

GOALCOMMIT · COMMIT TO YOUR GOALS

Protein Guide for Adults 40+

How much you really need, how to hit it at every meal, and why it decides whether you stay strong, lean, and independent for the next 30 years.



GOALCOMMIT

goalcommit.com · Training + Nutrition, as a team

Audited by a Registered Dietitian

Janeza, RD · Co-founder, Goalcommit

Practical, no-diets guidance for real life.

After 40, muscle is use it, fuel it, or lose it

After age 30, adults lose roughly 5-6% of muscle mass per decade - about a tenth of peak muscle is gone by 50. Left unchecked, that is roughly a fifth or more by your 70s, with the rate accelerating with age - and with it goes strength, balance, blood-sugar control, and independence. The good news: muscle after 40 is highly trainable, and protein is the lever most people underuse.

5-6%

muscle mass lost per decade after age 30 without intervention (NHANES DXA data)

2x

harder for older muscle to respond to a small protein dose vs. age 25 - the dose per meal has to go up

30-50g

protein per meal is the practical target that consistently triggers muscle building after 40

Anabolic resistance - the phrase worth knowing

Younger muscle builds readily from a modest meal. After 40, the same meal produces a blunted response. Researchers call this anabolic resistance. It does not mean the system is broken. It means the signal needs to be louder: more total protein across the day, a bigger dose at each meal, and resistance training to make the muscle receptive again. That is the entire strategy in this guide.

Protein also does quiet, compounding work: it keeps you fuller between meals, steadies energy, supports bone when paired with training, and - because protein costs more energy to digest than carbs or fat - it modestly raises daily energy expenditure. For fat loss after 40, that combination is decisive: you lose fat while keeping the muscle that keeps your metabolism up.

Janeza, RD: "I don't put clients on diets. We build one anchor at a time - a real protein at breakfast, then lunch, then dinner - until the day takes care of itself. It has to work on a Tuesday, not just on a motivated Monday."

How much protein **you** actually need

The old Recommended Dietary Allowance of 0.8 g per kg of body weight was set to prevent deficiency, not to protect muscle. Modern position stands for active and older adults land considerably higher.

Your situation	Daily target	For a 180 lb (82 kg) adult
Generally active, wants to maintain muscle	1.2-1.4 g/kg (0.55-0.65 g/lb)	100-115 g/day
Strength training 3-4x/week, building muscle	1.4-1.6 g/kg (0.65-0.75 g/lb)	115-130 g/day
Fat-loss phase, or training hard and often	1.8-2.2 g/kg (0.8-1.0 g/lb)	145-180 g/day

Ranges synthesised from the International Society of Sports Nutrition position stands and meta-analyses of protein and resistance training (e.g., Morton et al., British Journal of Sports Medicine). Use goal or target body weight if you have significant weight to lose. If you have kidney disease or another condition your clinician is managing, clear a higher-protein plan with them first.

The shortcut most of our clients use

Aim for **0.8-1.0 grams per pound of target body weight**, spread across the day. At the top of that range - around 1 gram per pound - most active adults cover muscle building, satiety, and fat-loss support in one simple rule. Newer research supports this range for people who train; it also crowds out the grazing that quietly stalls progress.

Total matters. Distribution decides.

150 grams eaten as 20g at breakfast, 30g at lunch and 100g at dinner underperforms the same 150 grams split as roughly 40 / 50 / 50 plus a snack. Muscle protein synthesis switches on per meal, so give it three to four real chances a day instead of one big one at night.

Do this first: keep your current eating for two days and simply note protein at each meal. Most adults over 40 discover breakfast is 8-12g and dinner is carrying the whole day. Fix breakfast first - it changes hunger and energy all day.

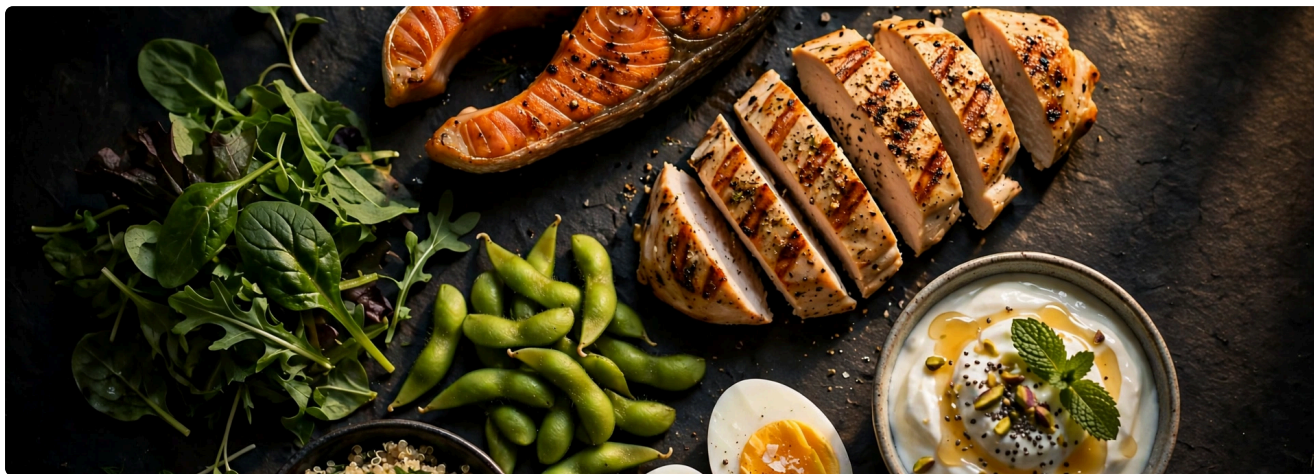
Hit 30-50 grams **per meal**, three to four times a day

Within each meal, leucine - an amino acid concentrated in animal proteins, dairy, eggs and soy - acts as the on-switch. After 40 you need roughly 2.5-3 grams of leucine in a sitting to fully trigger muscle building. In practice, 30-50 grams of high-quality protein gets you there.

Food (typical serving)	Protein	Notes
Chicken or turkey breast, 5 oz cooked	~44 g	Lean, versatile, meal-prep friendly
Salmon or tuna, 5 oz	~36-40 g	Adds omega-3s that support joint and heart health
Lean beef or pork tenderloin, 5 oz	~38 g	Iron and B12 come along for the ride
Greek yogurt, 1 cup (non-fat or 2%)	~20-23 g	Breakfast anchor; add berries and nuts
Cottage cheese, 1 cup	~25 g	Slow-digesting - an excellent evening option
Eggs, 3 large + egg whites	~24 g	Among the most bioavailable proteins
Tofu / tempeh, 1 cup	~20-40 g	Best plant anchors; pair with grains or soy milk
Lentils + quinoa, 1.5 cups cooked	~22 g	Fiber-rich; combine across the day for full amino acids
Whey or plant protein shake	~25 g	A tool for busy days - food first, shake to close gaps

Plant-based eaters: you can absolutely hit these targets. You will lean on larger volumes, soy foods, and deliberate combining (beans + grains, hummus + pita, lentils + rice). A registered dietitian can map this to your preferences in one session - it is exactly the kind of personalisation that makes the plan stick.

Two real days - no powders required



DAY A - ~145 G

- **Breakfast 38g:** Greek yogurt bowl with berries, chia and a handful of walnuts + 2 eggs on the side
- **Lunch 48g:** grilled chicken and quinoa bowl, greens, feta, lemon-olive oil
- **Snack 18g:** cottage cheese with cucumber and everything seasoning
- **Dinner 42g:** salmon, roasted vegetables, small sweet potato

DAY B - ~180 G

- **Breakfast 45g:** egg-white and egg scramble with turkey, spinach and cheese
- **Lunch 55g:** tuna and white-bean salad over greens with crusty bread
- **Post-training 25g:** whey shake or chocolate milk - only on training days if dinner is late
- **Dinner 55g:** lean steak or pork tenderloin, lentils, big salad

Notice what is missing: restriction theatre. Bread, potatoes and dessert can all live inside a protein-anchored day. The anchor comes first; the rest of the plate is built around it. That is the no-diets structure Janeza coaches - food that fits a restaurant, a family dinner, and travel.

Protein builds. Training tells it where to go.



Protein without a training stimulus mostly maintains. Protein with progressive resistance training - loads that gradually increase, taken close to your current limits with good form - builds. Two to four strength sessions a week is enough to change the trajectory. That is why our coaching pairs a trainer and a registered dietitian: the training creates the demand, the nutrition supplies the material, and neither has to be extreme to work.

Myth: "High protein damages kidneys"

In healthy adults, intakes in the ranges in this guide have not shown kidney harm in controlled research. The caution applies to people with existing kidney disease - which is why we screen and refer out. If that is you, work with your clinician and a dietitian.

Myth: "You need shakes to do this"

Powders are convenience, not magic. Food-first days above hit 145-180g with zero shakes. Keep a powder for travel and chaotic days; let real meals do the heavy lifting the rest of the time.

A note on GLP-1 medications: if you are using one, appetite suppression makes protein and strength training more important, not less. Rapid weight loss without them disproportionately costs muscle. Smaller, protein-forward meals eaten on a schedule - rather than waiting for hunger that may not arrive - protect strength while the medication does its work.

Your 7-day **protein anchor** plan

No overhaul. One anchor at a time, in Janeza's order:

- **Days 1-2 - Breakfast anchor:** 30g+ before 10 a.m. (yogurt bowl, eggs + whites, or cottage cheese plate). Notice afternoon hunger.
- **Days 3-4 - Add lunch:** a palm-and-a-half of protein as the centre of the plate. Restaurant or desk, same rule.
- **Days 5-6 - Add dinner + evening check:** if dinner is light, close the gap with cottage cheese or Greek yogurt in the evening.
- **Day 7 - Review, don't judge:** which anchor was easiest? That is your permanent habit. Which was hardest? That is where coaching helps.

Audited by Janeza, Registered Dietitian. Every target, meal and myth-check in this guide was reviewed against current sports-nutrition position stands and real client practice - practical, no-diets guidance built for busy adults, not athletes on a stage. This guide is general education and is not medical advice.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Find your Strength Age - then build the plan around it.

Protein is one side of the equation. Take the free "**What's Your Strength Age?**" assessment at goalcommit.com to see how your strength stacks up for your age, then apply for 1-to-1 coaching with a trainer and a registered dietitian working as one team.

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