonder how you are going to make it through your day with so many things going on? Or how your kids are going to make it when they go to school early in the morning and go straight to extracurricular activities immediately after and into the evening and then have homework? So many of us are busy people with packed schedules! The truth is that we wouldn't have it any other way, but how can we keep going, going, going without energy to support it? The answer is protein and preparation. It takes some planning in order to have the food you need on hand. If we don't take the time to plan and prepare, we are liable to grab whatever is in front of us, healthy or not! When that happens we tend to miss out on protein and end up consuming more carbohydrate and fat loaded food, which sustains us for a shorter amount of time. Read on to learn more about protein as well as 15 on-the-go options for busy people.



Why do we need protein?

1. Energy
2. Repair and Maintenance
3. Hormone Creation
4. Enzymes (Enzymes are proteins that increase the rate of chemical reactions in the body.)
5. Transportation and Storage of Molecules
6. Antibody Formation (prevents infection, illness and disease)

What is protein?

Before I go on, let's just cover the basics, proteins are macronutrients (the food that gives us energy) that are made up of amino acids, which are considered building blocks of protein and are found in a variety of foods like eggs, meats, legumes and dairy. These foods contain the highest amounts of protein but also contain smaller percentages of other macronutrients (fat and carbohydrates) and also micronutrients (vitamins and minerals).

How to prepare your nutrition for the week?

I recommend that you prepare your weekly food menu (or your kids') on one or two days per week and cook as much of it ahead of time as you can. When you prepare your meals, start with protein. Decide if you will have eggs, meat, legumes or dairy or a combination of a few. A good rule of thumb is that, for meals, eat as much protein as you can hold in one hand. Once you've got your protein your palm-sized protein portion on a big dinner plate. Fill the rest of your plate with veggies or other healthy carbs, and then just a smidge of good fat (oils, seeds, nuts, avocado, etc). The idea is to eat three meals per day that will sustain you to the point that you don't have to snack. That means the right portions of protein (what you can hold in one hand), carbs (fill the rest of your large dinner plate), and a smidge of good fat (oils, nuts, seeds, avocado).

Snacking?

The truth is that sometimes we don't eat enough of the right foods at our meals and end up needing a snack here and there, which is fine, and if you are hungry you should eat. The problem with most snacks is that we tend to miss out on the protein and end up causing a vicious cycle of snacking that never truly stabilizes our blood sugar and energy. Read on to find out 15 protein snacks that are great for busy people.



15 On-the-Go Protein Snacks

Below are some healthy protein options that can be used for snacking. Some of these are foods you can carry with you all day that do not need refrigeration and some are foods that you can prepare ahead of time to grab from the fridge when you are home or at work; or for kids, have a parent bring it in the car ready for transporting to the next activity. Snacking portions of protein would be about 25-75% of a meal portion of protein (what you can hold in one hand) or roughly 6-21 grams of protein depending on how hungry you are and what activity you will be doing in the next few hours. Pair these items with a veggie or fruit and some good fat for optimal energy levels.

- Edamame (dry, boiled or steamed; 8 grams per half cup)
- Hard-Boiled Egg (6 grams per egg; boil several at once;
- Roasted Chickpeas (1 serving = quarter cup = 7 grams; make as many servings as you desire; rinse and drain; mixed with olive oil, spices, salt and pepper; bake in preheated oven on baking sheet for 45 minutes; divide into serving with zip-locks or storage containers)
- Nut-Butter (almond, peanut or sunflower-seed; serving size and protein amount varies)
- Protein Bars (look for 6-14 grams of protein & 5 grams of fiber)
- Single Serve Oatmeal (4 grams per packet)
- Turkey Roll Ups (18 grams; nitrate-free; with tomato, greens & mustard)
- Hummus (4 grams per quarter cup)
- Nuts (handful of almonds = 4 grams; handful of walnuts = 3 grams; add dried fruit for extra fiber)
- Tuna Pouch (16 grams)
- Jerky (Krave or Perky Jerky; 7-11 grams per 1 oz serving)
- Mini String Cheese (6-8 grams per serving)
- Single Serve Cottage Cheese (20 grams per 5 oz serving)
- Greek Yogurt (12-20 grams per container)
- Low-Fat Chocolate Milk (Organic Valley single serve boxes; one box is 9 grams; does not need to be refrigerated)