

INCREASING PROTEIN IN VEGETARIAN & VEGAN DIETS

Increasing your dietary protein intake helps stabilize blood glucose which in turn enhances & sustains your energy levels & mental clarity. See if this holds true for you by eating more protein than you typically would for 3 days. If you notice improvement in your energy & mental clarity, maintain a daily protein intake of about 65 grams by eating 20-25 grams per meal & 6-8 grams per snack. Try these interchangeable options (e.g. lunch can be swapped for dinner) & feel better fast!

BREAKFAST

Goals: 14-20 grams of protein, 1 veggie or fruit, something with fiber, & a little fat

- Ready-to-drink protein shake (e.g. Odwalla or Orgain) & 1 piece of fruit (e.g. apple or banana) with 4 Tbsp of nut or seed butter (e.g. almond or tahini) OR homemade protein shake with whey, rice, or Vega-brand protein powder, berries, cocoa, coconut milk, & water
- Protein bar: Clif Builder's, Zing, or Stinger
- High-protein Greek yogurt (e.g. Fagé or Chobani) with nuts or seeds (e.g. walnuts or almonds or sunflower or sesame seeds) & 1 piece of fruit
- Apple, carrot &/or celery with 4 Tbsp of nut or seed butter
- Whole eggs or firm tofu: 1-2 eggs or ¼ block firm tofu scrambled/fried/boiled (eggs) with a handful of veggies & 1 piece of toast or 1 sweet potato
- 1 burrito or 3 tacos with scrambled eggs, beans (e.g. whole or refried pinto or black beans), firm tofu, or mock meat (e.g. veggie sausage), a handful of veggies, & dairy or vegan cheese

SNACK

Goals: 6-8 grams of protein 1. between meals, 2. before going home, & 3. before big emotional challenges

- ½ a ready-to-drink protein shake & 1 piece of fruit
- 1 piece of fruit with 4 Tbsp of nut or seed butter
- ½ a cup of high-protein Greek yogurt or ½ a cup of cottage cheese
- Protein bar: Clif Builder's, Zing, or Stinger
- 1 handful (¼ cup) of nuts or seeds with unsweetened dried fruit (e.g. raisins or cranberries)

LUNCH

Goal: 20 grams of protein, 1-2 cups veggies, carbohydrate (bread, pasta, rice, sweets the same size as the protein), a little fat

- Goals: 20-25 grams of protein, 1-2 cups of veggies, ½ a cup of whole grains (e.g. brown rice or quinoa) or 1 wrap/tortilla, & a little fat

LUNCH (cont'd)

- Restaurant or grocery store-prepared foods: 1 cup of beans, hummus, or tempeh OR 1/2 block of firm tofu in a salad, burrito, wrap sandwich or over brown rice or quinoa
- From home: Pre-cook 4-8 veggie sausages. Eat 1 veggie sausage with salad greens, your favorite salad dressing, & ½ a sweet potato or 1 piece of fruit
- High-protein Greek yogurt with nuts or seeds & berries along with 1 piece of fruit with 4 Tbsp of nut or seed butter
- Egg salad or cottage cheese on a bed of salad greens with sliced tomato
- Three-bean or lentil salad on brown rice or quinoa

DINNER

Goals: 20-25 grams of protein, 1-2 cups of veggies, ½ a cup of whole grains (e.g. brown rice or quinoa) or 1 wrap/tortilla, & a little fat

- Restaurant or grocery store-prepared foods: ½-1 cup of beans, ½ a cup of hummus, 1 cup of tempeh, or ¼ block of firm tofu in a salad, burrito, wrap sandwich or over brown rice or quinoa
- 1 can of soup with ½-1 can of beans or mock meat & canned artichokes with salad dressing
- Brown rice or quinoa with mock meat, red sauce, & veggies along with a green salad
- Veggie chili or stir-fry with beans, tempeh, or firm tofu on brown rice or quinoa & microwaved frozen veggies (e.g. broccoli or spinach) with 1 Tbsp of butter or olive oil
- Quesadilla with beans or tempeh, spinach, mushrooms, onions, & dairy or vegan cheese
- Eat out & bring leftovers to lunch: Indian, Thai, or Mexican food with beans, firm tofu, or eggs

TREATS

Eat dark chocolate at the same time each day to decrease sugar cravings/binges

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TIPS

- Pre-cook mock meats: Veggie sausages are each about 3 oz & can be added to salads, stir-fries, soups, burritos, & prepared veggies (from grocery stores).
- Slow cookers are great for tender beans & veggies: Try beans & spices with onions, garlic, hearty greens (e.g. kale or collards), & sweet potatoes. I combine all ingredients in the cooker, set it on "low," & leave for 6-8 hours until food is tender.
- Eat veggies with salad dressing. It is more important to eat veggies than to avoid whatever stopped us from using salad dressing in the first place.
- Even veggie-haters often have 1 veggie they do like. For example, most people like canned artichokes which don't spoil quickly, do transport easily, & often have pull-off lids.
- Convenient foods for your office desk or kitchen cupboard: nut butter (any kind so long as it's unsweetened) & Trader Joe's mini bags of nuts & dark chocolate bars
- Request that your workplace stock the following Costco foods: nuts, high-protein Greek yogurt, cottage or string cheese, apples, oranges, unsweetened dried fruit, & dark chocolate

NOTES

- It is important not to eat more than 1 soy-based meal per day because eating too much soy can easily cause nutrient malabsorption. Many other veggie protein sources are included in this handout.
- Also, eating foods with vitamin C (e.g. tomatoes & green veggies) along with vegetarian sources of iron (namely including beans) helps ensure ample iron absorption & energy levels.
- Furthermore, especially if you are vegan, it is very important to supplement consistently with vitamin B-12 & vitamin D3. Research shows that vegans cannot dietarily source enough of vitamins B-12 & D3 to ensure neurological well-being & apt calcium absorption, so supplementation is key.
- Jarrow Formulas Methyl B-12 1000 mcg is a reliable supplementary source of B-12 & Country Life Certified Vegan D3 5000 I.U. reliably supplies supplementary D3. But note that not only vegans need D3 supplementation; sufficiently sourcing D3 through food alone is challenging for everyone.

Happy Experimentation!



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