What Your Body Actually Needs to Build Muscle and Thrive

5 MIN READ

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Food is essential not just to nourish our bodies but to create communities, culture, celebrations, and connections.

Food is fuel, it's memory, meaning, and medicine. It shapes our health, our energy, and our connections. But with so much nutritional noise out there (fasting! keto! macros!), it can feel impossible to know how to truly nourish yourself. We've dedicated our lives to teaching people what it takes to live a healthy life and we've learned some valuable lessons about how to fuel for longevity.

So let's reframe the diet problem. Instead of restriction, let's focus on *savoring*, choosing foods that energize your body, stabilize your hormones, and support your goals.

This Is What Your Body Actually Needs

1) PRIORITIZE PROTEIN (MORE THAN YOU THINK)

Forget the outdated myth that women don't need much protein as men. In midlife and beyond, **adequate protein is critical** for maintaining muscle mass, supporting metabolism, and powering recovery.

Aim for 1.2 to 1.6 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight daily, especially if you're active or strength training. For a 120 lb woman (54 kg), that works out to

roughly 65 to 87 grams per day. Most men will land between 100 and 140 grams. The old RDA of 0.8 g/kg is a minimum to prevent deficiency, not an optimal target for building or maintaining muscle.

2) FUEL BEFORE YOU MOVE

If you work out in the morning, don't skip your pre-workout fuel. Early in the day, cortisol is naturally elevated. Eating (especially a mix of protein, carbs, and fat) signals your body that it's safe to use energy to **build muscle** and recover, rather than staying in a stress state.

3) SMART SUPPLEMENTS FOR MIDLIFE ENERGY AND BRAIN HEALTH

Food comes first but targeted supplementation can help fill in gaps. Some nutrients worth exploring:

- **Creatine**: **Supports muscle** strength *and* brain health (especially important post-injury or for cognitive aging)
- **Magnesium, Omega-3s, and Vitamin D, K, and C**: Crucial for mood, bone health, inflammation, and cellular function.

4) BUILD A LONGEVITY PLATE

Whether you are meal prepping, lunching on the go, or enjoying dinner with friends, these five principles can help you eat with power and presence:

- **Protein first**: Aim for that 1.2–1.6 g/kg daily goal, choosing high-quality sources like fish, lean meat, tofu, or tempeh.
- **Nutrient-dense choices**: Eat mostly whole foods to get a spectrum of vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients.

- **Hydration matters**: Add electrolytes **to your water**, especially in the morning (before coffee) to optimize energy.
- **Fiber up**: Great for digestion, glucose stability, and long-term metabolic health.
- **Share your meals**: Longevity is about **building community** as much as it's about building health. Regular meals with others are a deeply nourishing (and scientifically backed) health habit.

Three Emerging Tools to Personalize Your Nutrition

Midlife nutrition is about finding what works for your body. Here are two science-backed strategies worth exploring:

1. **Continuous Glucose Monitoring (CGM)**
   These small devices provide real-time feedback on how your body responds to different foods, giving you a personal metabolic roadmap.
2. **Prebiotics & Probiotics**
   Support your gut health with the right balance of inputs.
   - *Prebiotics* (like asparagus, garlic, and artichokes) are the fertilizer.
   - *Probiotics* (like yogurt, kefir, and kimchi) are the seeds.
     Together, they help create a thriving internal ecosystem linked to mood, immunity, and longevity.
3. **Get Your Blood Work Done**
   A full nutritional panel can highlight deficiencies, optimize your supplement stack, and help tailor your eating style for the decades ahead.

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