

# ROTC WEIGHT CONTROL GUIDE

HILLTOPPER  

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NUTRITION



## FOREWORD

This guide is about empowering ROTC cadets with the knowledge and tools to lose weight. The concepts and ideas within this publication are evidence-based, tested, and meant to be paired with an exercise regimen. Furthermore, this publication is intended to be a reference guide and beginning resource, not an end in itself. Please schedule a one-on-one consultation or request a presentation to receive personalized advice or in-depth treatment of a specific topic.

To schedule a one-on-one consultation with a Hilltopper Nutrition dietitian, please contact Cory Eakins:

- Email: [cory.eakins@wku.edu](mailto:cory.eakins@wku.edu)
- Phone: 270-745-6044
- Office: Health Services Building, Rm 1074

Alternatively, schedule a presentation or event using the request form found on the Hilltopper Nutrition webpage: [wku.edu/hilltoppernutrition](http://wku.edu/hilltoppernutrition).

Sincerely,

Hilltopper Nutrition  
Cory Eakins, MS, RDN, LDN

# Lifestyle and Weight Loss

Healthy, long-term weight loss is almost never achieved through strict dieting. Rather, long-term weight loss is achieved by improving one's total wellness. Correcting unmanaged stress and inadequate sleep is vital to weight loss since these cause fat storage and trigger unhealthy eating patterns. The following suggestions are common solutions, not an exhaustive list.

## Manage stress

- Write or journal about your stressors and what you are grateful for.
- Practice mindfulness meditation or breathing, such as Mark Divine's "box breathing" or a meditation app.
- Schedule time for intentional, undistracted rest and recreation.
- Disconnect from social media and the news cycle.

## High-quality sleep

### *Sleep Environment*

- Avoid digital screen exposure, whether through TV, phone, or computer, at least an hour before bed. The blue light emitted by digital screens triggers wakefulness.
- Take a shower or bath before bed. As your body cools, your core temperature drops and promotes tiredness.
- Improve the sleeping environment by minimizing light exposure, lowering the temperature by a few degrees, and limiting noise. A sleep mask and white noise may help.
- Have a consistent wake and sleep time.

### *Food and Sleep*

- Consume the last large meal of your day at least two to three hours before bed. Eating too much right before bed will result in blood sugar fluctuations which will interrupt deep sleep and contribute to acid reflux.
- Do not consume caffeine after the early afternoon. If you continue to feel poorly rested, try avoiding caffeine by 11 a.m.
- Avoid alcohol before bed. Alcohol may help you lose consciousness, but it disrupts sleep patterns and reduces restfulness.
- Drink the majority of your daily liquids early and in the middle of the day to limit the need to urinate in the middle of the night.
- Consider supplementing with magnesium and/or tart cherry juice at dinner. Note: no supplement will make up for poor sleep habits.

# Food and Weight Loss

Healthy eating patterns are not simply about what you eat: they are about *how* you eat. Develop the following habits to support sustainable, health-focused weight loss.

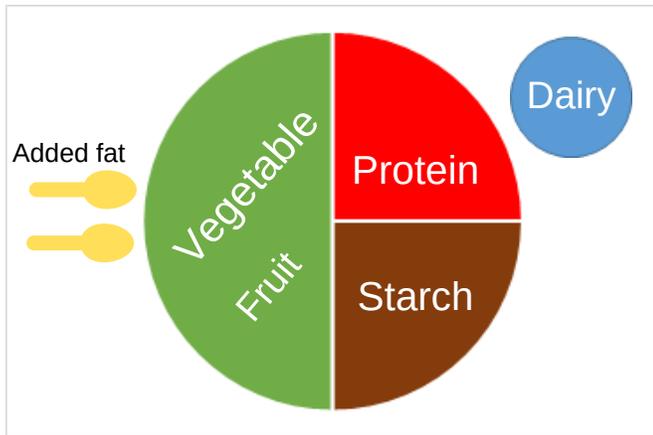
- **Remember your “why.”** If you need to lose weight, you will need to be intentional in your approach to nutrition. As you decide what to eat, ask yourself, “Is this food helping me in my mission?” If it is, enjoy it. If it is not, consider another option you might enjoy but keeps you on the path to meeting your weight requirement.
- **If you consistently do not enjoy what you eat, you’re going to “cheat” or binge.** One of the major causes of weight gain is overeating or bingeing on foods which you have treated as forbidden or “bad.” Plan to eat foods you enjoy but choose relatively healthier options. If you know you are going to consume a high-calorie treat, stay in control and eat a reasonable serving as part of your meal rather than eating compulsively.
- **Honor your hunger and fullness.** Weight gain is likely to occur when you do not respect your hunger and fullness signals. When you start to become hungry, eat a snack or meal until you are satisfied or 80% full, not stuffed or in pain.
- **Don’t eat while distracted.** Recognizing when you are satisfied or nearing fullness is difficult when you eat while distracted, such as when watching TV. Eat slowly, savor your food, and pay attention to your hunger status. This discipline of mindfulness can reduce caloric intake significantly while fueling the body on its own terms.
- **Keep it simple.** The more complex you make a meal plan, the less likely you are to comply and the easier it is to spiral out of control. The perfect diet does not exist, but you can find lasting success by following a simple plan you enjoy.
- **Weight loss does not happen overnight.** Weight loss takes time, so begin improving incrementally to achieve significant mid- and long-term results. Similarly, weight loss does not result from one major moment or choice. Rather, it is the cumulative result of many small choices.
- **Choose whole foods which have been minimally processed.** Not only do these foods tend to be more nutritious and suited to your biological needs, they require more energy from the body in order to be digested, resulting in fewer calories stored by the body.

# Eating Templates

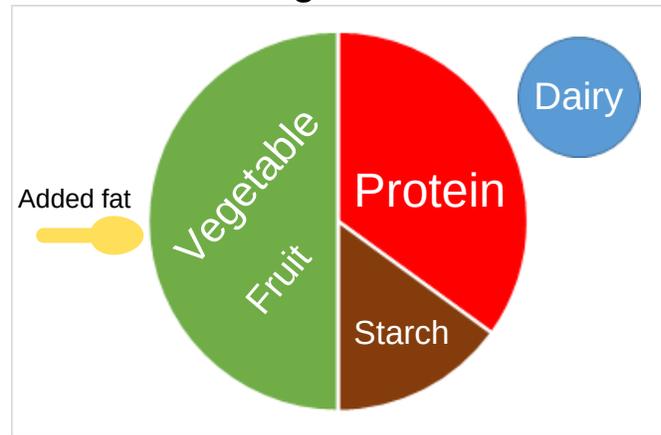
The following eating templates are suggestions, not hard and fast rules, about how to eat in a way which fuels your body through balance, variety, and a focus on nutrient-dense foods.

## Basic Plate Layout

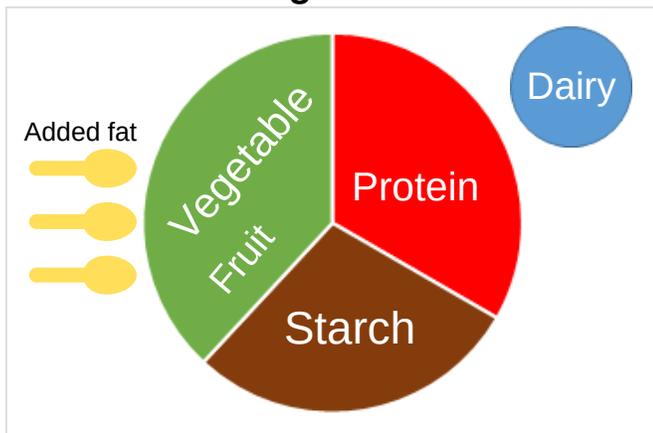
**Standard**



**Weight Loss**



**Weight Gain**



When you are nearing fullness, do not "clean your plate." Next time, however, try smaller portions of each food group so you can eat everything while respecting your fullness.

Vegetables and fruit are emphasized because they are vital sources of vitamins and minerals.

Refer to page 7 for a list of recommended vegetables, fruit, proteins, starches, dairy, and added fats.

# Hand-Sized Portioning

Your hand size is constant and proportionate to your body size, so it is an excellent tool to standardize food and nutrient intake.



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

Many active men do best with 6-8 servings of each food group per day (about 2300-3000 calories) and many active women do best with 4-6 servings of each food group per day (about 1500-2100 calories), so adjust the number of portions to meet your own specific needs and goals.

## If you need more food because you...

- 1) Are larger in stature
- 2) Aren't feeling satisfied at meals
- 3) Eat less frequently throughout the day
- 4) Are very active
- 5) Are trying to gain muscle
- 6) Aren't getting muscle-gain results

### ...Then start by adding...

**Men:** 1 cupped handful of carbs and/or 1 thumb of fat to a few meals each day.

**Women:** ½ cupped handful of carbs and/or ½ thumb of fat to a few meals each day.

## If you need less food because you...

- 1) Are smaller in stature
- 2) Are feeling too full at meals
- 3) Eat more frequently throughout the day
- 4) Are not very active
- 5) Are trying to lose fat
- 6) Aren't getting weight-loss results

### ...Then start by removing...

**Men:** 1 cupped handful of carbs and/or 1 thumb of fat to a few meals each day.

**Women:** ½ cupped handful of carbs and/or ½ thumb of fat to a few meals each day.

# How to Build a Plate



**Men:**  
Two palm-sized portions  
(~ 40-60 g protein)

**STEP 1**

## PROTEIN

Meat, fish, eggs,  
cottage cheese,  
and Greek yogurt



**Women:**  
One palm-sized portion  
(~ 20-30 g protein)



**Men:**  
Two fist-sized portions

**STEP 2**

## VEGETABLES

Broccoli, spinach,  
salad, carrots, etc.



**Women:**  
One fist-sized portion



**Men:**  
Two cupped-hand sized portions  
(~ 40-60 g carbs)

**STEP 3**

## CARBOHYDRATES

Grains, starches,  
beans, and fruits



**Women:**  
One cupped-hand sized portion  
(~ 20-30 g carbs)



**Men:**  
Two thumb-sized portions  
(~ 15-25 g fat)

**STEP 4**

## FATS

Oils, butters,  
nut butters, nuts,  
and seeds



**Women:**  
One thumb-sized portion  
(~ 7-12 g fat)

# Healthy Whole Food Choices

## Make these the majority of your diet

Proteins	Vegetables	Carbs	Fats
<i>Meat</i>	<i>Leafy Greens</i>	<i>Fruit</i>	<i>Nuts &amp; Seeds</i>
Chicken	Spinach	Berries	Walnuts
Turkey	Kale	Cherries	Sunflower seeds
Ground poultry (Leanest option)	Lettuce	Apples	Pecans
Beef	Bok choy	Grapefruit	Cashews
Ground beef (85/15 or leaner)	Collard greens	Oranges	Macadamia nuts
Pork	<i>Cruciferous</i>	Mango	Almonds
Eggs	Broccoli	Pineapple	Pistachios
Fish	Cauliflower	Bananas	Peanuts
Shellfish	Brussels sprouts	Grapes	Nut butters
	Cabbage	Dried fruits	<i>Added Fat</i>
<i>Dairy</i>	Radish	<i>Starches</i>	Olive oil
Greek yogurt	Onions	Beans	Avocado oil
Yogurt	Garlic	Lentils	Sesame oil
Cottage cheese	Asparagus	Peas	Coconut oil
Kefir	Mushrooms	Quinoa	Butter
Milk	<i>Colored</i>	Oatmeal	Ghee
Lactose free milk	Beets	Potatoes	Sour cream
Cheese	Herbs	Corn	
<i>Other</i>	Ginger	Rice	
Beans	Artichokes	Pumpkin	
Lentils	Celery		
Peas	Cucumber		
Tofu	Zucchini		
Soy	Olives		
	Avocado		
	Carrots		
	Tomato		
	Bell pepper		

# Snack Guide

Eating snacks between meals helps keep blood sugar stable and reduce the temptation to eat less healthy options. Keep healthy snacks ready to eat for when you need them.

## Backpack Snacks

Trail mix  
Beef jerky  
Energy/Protein bites  
Dried fruits  
Banana  
Apple  
Applesauce cup  
Orange  
Fruit + peanut butter  
Nuts  
Dark chocolate  
Granola

## Dorm/Apt Snacks

Greek yogurt  
Greek yogurt + fruit or granola  
Cottage cheese + fruit  
Apple or banana + peanut butter  
Small wraps  
*(tortilla, deli meat, cheese, veg)*  
Grapes + cheese stick  
Boiled eggs + fruit  
Fruit smoothie  
Veggies + peanut butter  
Veggies + hummus  
Veggies + guacamole  
Canned salmon or sardines  
Edamame