

Step 4: Adopt Adopt Balanced Eating

Why is this step important?

Since you have completed all the basic steps of understanding the importance of food through Step 1, clarifying any myths you may have about food through Step 2, and assessing where you are currently in your eating through Step 3, it is time to begin to implement balanced eating.

Before you eat, you have to think about what goes on your plate, in your cup and bowl. You cannot afford to eat just to fill your stomach or to fulfill your taste buds.

In this step, you will learn what should go on your plate during your meals and snacks.

What is Balanced Eating?

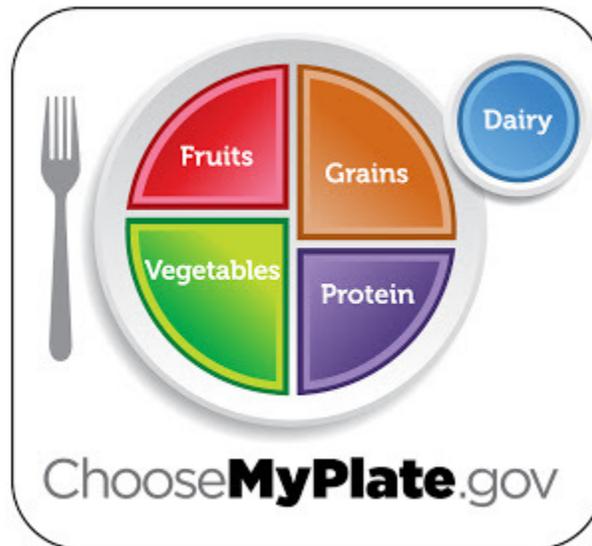
The USDA's food guidance system has the new MyPlate symbol and other materials to help you make healthy food choices.

MyPlate illustrates the five food groups that are the building blocks for a healthy diet using a familiar image—a place setting for a meal. This replaces the old food pyramid.

The 5 food groups are vegetables, fruits, grains, calcium products, and protein foods which contain the nutrients you need.

Balanced eating means including all the above 5 food groups in the right proportion.

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What is the right proportion for the above 5 food groups?

- Half the plate must be vegetables and fruits. Increased intake of vegetables and fruits will help you stay healthy and protect you against weight gain. They give you lot of energy to carry through the day.
- More than $1/4^{\text{th}}$ of the plate must be grains
- Protein must be less than $1/4^{\text{th}}$ of a plate.
- More than $3/4^{\text{th}}$ of the plate is from plant resources whether you are a vegan or not.
- There are different recommendation for these proportions by different people, but the above is from MyPlate.gov

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What is the most common form of an unbalanced diet?

It is indeed **SAD** for your body, mind and spirit if you are only following the old Standard American Diet (**S.A.D**) of consuming meat, poultry and sea food as a **major part** of your diet.

Eating just M.P.S (Meat, Poultry and Sea food) or more M.P.S than other foods is NOT a balanced diet. M.P.S is just one of the many ways to include protein in your diet.

Even if you consume M.P.S for your proteins instead of plant-based protein, you have to ensure that it is less than 1/4th of your plate. Many consume more protein than the body's requirement.

If you are a vegetarian or vegan and are already consuming plant based protein, make sure that you include enough vegetables and fruits in your diet for it to be balanced. Otherwise it will lead to other health problems.

Dangers of protein inclusion using Meat, Poultry and Sea food

Animal products are the most common source of saturated fat and the **only** source of cholesterol in the diet.

Even when you consume the right amount of protein, the protein from the animal source has the disadvantage of adding some **unwanted** fat along with the required protein to your body.

When you consume too much dairy or M.P.S as is usually the case, then you add more weight to your body. You may consider healthy vegetarian or vegan alternatives at least **for a part of the protein.**

Eat the **rainbow** for fruits and Vegetables

When making half of your plate fruits and veggies, choose foods with vibrant colors that are packed with fiber, minerals, and vitamins. There is a lot of variety in the plant kingdom.

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- **Red: bell peppers, cherries, cranberries, red beets, strawberries, tomatoes, watermelon**
- **Green: avocado, broccoli, cabbage, cucumber, dark lettuce, grapes, honeydew, kale, kiwi, spinach, zucchini**
- **Orange and yellow: apricots, bananas, carrots, mangoes, oranges, peaches, squash, sweet potatoes**
- **Blue and purple: blackberries, blueberries, grapes, plums, purple cabbage**

Serving size and Required servings

Apart from these examples of what is 1 serving size, you will see more under Food Groups in <https://www.supertracker.usda.gov>. The “Dairy” there has been replaced with “Calcium” here.

Category	1 Serving equals	Daily Required Servings
Grains (Breads, cereals, rice, pasta, whole grains, tortilla etc.)	1 slice of bread, 1 cup uncooked cereal, ½ cup of cooked grains, cereal or pasta, 1 tortilla	6 or more
Vegetables Fresh or Frozen Raw or cooked	1 cup raw or cooked vegetables 1 cup 100% vegetable juice 2 cups leafy salad greens	3 or more
Fruits Fresh or Frozen Raw or cooked	1 cup raw or cooked fruit 1 cup 100% fruit juice ½ cup dried fruit	2 or more
Protein Beans, lentils, nuts, seeds etc.	¼ cup cooked legumes 1 oz. of M.P.S (if you want) 1 Tablespoon peanut butter ½ ounce nuts or seeds	5 or more
Calcium Fortified plant milk Fortified Fruit juice Dairy (if you want) Green leafy vegetables Legumes	1 cup fortified plant milk / dairy	3 or more

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Balanced Eating Worksheet:

If you did the worksheet in “Step 3. Assess”, then by now you should have at least 3 days of assessment about your eating pattern as given in the example below:

	How many servings?				
	Grains	Vegetables	Fruits	Protein	Calcium
Day 1 -Breakfast	1 cup Wheat cereal				2 cups Soy milk
- Lunch	1 cup cooked Rice	1 cup cooked Spinach		¼ cup lentil	
- Dinner	1 tortilla	1 cup Vegetable salad		½ cup cooked Garbanzo	
- Snacks		1 cup Baby carrots	1 apple	¼ cup Nuts , seeds	
- Total	4 servings 1 + 2 + 1	3 servings 1 + 1 + 1	1	4 servings 1 + 2 + 1	2 servings 1 + 1

Now from the day’s total, you will easily see how many servings of grains, vegetables, fruits, protein and calcium group you ate.

Let us take an example: According to the requirement below,

Target	6 oz.	2½ cup(s)	1½ cup(s)	3 cup(s)	5 oz.
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- Grains must be 6 servings (6 oz.) instead of 4
- Vegetables = 3 cups (3 servings) is good
- Fruits must be 1 ½ cups instead of 1
- Protein must be 5 servings (5 oz.) instead 4
- Calcium is 2 cups instead of 3, but garbanzo and spinach have calcium, so it may be OK.

In the same way, find out your serving size and what you eat.

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3. Put your favorite foods for 1 day and find out how they total up for the servings.

	How many servings or cups or oz.?				
	Grains	Vegetables	Fruits	Protein	Calcium
Day 1 -Breakfast					
- Lunch					
- Dinner					
- Snacks					
- Total					

4. If the grains or protein exceed your supertracker limit, **consciously** take them out. You can spread them out to other days of the week in the worksheet below.
5. If you find less vegetables or fruits, you have to **consciously** add them for the day
6. Once you are able to come closer to the day’s requirement, then you may repeat the process for other days of the week in the **“Conscious Eating List Worksheet”** below
7. You may notice that though you may be eating items that don’t fall under the 5 food groups, we are not talking about them here
8. They will be addressed in “Step 5. Amplify”. For now, focus on just the 5 food groups
9. **To work on this exercise where you are trying to find a balance between the foods you like and eating right, it WILL require you to set aside some time. Be patient.**
10. You can make more tweaks to your daily foods by entering them in the super tracker <https://www.supertracker.usda.gov> . You would know exactly how you are doing in each category in the serving size and also calorie-wise for your age and activity.

If you cannot print the worksheet below, create a similar format in your notebook allocated for this and start tracking. Good luck.... **Love yourself to be YogaFit.....**

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1. Conscious Eating List Worksheet:

	How many cups or ounces?				
	Grains	Vegetables	Fruits	Protein	Dairy
Day 1 - Breakfast					
- Lunch					
- Dinner					
- Snacks					
- Total					
Day 2 - Breakfast					
- Lunch					
- Dinner					
- Snacks					
- Total					
Day 3 - Breakfast					
- Lunch					
- Dinner					
- Snacks					
- Total					
Day 4 - Breakfast					
- Lunch					
- Dinner					
- Snacks					
- Total					
Day 5 - Breakfast					
- Lunch					
- Dinner					
- Snacks					
- Total					
-					
Day 6 - Breakfast					
- Lunch					
- Dinner					
- Snacks					
- Total					

