

The Best Protein Power Foods For Weight Loss

Are you looking to lose weight the healthy way? So many people turn to fad diets to shed the pounds. Not only are those diets proven to be ineffective but they can also be very dangerous to your health. **Losing weight is simple: exercise regularly and eat a healthy, high protein diet.** A diet high in lean and low-fat sources of protein is thought by many to be one of the most effective ways to slim down. These healthy proteins maintain lean tissue while burning fat for fuel and curbing your appetite. In short, eating a high protein diet will make working out more effective and eating healthy easy.

Benefits of high-quality protein diet includes boosting metabolism, shedding pounds, increasing feelings of fullness, and helping the body retain muscle.

The types of protein you incorporate in your diet will have a huge impact on your weight loss. You want to add lots of lean, low-fat sources of protein. Below, you will find a list of foods proven to be good sources of protein, as indicated by the US Department of Agriculture.

1. Lean Meat, Fish, Poultry

Amount: 1 Ounce = 7 Grams of Protein

Incorporating lean meats, fish and poultry (lean chicken, turkey, salmon, sole, tuna, etc.) into your daily diet will give you a huge boost of healthy protein. An average chicken breast or salmon fillet can range from 4 ounces to 8 ounces of protein, depending on the size. Many individuals turning to high protein diets significantly increase their intake of lean chicken breasts and fish because they boast so many other health benefits as well while being low in fat. Stay away from breaded or fried chicken or fish for best results.

You can add slices to sandwiches or tortillas, use it ground in pasta sauce and casseroles, cut up meat into a salad, add to soups and stews, and even add to omelets for added protein to get you going in the morning. Bake up a flat of 8-10 chicken breasts on Sunday so you can store them in the fridge and use as needed all week long.

2. Eggs

1 Large Egg = 6 Grams of Protein

Eating one or two eggs a day is a great way to add healthy protein to your diet. If you don't have time to make eggs before work or school, hard boil 5-10 at the beginning of the week and you can easily just grab them and go in the morning. If you don't like the taste of eggs, whip one or two into a morning smoothie and you won't be able to taste them at all.

Eggs are one of the healthiest foods on the planet, containing small portions of almost every essential vitamin and mineral, including selenium, vitamin B12, vitamin B5 and B6, vitamin B2, vitamin A, vitamin E, as well as calcium, iron, potassium, manganese, Folate, and zinc.

3. Milk

1 Ounce = 1 Gram of Protein

Drinking a glass of milk a day (an 8-ounce glass of milk contains approximately 8 grams of protein) will give your body the boost of protein as well as calcium, which is good for your bones. If you don't like drinking milk on its own consider making a fruit smoothie or eating a bowl of cereal to get the nutrients your body needs.

And don't fret if you have a casein allergy, which is an allergic response to milk protein, or an intolerance to milk products. You can get your protein in many healthy milk substitutes, such as soy milk, which contains roughly the same amount of protein as cow's milk at approximately 8 grams of protein per cup. Almond or cashew milk can also be used instead.

4. Low-Fat Yogurt

4 Ounces = 6 Grams of Protein

An average, on-the-go container of yogurt is about 6 ounces. Eating 1-2 portions of low-fat yogurt each day is a healthy and delicious way to up your protein intake in a healthy way. However, you can get the most amount of protein if you opt for Greek style yogurt. This thick and creamy bowl will provide roughly 10 -16 grams of protein per 100-120 gram serving. And you can also buy it in plain, low fat.

The great thing about Greek yogurt is that it can be used as a healthier substitute to many other cooking, baking, and condiment choices. For instance, use it in baking to substitute heavy cream and butter. Use plain yogurt as opposed to sour cream on tacos and fajitas. It's also a great option for making healthier dips and salad dressings.

5. Cheese

1 Ounce = 7 Grams of Protein

Cheese is a huge source of healthy protein as long as you monitor your servings closely. Enjoying a few slices of cheese everyday will increase your protein intake significantly. To put things into perspective, 1 ounce of cheese will give you the same amount of protein as 1 ounce of chicken. Keep in mind that Swiss and cheddar hard cheeses can add up quickly at 100 calories per ounce.

As cheese lovers, who shun low fat cheese for its rubbery consistency will still get taste minus the excess calories if they opt for naturally light options, such as grated Parmesan (20 calories per tablespoon), soft Camembert (at 85 calories per ounce), and goat's cheese and feta cheese (both 75 calories per ounce).

6. Cooked Kidney Beans

1/2 Cup = 7 Grams of Protein

One half-cup of cooked kidney beans will give you the same amount of protein as an ounce of cheese or lean chicken. If you're looking to add more variety to your diet while keeping your intake of healthy protein high, consider adding a small cup of kidney beans to your lunch or dinner a few days a week.

The good news about beans, like kidney beans, is that it can be easily added to soups, stews, casseroles, and sauces without kids or veggie-adverse adults realizing they are stirred in. Luckily, beans typically pick up and absorb other spices and flavors to mix in sneakily. Plus, beans are high in fiber, which means they will help keep you full for longer and ease digestion.

7. Low-Fat Cottage Cheese

1/2 Cup = 14 Grams of Protein

Low-fat cottage cheese ranks number one on this list for the highest amount of protein per serving. A half-cup of cottage cheese will provide your body with 14 grams of protein to help you lose weight and stay healthy. Again, if you're worried about calories, make sure you purchase the low-fat cottage cheese option.

Like plain, Greek yogurt, cottage cheese can be used in a variety of baking, cooking, and dips as a healthier, lower fat option. You can use low fat, plain cottage cheese in casseroles, to make spinach dip (and no one will notice it's not sour cream), and as a high protein topper for salads.

8. Lentils

1/2 Cup = 9 Grams of Protein

There are several types of lentils to choose from, for those of you looking to add this protein super food to your diet. Lentils are sold in many colors, shapes and forms (with skin/without skin etc) and are often found in many Mediterranean diets. Not only do lentils make a great non-meat protein option for vegetarians and vegans, lentils are low calorie and high in fiber so they keep you full for much longer.

The healthy legume has been shown to aid in the reduction of blood cholesterol, and the heart-healthy source of soluble fiber not only helps keep cholesterol levels healthy, lentils also lower the risk of heart attack, stroke, and cardiovascular disease. Because they're a high source of fiber, lentils work to protect your arteries by keeping them clear of harmful plaque.

9. Nuts

1 Ounce = 7 Grams of Protein

Eating a handful of nuts instead of chips or chocolate for your afternoon snack will go a long way in adding a boost of protein to your diet. If you don't like eating nuts on their own, consider adding walnuts or almonds to a salad to mask the taste, but reap the health benefits.

A diet high in nut consumption will protect cardiovascular health and prevent heart disease, particularly for men. Nuts have also been shown to improve blood vessel functioning, keep cholesterol levels low, lower cholesterol, and provide essential mono- and polyunsaturated fatty acids, which protect the heart.

10. Vegetables

1/2 Cup = 2 Grams of Protein

Many people wonder how much protein is in vegetables, and the answer varies depending on which veggie you're nibbling. For instance, an average half-cup of vegetables, such as carrots, celery, and cucumber contains just 2 grams of protein. However, if you opt for high protein veggies, such as spinach, chickpeas or broccoli, you will enjoy up to 6 grams per serving.

If you're looking to get more protein from your vegetables, choosing the right ones and eating larger portions should do the trick, and you also have to pair them with whole grains because plant proteins are 'incomplete' proteins, meaning they don't contain all of the essential amino acids.

11. Peanut Butter

2 Tablespoons = 8 Grams of Protein

Eating peanut butter is perhaps the easiest (and most delicious) way to up the amount of healthy protein in your diet. You can add peanut butter to so many things (wraps, sandwiches, vegetables, smoothies, etc.) but for those of you with little time to prepare healthy meals, simply consuming a dab on an apple slice or a celery stalk will give you a whopping 16 ounces of healthy protein for the day.

Most folks consider peanut butter a breakfast or snack option only, and of course, there are many healthy raw nut butters to choose from, including almond, macadamia, and raw peanut butter for spreading. You can incorporate more protein into your vegetable stir fries by mixing a tablespoon of almond butter, with fresh lime juice, a touch of balsamic vinegar, and grated ginger for a creamy rice topper.