

Counting macronutrients (macros) can be a handy tool for understanding what you're eating and achieving short-term weight loss, but it can also be as tedious as counting curse words in a Kendrick Lamar song. You need to download apps, read labels, measure food, and be the person who asks their waiter how many calories are in the soup of the day. For long-term success and overall well-being, counting macros often falls short. In theory, it's a practice that should yield great results. In practice, it's just another chore to weigh you down. With that said, here's a closer look at why counting macros might not be the best long-term strategy and what you can do instead.

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# DID YOU KNOW?

## **Feels Unnatural**

Counting macros can turn eating into a numbers game. Instead of enjoying your meals, you might find yourself fixated on exact figures. This approach can make eating feel like a chore, especially during social gatherings or big life events. Remember that time you fretted over how many grams of protein were in your friend's homemade lasagna? It's often better to develop habits that naturally support healthy eating rather than obsessing over each macronutrient.

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## **Risk of Unhealthy Eating Habits**

Being overly focused on macros can lead to unhealthy behaviors. While it's useful to learn about calories and macronutrients, sticking with this approach long-term might foster a preoccupation with food that isn't necessarily healthy. This constant tracking can overshadow the importance of enjoying a balanced diet and can lead to stress or anxiety around food.

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## **Psychological Stress**

The stress of tracking every bite can take a toll on your mental health. Instead of adhering to a rigid counting system, consider making gradual, manageable changes to your eating habits. Small adjustments, like eating without distractions (goodbye, phone!), can make a big difference. This way, you can build a healthier relationship with food without the constant mental load of macro tracking.

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## **Focus on Food Quality**

A more sustainable approach is to prioritize the quality of your food. Opt for whole, nutrient-dense options and reduce processed foods. By focusing on what's in your food rather than how much, you're likely to naturally eat fewer calories and maintain better long-term health. This shift helps align your eating habits with your health goals more effectively than rigidly counting macros.

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## **Behavioral Adjustments**

Simple changes can help you manage your intake without constant counting. For example, eating without distractions like TV or smartphones can reduce calorie consumption by around 15%. These small but impactful changes are easier to stick with than a strict macro-tracking routine and support a more relaxed approach to eating.

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## **Educate and Adapt**

Tracking macros initially can provide useful insights into your eating habits and help you understand your calorie intake. However, for most people, it's best used as a learning tool rather than a permanent solution. The goal should be to move towards intuitive eating—being aware of how different foods affect your hunger and energy. Developing this awareness allows you to make healthier choices naturally, without the need for constant counting.

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