THE PROTEIN GUIDE

Let's Change The Conversation About Protein

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INTRODUCTION

Let's Change The Conversation About Protein

In the early days of my bodybuilding career, I'd choke down a dozen desiccated liver tablets before breakfast. They tasted like chalk and smelled like old leather. But they were packed with nutrients, and that's all I cared about.

I wasn't thinking about taste. I was thinking about muscle.

Vince Gironda, one of the most legendary trainers in our sport, swore by them. And back then, if something gave you even the smallest edge, you did it. No questions asked. I wasn't chasing flavor. I was chasing my vision to become the greatest bodybuilder in the world, get to America, and star in the movies.

This was the 1960s. We didn't have apps that tracked our macros. We didn't have research reviews or supplement databases. We had instinct, experience, and each other. We traded secrets in the gym like war stories. And the one constant—what everyone agreed on—was protein.

Everything I ate was designed around it. That meant eating plenty of protein when I was competing. I drank protein shakes twice a day, stacked my meals with steak and eggs, and planned my life around feeding the machine.

However, something interesting happened as the years passed. I stopped trying to become the biggest guy in the room. I stopped

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INTRODUCTION

eating five times a day. And yet—I didn't lose my strength. I didn't lose my edge.

I simply evolved.

Now I eat less meat than I used to. I've shifted toward a more plant-based approach. I still love a good steak and barbeque, but I've changed the type of meat I consume. I want red meat with more nutrient density, more protein, and less saturated fat. The game meats — like venison — are the perfect combination of higher protein that considers the health of your body.

I still love protein, but I've learned that where it comes from and how much you need depends on your goals, your lifestyle, and your stage of life.

This wasn't about fads. This was about experience. Because after 60 years in the gym, I've seen what works. I've lived through the misinformation. And I've learned that if you don't keep adapting, you get left behind.

That's why we created this guide.

I want to give you what I didn't have. A simple, no-BS roadmap to help you understand how protein works, why it matters, and how to use it—no matter your age or fitness level.

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INTRODUCTION

Protein isn't just for bodybuilders. It's for anyone who wants to build muscle, lose fat, improve their overall health, recover more quickly, combat aging, and feel strong for life.

But most people still get it wrong. Some eat too little and wonder why they can't build muscle. Some eat too much of the wrong kind and run into health issues. And many people are confused by myths, like whether too much protein hurts your kidneys (it doesn't), or if it turns to fat (it rarely does).

This guide is designed to clarify the confusion and provide you with the truth. We'll walk you through the science. The strategy. The sources. We'll talk about protein for muscle, for fat loss, for recovery, for beauty, for longevity—and yes, for real life.

Because at the end of the day, this isn't about being perfect. It's about being powerful. It's about giving your body what it needs to be at its best.

You don't need to eat liver tablets. However, you do need to be mindful of protein.

Let's get started.

CHAPTER 1

WHY IS PROTEIN SO IMPORTANT?

The Nutrient That Built You—And The One That Will Keep You Going

When Arnold first arrived in America in 1968, he had three things: A gym bag, a thick accent, and a belief—carved into his bones—that everything he wanted would be built with work.

But even work needs fuel. And Arnold, more than most, understood that the raw materials mattered. What he couldn't explain back then in scientific terms, his body already knew: Protein is the foundation. Of your strength. Of your health. Of the life you want to build.

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THE BLUEPRINT OF YOU

Your body is made of protein. Not just your muscles. But also your skin, your hair, your nails, your organs.

And because of that, protein plays an important role in almost every process that matters: Your immune system. Your hormones. Your enzymes. The collagen in your joints. The keratin in your scalp. The hemoglobin in your blood carries oxygen to every cell.

Every function your body performs—healing, growing, defending, thinking—is powered by protein. Or made possible by it.

The 20 amino acids that make up dietary protein? They're not just nutrients. They're the alphabet of life.

You use them to build every letter, every word, every sentence of who you are.

Some of those amino acids—like leucine, lysine, and methionine—your body can't make. You have to eat them. That's why they're called "essential." Without them, your body starts breaking down itself, taking protein from your muscles, your tissue, your systems, just to survive.

That's why older adults lose muscle so rapidly. It's not aging—it's under-eating protein, which makes recovery slower, strength harder to maintain, and vitality feel like it's slipping away.

THE COST OF DEFICIENCY

Protein deficiency doesn't just mean starvation in a third-world country. It happens every day, quietly, in the lives of people who think they're eating healthy:

The person skipping breakfast, having a salad for lunch, and wondering why they're exhausted by 3 p.m.

The mom who's juggling kids and work and grabs a bar with 6g of protein and 28g of sugar.

The aging dad who's eating toast and cereal while slowly losing the ability to get up off the floor.

PROTEIN DEFICIENCY SHOWS UP IN WAYS PEOPLE DON'T ALWAYS RECOGNIZE:

- Hair loss
- Slow wound healing
- Fatigue
- Weak nails
- Increased injury risk
- Immune dysfunction
- Loss of muscle

Not just for bodybuilders. For everyone. For walking, climbing stairs, and physical independence.

PROTEIN IS IMMUNE DEFENSE

Most people don't realize this:
Your immune system runs on protein.

Antibodies, cytokines, the cells that kill viruses, are all made of amino acids. When your diet is low in protein, your body will rob from other systems to keep your immune system active. That includes your muscles. Your bones. Your organs.

THIS IS WHY HIGH-PROTEIN DIETS ARE CONSISTENTLY LINKED TO:

- Fewer infections
- Faster recovery from surgery or injury
- Better outcomes during illness

PROTEIN IS SURVIVAL

Sarcopenia. It sounds like a rare disease, but it's not. It's the age-related loss of muscle mass, affecting more than 1 in 3 adults over 60.

It starts subtly. You feel weaker. You tire faster. You don't bounce back from a workout like you used to. Eventually, it becomes harder to get out of a chair. Harder to catch your balance. Harder to live.

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PROTEIN IS SURVIVAL

That's not inevitable. It's not destiny. It's often preventable.

Research has found that older adults who consume higher-protein diets maintain more lean mass, strength, and mobility, even without increasing exercise.

WHAT PROTEIN CAN DO FOR YOU—RIGHT NOW

Protein doesn't just support your health.
It supports your choices.

Want to lose fat? Protein controls hunger.
Want to build muscle? Protein makes it possible.
Want to look better? Protein builds your hair, skin, and nails.
Want to live longer? Protein protects your body from the slow erosion of time.

And best of all? You don't need to be perfect.

You don't need a six-meal-a-day bodybuilder plan. You don't need to chug shakes like a teenager in a gym parking lot. You just need to be aware—and make it a priority.

Continued...

WHAT PROTEIN CAN DO FOR YOU—RIGHT NOW

Protein isn't a trend. It's not keto or paleo or high-carb or low-fat. It's not a gimmick.

It's the nutrient that built you as a child. It's the one that will defend you as you age. And it's the only one that stays essential, no matter how your goals change.

If you've ever struggled to stay consistent, wondered why you feel tired, weak, or hungry all the time, or felt like your body isn't cooperating anymore, protein is a great place to start.

Don't start with subtraction. Start with protein and build from there.

PERSONAL PERFORMANCE TO PLANETARY IMPACT

True sustainability isn't about doing less harm—it's about creating balance. Every Maui Nui Venison purchase helps restore Hawaii's fragile ecosystems by managing invasive Axis deer populations. This isn't just better meat—it's a better model.

Their stress-free harvesting methods yield venison with higher antioxidant levels and cleaner nutritional profiles than top quality grass-fed meat, proving that the healthiest choice for your body is also the healthiest choice for the planet. Performance and purpose, perfectly aligned.

Pump Club members get a complimentary Stick Starter Pack (a $79 value) featuring 12 of Maui Nui's best-selling venison sticks with any purchase over $79, while supplies last.

CLAIM YOUR FREE MAUI NUI VENISON STICKS NOW

CHAPTER 2

HOW DOES PROTEIN SUPPORT MUSCLE GROWTH?

WHAT IF EVERYTHING YOU WERE TOLD ABOUT MUSCLE WAS WRONG?

You've probably heard the story: You lift weights. Your muscles tear. Your body repairs the damage. You grow back bigger, stronger.

It's a nice story. Clean. Linear. Logical.

And it's wrong.

For decades, the idea of microtears as the mechanism behind muscle growth went unchallenged. It was everywhere—from textbooks to gym locker rooms. But here's what science has shown us now:

Continued...

HOW DOES PROTEIN SUPPORT MUSCLE GROWTH?

Muscle doesn't grow from tearing. It grows from tension.

Not damage. Demand.

When you place a muscle under enough mechanical tension—through heavy lifting, controlled tempo, and extreme demand—it creates a molecular signal inside your muscle cells. That signal tells your body:

"This muscle isn't strong enough for what we just did. Make it stronger."

It's not trauma. It's adaptation. You're not breaking yourself down to grow. You're challenging your body to rise.

And yet, this might be the least understood truth in all of fitness.

Because if we still get the most basic mechanism of growth wrong, what else are we misunderstanding?

THE ONE THING MOST PEOPLE GET RIGHT

Despite all the myths about soreness, timing, reps, and supplements, there's one thing nearly everyone agrees on:

Protein helps build muscle. That's not just folklore. It's a biological fact.

When you create mechanical tension through resistance training, you spark a process known as muscle protein synthesis. It's your body's way of rebuilding what you've stressed—and ideally, making it better.

But it only works if there are amino acids—especially leucine—circulating in your blood.

This is why protein isn't optional. It's essential. It's the difference between stimulus and results.

But here, too, the water gets muddy. People still debate how much you need, when to eat it, whether you can eat too much, or whether it ruins your kidneys.

So let's clear it up, once and for all.

THE TRUTH ABOUT HOW MUCH YOU NEED

There is no magic number. But there is a range where your body thrives.

GOAL	DAILY PROTEIN TARGET
General health	0.6—1g per pound of bodyweight
Building muscle	0.8—1g per pound
Cutting fat	1—1.2g per pound of goal weight
60+ years old	1—1.2g per pound

If you weigh 180 pounds and want to build muscle, aim for 110 to 180 grams per day.

Not because it's trendy. Because that's what your body needs to fuel the signal you worked so hard to send at the gym.

You train. You recover. You grow. That's the loop.

Protein turns your workouts into progress.

It repairs the damage you can't feel.

It builds the tissue you can't see.

Continued...

THE TRUTH ABOUT HOW MUCH YOU NEED

It helps you maintain your strength while losing weight.

It helps you bounce back faster when you're sore or injured.

It helps you add size when your training and sleep are dialed in.

And when you don't get enough? Recovery slows, soreness lingers, fatigue creeps in, and you keep working, but the results stall

It's rarely overtraining that's the issue. More often, it's poor nutrition or underfeeding.

THE 30-GRAM LIE

For years, you might've heard this: "Your body can only absorb 30 grams of protein at once."

Put simply, that's not true.

Early studies suggested muscle protein synthesis peaks around 30 grams in a single meal. However, they didn't account for long-term absorption or protein oxidation, which is how your body continues to utilize protein over time.

A study we shared in Arnold's Pump Club showed that a 100g protein meal still elevated muscle protein synthesis, just over a longer duration.

Continued...

THE 30-GRAM LIE

So no, your body doesn't waste the extra. It doesn't dump the rest. It uses what it needs when needed.

Eat protein. Eat enough. Your body knows what to do.

THE TIMING TRAP

There's nothing wrong with having a protein shake after your workout. But it's not a race against the clock

The anabolic "window" isn't 30 minutes. It's several hours.

Muscle growth isn't a door that slams shut. It's a sliding glass panel that stays open as long as you're consistent. What matters more than when you eat is how much you eat, consistently, across the day.

- Aim for 3 to 6 protein-rich meals
- Each with at least 20 to 40 grams of high-quality protein (but you can enjoy more)

Because if your daily number is right, the timing will take care of itself.

THE LONGER YOU TRAIN, THE MORE PRECISION YOU NEED

Here's something most people don't realize. The amount of protein you need depends not only on your body size or goals, but also on your training experience.

If you're new to lifting? Almost anything works. You're sensitive to the stimulus. Muscle protein synthesis is easier to trigger. You can make gains with modest increases in protein intake, even if your diet isn't perfect.

But if you've been lifting for years—pushing past plateaus, training with intensity, chasing progressive overload—your body stops responding to the basics. It demands more.

The further you've come, the more precise your inputs need to be to keep improving. This isn't just theory. It's exactly what researchers found when they zoomed in on protein intake in trained vs. untrained individuals.

A meta-analysis often cited to support the idea that lifters don't need more than 1.6g/kg (approximately 0.7g per pound) was primarily based on studies involving untrained individuals. When researchers pulled out the few studies that actually included trained lifters, the results told a different story.

Continued...

THE LONGER YOU TRAIN, THE MORE PRECISION YOU NEED

In studies where trained athletes consumed more than 2g/kg—often well above the so-called "breakpoint"—they continued to gain significantly more fat-free mass than groups consuming closer to 1.6g/kg.

To put that in perspective: The control groups in these studies (already at 1.6g/kg) barely gained lean mass. The groups that increased protein beyond that added 1.5 to 2.3 kg of fat-free mass—real, measurable muscle.

The effect isn't infinite—there's a ceiling somewhere, likely around 2.3 to 2.4g/kg. But it's higher than most people assume.

The lesson? If you're newer to lifting, aim for 0.6 to 1 gram per pound of goal body weight. That's your foundation. If you're an experienced, consistent, hard-training lifter? Going above 1g/lb—and toward 1.1—1.2g/lb or beyond—can continue to deliver results.

The more advanced you are, the smaller the margin for error. And that's where protein becomes more than helpful—it becomes strategic.

"BUT DOESN'T IT HURT YOUR KIDNEYS?"

Not unless your kidneys are already compromised.

Decades of research have investigated high-protein diets in healthy adults, with intakes ranging from 1 to 2 grams per pound of body weight, and have found no adverse effects on kidney function, liver health, or bone density.

It's one of the most persistent myths in nutrition and one of the most thoroughly debunked.

If you're healthy, protein is safe. And for many people, it's the missing piece.

CHAPTER 3

HOW PROTEIN SUPPORTS FAT LOSS, HUNGER, AND SATIETY

Hunger isn't a weakness. It's a signal. A whisper from your biology that says: "Feed me what I really need."

In the summer of 1966, a British scientist named Stephen Simpson observed a group of locusts breaking down their food.

He wasn't studying humans. He wasn't trying to solve the obesity crisis. He just wanted to understand what drives an animal to eat and stop.

Continued...

HOW PROTEIN SUPPORTS FAT LOSS, HUNGER, AND SATIETY

But the deeper he studied the way insects navigated their diets—swapping leaves and bark and fruit to get something just right—the more he started asking a question that would change the way we understand hunger:

What if all living things eat for protein?

It would take him decades to publish what's now known as the Protein Leverage Hypothesis, a revolutionary theory that reframes hunger not as a failure of willpower, but as a search for amino acids. A biological hunt for the building blocks of life. And when that need goes unmet, we don't stop eating. We keep going.

We eat more carbs. We eat more fat. We eat more of everything.

And that's the trap.

THE BIOLOGY OF HUNGER

Let's take a moment to understand what's really happening when you're hungry. Your stomach is not a black hole. It's a sensor. It's lined with stretch receptors and hormone-producing cells. When you eat, it doesn't just fill—it talks to your brain.

That conversation happens through the vagus nerve, a bi-directional superhighway that runs from your gut to your brainstem. As your stomach expands, and certain nutrients hit receptors, it sends signals that say:

"We're good down here. You can stop now."

But not all calories send the same message. And this is where protein stands apart.

WHY PROTEIN SILENCES CRAVINGS

Protein triggers the release of powerful satiety hormones:

- Peptide YY (PYY), which reduces appetite.
- GLP-1, which delays gastric emptying and helps you feel fuller longer.
- Cholecystokinin (CCK), which tells your brain to slow down.

Continued...

WHY PROTEIN SILENCES CRAVINGS

Protein also suppresses ghrelin, the “I’m starving” hormone that ramps up before meals.

That’s why when you start your day with protein, you don’t just feel satisfied—you feel quiet. The inner chatter fades. The late-night cravings lose their grip. The sense of “I need more” becomes “I’ve had enough.” It’s not magic. It’s biology.

THE METABOLIC COST OF EATING: UNDERSTANDING THE THERMIC EFFECT OF FOOD

Every time you eat, your body goes to work. Digesting, absorbing, transporting, and storing nutrients takes energy. That energy is known as the Thermic Effect of Food, or TEF.

Think of it like this:

- Fat is easy to process. Your body burns 0—3% of those calories just to digest it.
- Carbohydrates are slightly harder—5—10% of their energy goes into processing.
- Protein? That’s the metabolic overachiever. Your body uses up to 30% of protein’s calories just to break it down.

Continued...

THE METABOLIC COST OF EATING: UNDERSTANDING THE THERMIC EFFECT OF FOOD

So, if you eat 100 calories of chicken or lentils or eggs?

Your body only keeps about 70. The rest is spent doing the work of digestion, enzyme production, and nutrient transport.

This means protein-rich meals raise your metabolism more than any other food group without you doing anything extra.

It's not a trick. It's not a loophole. It's your body doing its job.

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR FAT LOSS

When people say "your metabolism is broken," they usually mean that you're not burning enough calories. However, what they often overlook is that your metabolism is influenced not only by how much you move, but also by what you eat.

A higher-protein diet leads to:

- Greater diet-induced thermogenesis (calorie burn from digestion)
- More lean muscle mass (which increases resting metabolic rate)
- Less metabolic slowdown during calorie restriction

Continued...

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR FAT LOSS

In simple terms, when protein is high, your metabolism stays elevated, even if you're eating fewer calories overall.

And when your metabolism is running efficiently, you're less likely to hit plateaus. Less likely to lose muscle. Less likely to feel like your body is betraying your efforts.

THE HIDDEN DRIVERS OF OVEREATING

Here's the hard truth: most processed foods are designed to be low in protein but high in carbs and fat—the exact combination that fuels overconsumption.

Your brain's reward systems light up. Your satiety hormones stay silent. Your search for amino acids continues.

So you eat more. Not because you're weak, but because your body is still searching. This is what Simpson and Raubenheimer meant when they wrote: **"Obesity arises not from a surfeit of energy, but from a deficit of protein."**

It's not always about cutting back. Sometimes, it's about adding back in what's been missing.

THE PROTEIN LEVERAGE HYPOTHESIS

The protein leverage hypothesis, first articulated by Simpson and Raubenheimer in the early 2000s, suggests that your body has a fixed protein target. Not consciously, but biologically.

If your diet is low in protein—say, 10 percent of your total calories—your body will drive you to eat more food until it reaches its amino acid quota.

Even if that means eating hundreds of excess calories from carbs and fat.

But if you increase protein to 20 percent, 30 percent, or more of your intake?

Suddenly, hunger fades. Calorie intake drops—naturally, not by restriction. In other words, we eat too much because we're not getting enough protein.

THE PROOF IS IN THE PLATE

In one landmark study, participants were instructed to increase their protein intake to 30% of their daily calories. That was the only instruction. They lost an average of 11 pounds in 12 weeks. No calorie tracking. No meal replacements. Just more protein.

Another study showed that when individuals consumed double their usual protein intake, they automatically reduced calorie consumption by over 400 calories per day.

They weren't fighting hunger. Hunger had left the battlefield.

THE SIMPLICITY OF SATIETY

You don't need to hack your metabolism. You don't need to outsmart your cravings. You just need to feed your biology what it needs.

Here's a practical guide:

- 0.7 to 1 gram of protein per pound of goal body weight.
- Divide it across your meals: 20 to 60 grams per sitting. (but don't worry, if you eat less than 20 grams, it still has benefits, and if you eat more than 60 grams your body can still process and absorb).

Build each plate around protein, then add vegetables, healthy fats, and carbohydrates to support your lifestyle and performance.

A NOTE OF COMPASSION

If you've struggled with hunger, with snacking, with nights where you stood in the pantry wondering what's wrong with you, then now this: Nothing is wrong with you. Your body is not broken. It's just been underserved.

Give it what it needs. Feed it protein, as well as fiber, vegetables, fruits, and other nutritious foods, and everything changes. When you stop aggressively restricting, you start to feel more satisfied. When you stop punishing, you feel fueled.

You don't need another fad. You need a foundation.

THE MYTH: "IF I EAT TOO MUCH PROTEIN, IT'LL JUST TURN TO FAT"

There's a fear that sneaks into nearly every conversation about protein. It sounds like this: "Isn't all that extra protein just going to turn into fat?"

It's a reasonable question. We've been conditioned to believe that anything "extra" we eat, especially when portion control is a real issue, will somehow sneak past our metabolism and plant itself on our waistline.

And yes, if you eat too many excess calories from protein, you will gain weight. But eating "a lot" of protein without going into a calorie surplus isn't going to result in protein becoming fat.

Continued...

THE MYTH: "IF I EAT TOO MUCH PROTEIN, IT'LL JUST TURN TO FAT"

More importantly, unlike carbs or fats, which are designed for storage (as glycogen or adipose tissue), protein doesn't have an efficient storage depot.

When you eat it, your body breaks it into amino acids. Those amino acids are used for repairing muscles, building enzymes and hormones, supporting your immune system, and replacing old skin, hair, and connective tissue.

If you've met your needs? The rest is either burned for energy or excreted as waste.

The metabolic process required to convert excess protein into fat is called de novo lipogenesis (DNL). And in humans, it's extraordinarily rare because it's not something your body wants to do. DNL is metabolically expensive and inefficient—your body much prefers storing dietary fat directly as fat or using carbs for energy.

Your body is too smart—and the process is too inefficient—for it to waste energy turning protein into fat unless you're in a wildly excessive caloric surplus and sedentary.

Even then? It would rather ramp up metabolism, increase protein turnover, and build lean mass.

Research shows that overfeeding protein (eating more than your body needs) doesn't usually result in fat gain unless total calorie intake is too high and sustained for days or weeks.

THE OVERFEEDING STUDY THAT SHOCKED EVERYONE

In 2014, Dr. Jose Antonio ran an experiment that made headlines in the nutrition world.

In this 8-week randomized controlled study, researchers put the "more protein = more fat" myth to the test. Thirty resistance-trained men and women (average age 24) were assigned to either continue their normal diet (about 1.8 g/kg/day protein) or dramatically increase their intake to 4.4 grams per kilogram of bodyweight—more than five times the RDA.

The high-protein group consumed an average of 307 grams of protein per day compared to 138 grams in the control group. Crucially, participants didn't change their workouts, fat, or carbohydrate intake—just the amount of protein and total calories.

Despite eating more than 800 extra calories per day (thanks to protein), the high-protein group showed **no significant changes** in body weight, fat mass, fat-free mass (muscle), or body fat percentage.

In other words, eating "too much" protein didn't hurt them—it helped. Their bodies burned it, used it, and adapted to it. Because protein isn't an intruder. It's infrastructure.

If you're active and trying to support muscle recovery or growth, you don't need to fear high protein intakes. Even if you overshoot your needs, it's unlikely to backfire, especially if the rest of your nutrition is dialed in.

THE METAPHOR YOU'LL REMEMBER

Imagine your body as a construction site. Protein is the lumber, nails, drywall, and bricks. It's not stored in the basement for later—your body uses it to build, rebuild, and reinforce.

Now, picture carbs and fat as fuel. When you consume more than you need, your body stores the excess in fat cells for later use. But when you oversupply protein?

There's no tank. Just a crew of workers saying, "Thanks, we'll take what we need, and we'll burn the rest."

If you've been afraid to increase your protein intake...if you've avoided an extra egg, or skipped a protein shake because you thought it would make you fat...you deserve to know:

Protein is the safest macronutrient to eat in abundance. It is the least likely to be stored as fat. And it's the most likely to be used to improve your body and health.

So go ahead and eat the lean meat. Have the salmon. Drink the shake.

You're not overdoing it. **You're finally doing it right.**

10G PROTEIN. 55 CALORIES. ZERO COMPROMISE.

When you're serious about performance, every macronutrient matters. Maui Nui Venison delivers the highest protein-to-calorie ratio of any red meat on the planet—with 5x less fat than beef and a complete amino acid profile optimized for muscle recovery.

Maui Nui wild-harvested venison contains naturally occurring B vitamins, zinc, iron, and chromium—essential micronutrients for energy production and metabolic health. Nature's perfect protein doesn't need improvement.

While supplies last, Pump Club members get a complimentary 12-pack of Maui Nui's protein-rich Venison Sticks (a $79 value) with the purchase of any other box of Venison Sticks so you can try all of our favorite flavors totally risk free.

CLAIM YOUR FREE MAUI NUI VENISON STICKS NOW

CHAPTER 4

WHAT ARE QUALITY SOURCES OF PROTEIN?

Not All Protein Is Created Equal

In 2014, the National Peanut Board unveiled a new campaign: “The Perfectly Powerful Peanut.”

The ads were elegant. Soft illustrations of peanut plants with botanical precision. Earth-toned palettes. A vintage, almost scientific aesthetic—designed to make you feel like peanuts belonged in a museum, a medicine cabinet, and your breakfast bowl.

The messaging was subtle but direct: plant-based, natural, protein-packed.

A few years later, another campaign launched: “Peanuts: Energy for the Good Life.”

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WHAT ARE QUALITY SOURCES OF PROTEIN?

This time, the tone shifted—bright colors, active people, cheerful slogans. Peanut butter wasn't just nostalgic comfort food anymore. It was fuel. A performance enhancer. The kind of thing you might eat before a run or after a yoga class.

And it worked.

Americans had long loved peanut butter. But now? They believed in it. They saw it as protein. A smart swap. A health food.

There was just one problem.

To get the same amount of protein in one chicken breast, you'd need to eat 7 tablespoons of peanut butter—a 700-calorie, 60-gram-of-fat detour that no amount of hand-drawn peanut vines could fix.

This isn't about demonizing peanuts. It's about understanding the difference between perception and reality. Between foods that contain some protein and foods that are truly protein-rich.

THE TRUTH ABOUT PROTEIN QUALITY

We talk about protein as if it were one thing. But it's not. Protein is a structure—a chain of amino acids. Different foods contain different combinations of amino acids, in varying amounts and proportions.

That's why nutrition scientists developed the Protein Digestibility Corrected Amino Acid Score (PDCAAS), which is a way of ranking how well a protein source meets human amino acid needs and how efficiently it's digested.

Foods with a perfect score of 1.0 or higher are considered complete, high-quality proteins.

Here's how common protein sources stack up:

PROTEIN SOURCE	PDCAAS SCORE
Whey Protein	1.00
Egg	1.00
Casein	1.00
Soy Protein	1.00
Beef	0.92
Chicken	0.91

Continued...

THE TRUTH ABOUT PROTEIN QUALITY

PROTEIN SOURCE	PDCAAS SCORE
Pea Protein	0.89
Black Beans	0.75
Peanut Butter	0.52
Wheat Gluten	0.25

Lower scores—typically found in plants like grains, legumes, seeds, and nuts—mean the food is incomplete or missing key amino acids (usually lysine, methionine, or leucine), and less efficiently absorbed.

This doesn't mean plant-based proteins are bad. It just means you need more of them and to combine different sources to get the same benefits.

PROTEIN EFFICIENCY: THE MATH MOST PEOPLE MISS

Let's revisit our peanut butter example. To get 30 grams of protein—a good goal amount for any meal to stimulate muscle protein synthesis and fullness—you'd need about 7.5 tablespoons of peanut butter. Great, you get the protein, but that would result in more than 700 calories and 60g of fat.

Continued...

PROTEIN EFFICIENCY: THE MATH MOST PEOPLE MISS

Compare that to:

- 4 oz of chicken breast → 130 calories, 26g protein
- 4 oz of venison (like Maui Nui) → 120 calories, 27g protein
- 1 scoop of whey protein → 110 calories, 25g protein
- 1 cup of Greek yogurt → 100 calories, 20g proteinand absorb).

Now, imagine trying to reach 120 grams of protein in a day. With peanut butter, you'd be pushing 3,000 calories. With high-quality sources? Around 600—800 calories.

That's the difference between struggling to stay lean and giving your body what it needs without the math working against you.

QUALITY MATTERS MORE WITH AGE

As we age, our ability to absorb and utilize amino acids—especially leucine, the trigger for muscle protein synthesis—begins to decline. This makes protein quality even more important for older adults.

You don't just need more protein—you need better protein. More leucine, more completeness, better digestibility.

Continued...

QUALITY MATTERS MORE WITH AGE

That's why elderly adults in protein studies consistently show better outcomes when using animal proteins, dairy proteins, or optimized plant blends (like soy + quinoa + pea).

This isn't about ideology. It's about physiology.

WHAT ARE INCOMPLETE PROTEINS (AND WHY DO THEY STILL MATTER)?

In the late 1970s, a well-meaning but catastrophic mistake shaped how millions of people thought about protein.

A widely cited book on vegetarian nutrition claimed that if you didn't eat all your essential amino acids in one meal—rice and beans, for example—your body couldn't use the protein at all. That myth spread fast. Food charts were created. Recipes were engineered. Plant-based eaters panicked.

What nobody realized at the time is that the author—Frances Moore Lappé—would later retract that claim.

"In trying to drive home my main point—that a plant-centered diet can provide sufficient protein—I reinforced a dangerous myth."

That myth? That incomplete proteins are incomplete people food. That they're somehow second-rate. Or wasted. Or not worth eating.

It wasn't true then. It's not true now. And understanding why can free you from a lot of unnecessary stress—and help you get smarter about how you nourish your body.

WHAT IS AN INCOMPLETE PROTEIN?

Proteins are made from 20 amino acids. Nine are essential, meaning your body can't make them, so you have to eat them.

A complete protein contains all nine in the amounts your body needs. It's why protein-rich animal sources we recommend are so effective. They come loaded with everything your body needs.

An incomplete protein is low in—or missing—one or more essential amino acids. Most plant proteins fall into this category, especially grains, legumes, nuts, and vegetables.

But here's the key:

Your body doesn't require complete proteins in every bite. It needs essential amino acids over time.

Your body is smart. It maintains an amino acid pool—a kind of reserve tank. You can eat lentils at lunch and rice at dinner, and your body will draw what it needs from both. The meal didn't have to be perfect. It just had to be enough.

COMPLETE VS. INCOMPLETE DOESN'T MEAN "GOOD" VS "BAD"

We've mentioned this before in the newsletter, and it's worth repeating: Yes, beans and rice can provide a complete protein when combined. So can lentils and grains. The human body is capable of assembling amino acids from multiple sources consumed throughout the day.

But here's the nuance: You'll often need to eat more total calories and larger volumes of food to reach the same level of usable protein as you would from lean meat or dairy.

If you're trying to build muscle, maintain strength, or lose fat without excess calories, high-quality protein sources make it easier, not harder.

PLANT VS. ANIMAL PROTEIN: WHAT THE RESEARCH SHOWS

If you've ever wondered whether plant protein is "just as good" as animal protein, here's the truth:

Per gram, most animal-based proteins are more complete, more efficient, and more bioavailable.

But that does not mean plant-based proteins can't work. It simply means you need more of them—or better combinations—to achieve the desired effect.

A 2020 meta-analysis published in Nutrients compared 18 randomized controlled trials examining plant vs. animal protein on muscle mass and strength outcomes. The results?

Animal proteins led to slightly greater gains in lean mass and strength, especially in older adults. **However, when total protein intake was equal and plant proteins were combined or optimized, the difference decreased or disappeared.**

PLANT-BASED PROTEIN POWDERS VS. WHEY

Whey protein has long been the gold standard for muscle repair and growth. It's rapidly digested, rich in leucine, the amino acid that triggers muscle protein synthesis, and easily absorbed

But plant-based powders have come a long way. Researchers compared rice protein isolate to whey protein over 8 weeks of resistance training and found no significant differences in muscle thickness, strength, or body composition. However, participants consumed 48 grams of protein post-workout to achieve the same results as approximately 30 grams of whey.

The higher dose of plant protein made up for the lower leucine content and digestibility. The researchers concluded that dose can offset quality, especially with high-performing plant powders.

More recent blends (pea + rice + quinoa) now match the amino acid profiles of whey, making them even more competitive, especially for those who avoid dairy or prefer plant-forward options.

IN DEFENSE OF PLANT PROTEIN

Now that we've cleared the myth, let's talk about why plant-based proteins still belong on your plate, even if they're not amino acid superstars.

1. THEY ADD UP

In real life, people don't eat only one food per day. They eat meals. They snack. They graze. That means protein from a bagel, a handful of nuts, some lentils, and a scoop of quinoa accumulates. It layers into that amino acid pool we mentioned earlier.

2. THEY COME WITH BONUS NUTRITION

Incomplete protein sources are often nutrient powerhouses:

- Lentils and beans provide fiber, folate, and magnesium
- Quinoa gives you iron and antioxidants
- Nuts and seeds offer healthy fats and trace minerals

In other words: They might not be perfect proteins, but they're perfectly useful foods.

Continued...

IN DEFENSE OF PLANT PROTEIN

3. THEY'RE KEY IN PLANT-FORWARD DIETS

Whether you're fully plant-based or just trying to eat less meat, these protein contributors become essential. The key is being intentional, not obsessive.

Combine complementary proteins throughout the day. That's it.

Some examples:

- Rice + beans
- Hummus + whole grain pita
- Peanut butter + oats
- Lentils + quinoa

Your body does the math. You don't need a spreadsheet.

Continued...

IN DEFENSE OF PLANT PROTEIN

4. PLANT PROTEIN IS A LONGEVITY POWERHOUSE.

You can't stop the clock, but what you put on your plate in midlife might help you age with strength, clarity, and vitality.

Eating more protein—especially from plants—makes you significantly more likely to reach older age free from disease, cognitive decline, and physical limitations.

In one of the largest and longest-running studies on health, researchers followed more than 48,000 women from midlife (under age 60) through their later years. Their goal? To identify if the type and amount of dietary protein consumed in midlife predicted "healthy aging"—defined as reaching older age free of 11 major chronic diseases, while maintaining good mental health, cognitive function, and physical ability.

For every 3 percent increase in daily calories from total protein, the odds of healthy aging rose by 5 percent. But when researchers broke it down by protein source, the real standout was plant protein.

Continued...

IN DEFENSE OF PLANT PROTEIN

Here are the odds of healthy aging adjusted by source:

Plant protein: +38%

Dairy protein: +14%

Animal protein: +7%

Only plant protein was consistently associated with better mental health and physical function in older age, two areas where decline can dramatically impact independence and quality of life.

And when participants swapped out carbs or fats for plant protein (of equal calorie amounts), their odds of aging well increased by 22 to 58 percent.

Researchers believe it's not just the amino acids but also the micronutrients that matter. Plant-based protein sources often come with fiber, antioxidants, and other healthy compounds, all while limiting overall calories. This nutrient synergy may help protect against inflammation, oxidative stress, and chronic disease, all of which are major drivers of accelerated aging.

Continued...

IN DEFENSE OF PLANT PROTEIN

To increase your odds of thriving in older age, prioritize protein. And if you can prioritize foods such as beans, lentils, nuts, tofu, and whole grains — along with animal-based sources — then you're giving your body everything it needs.. You don't need to go vegan, but replacing some animal protein, carbs, or fats with plant-based protein could help you live longer and better.

MAKING PLANT PROTEINS WORK FOR YOU

Now that we've cleared the myth, let's talk about why plant-based proteins still belong on your plate, even if they're not amino acid superstars.

1. Aim for variety over the course of a day.

2. Prioritize complete plant proteins when possible, like:

- Quinoa
- Soy (edamame, tofu, tempeh)
- Buckwheat
- Chia seeds
- Pea protein blends

Continued...

MAKING PLANT PROTEINS WORK FOR YOU

3. Use strategic pairing:

- Beans + grains
- Legumes + nuts
- Vegetables + seeds

4. Consider a high-quality supplement if you struggle to hit your total protein goals.

HOW TO LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD

If you're using plant proteins as your primary source:

- Eat more total protein. Aim for 0.8—1.2g per pound of body weight, depending on your goals.
- Use blended plant protein powders (pea + rice is a strong combo).
- Prioritize leucine-rich foods (soy, legumes, quinoa) or supplement with BCAAs (especially leucine) if needed.
- Eat with intent—diversity matters when you're building your amino acid pool.

YOUR PROTEIN SHOPPING LIST

Here's your go-to guide for high-quality protein by category, by efficiency, and by practicality.

ANIMAL-BASED PROTEINS (COMPLETE + HIGH BIOAVAILABILITY)

FOOD	SERVING SIZE	PROTEIN (G)	CALORIES
Chicken breast	4 oz	26g	130
Turkey breast	4 oz	25g	135
Venison (Maui Nui)	4 oz	27g	120
Lean beef (90/10)	4 oz	24g	180
Eggs	1 large	6g	70
Egg whites	4 whites	14g	68
Salmon	4 oz	23g	180
Tuna (canned in water)	1 can	25g	120

Continued...

YOUR PROTEIN SHOPPING LIST

DAIRY PROTEINS (COMPLETE + HIGH LEUCINE)

FOOD	SERVING SIZE	PROTEIN (G)	CALORIES
Greek yogurt (plain, nonfat)	1 cup	20g	100
Cottage cheese (low-fat)	1 cup	28g	160
Milk (2%)	1 cup	8g	120
Whey protein	1 scoop	25g	110
Casein protein	1 scoop	24g	120

PLANT-BASED PROTEINS (COMBINE FOR COMPLETENESS)

FOOD	SERVING SIZE	PROTEIN (G)	CALORIES
Tofu (firm)	4 oz	11g	90
Tempeh	4 oz	21g	195
Lentils (cooked)	1 cup	18g	230
Chickpeas (cooked)	1 cup	15g	270
Black beans (cooked)	1 cup	15g	225
Quinoa (cooked)	1 cup	8g	220
Edamame	1 cup	17g	190
Soy milk	1 cup	7g	100
Pea protein isolate	1 scoop	20—25g	120

Continued...

YOUR PROTEIN SHOPPING LIST

"PROTEIN-PRETENDERS"

These are often labeled as protein sources, but the amount is low compared to total calories:

FOOD	SERVING SIZE	PROTEIN (G)	CALORIES
Peanut butter	2 tbsp	7g	190
Almonds	1 oz	6g	165
Oats	1 cup cooked	5g	150
Whole wheat bread	2 slices	6g	180
Broccoli	1 cup cooked	4g	55

These foods can contribute to your protein total, but they shouldn't be relied upon as your primary source if your goal is fat loss, muscle gain, or recovery.

DON'T BE FOOLED BY LABELS

A food can be healthy, tasty, and nutritious without being a good source of protein.

Protein marketing is everywhere now. Snack bars, cereals, cookies, and even chips brag about "added protein." But always check the label.

Ask:

- How many grams of protein per serving?
- How many total calories?
- What else are you getting with it?

Because when you make protein your foundation, you make every goal easier to reach.

CHAPTER 5

HOW PROTEIN SUPPORTS LONGEVITY AND HEALTHY AGING

The Anti-Aging Secret That's Been in Your Fridge All Along

Walk into any high-end wellness clinic and you'll see it: Glass shelves filled with $200 serums, IV drips, and antioxidant injections with names you can't pronounce. Anti-aging is big business. And if you believe the hype, the key to living longer is cutting calories, cutting stress, and—most surprisingly—cutting protein.

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HOW PROTEIN SUPPORTS LONGEVITY AND HEALTHY AGING

The logic goes something like this: “Protein activates mTOR, and mTOR accelerates aging... so more protein = faster death.”

It sounds scientific. It’s been repeated in books and podcasts. It’s why some longevity experts recommend limiting protein as you get older.

But it’s not the full story. And in real life—not just petri dishes and pet mice—it doesn’t hold up.

THE MYTH THAT TOOK OVER THE LONGEVITY WORLD

The mTOR theory originates from mechanistic studies—research conducted in isolated cells, worms, and occasionally rodents. And yes, when you stimulate mTOR excessively, it can interfere with cellular repair. That's where fasting, calorie restriction, and protein limitation gained momentum.

But there's a problem: mTOR doesn't just regulate aging. It also builds and maintains muscle.

And in humans—especially as we age—muscle isn't the enemy. It's the difference between standing and falling. Between living and really living.

Which brings us to the new wave of research. Real people. Real outcomes. And a very different conclusion: **The more you age, the more you need protein.**

WHAT THE LONGEST STUDIES SHOW

A 30-year review of more than 48,000 people—one of the most comprehensive aging studies ever conducted—found something remarkable:

- Those who ate more protein experienced healthier aging.
- They had fewer chronic diseases, better cognitive function, stronger physical health, and better mental well-being.
- And the benefits weren't limited to plant or animal protein—both helped, though people who ate more beans, legumes, and nuts saw the greatest longevity boost.

According to the researchers, people who prioritized protein were:

- Less likely to develop diabetes, cancer, or cardiovascular disease
- Less likely to experience depression or cognitive decline
- More likely to maintain physical independence

It wasn't magic. It was muscle. Because when you have more lean mass and less body fat, your body works better at every level.

SARCOPENIA: THE SILENT THREAT NO ONE TALKS ABOUT

After age 30, you lose 3 to 8% of your muscle mass every decade. After 60, the decline speeds up.

This condition is called sarcopenia, and it's one of the strongest predictors of:

- Frailty
- Falls
- Hospitalization
- Loss of independence
- Early death

And yet, few people talk about it. Even fewer realize the role protein plays in fighting it. As your body ages, it becomes less efficient at using protein to maintain and build muscle. So what do you do? You eat more, not less.

You don't need megadoses. But you do need more than the current RDA (0.8g/kg), which was designed to prevent deficiency, not optimize health.

Newer research shows that 1.2—1.6g/kg per day is a much better range for preserving lean mass and reducing mortality.

SOMETIMES MORE IS MORE

Still worried about too much protein? Let's look at the most surprising data point of all.

A recent study examined over 8,500 adults aged 60 and older, many with chronic kidney disease—a population long believed to be vulnerable to high-protein diets.

But what happened? Individuals who consumed more protein experienced better health outcomes and longer lifespans.

Compared to those eating the recommended 0.8g/kg per day:

- **At 1.0g/kg:** 12% lower risk of death
- **At 1.2g/kg:** 21% lower risk
- **At 1.4g/kg:** 27% lower risk

And here's the kicker: **Among healthy individuals, the benefits were even greater—up to 45 percent lower mortality for those eating the most protein. For every 0.2g/kg/day increase in protein, mortality risk dropped by 15 percent.**

Let that sink in. The very nutrient people are afraid to eat more of—the one they're told might harm their kidneys or speed up aging—is the same one that helps them live longer.

IS PROTEIN THE BEST SKIN SOLUTION?

Your skin is your largest organ, and it's under constant renovation. Every 28 days, most of your skin cells are replaced. That cycle—called cellular turnover—requires a steady supply of amino acids to rebuild collagen and elastin, the proteins that keep skin supple, elastic, and youthful.

Among the most important amino acids for your skin:

- Glycine and proline form the framework of collagen.
- Lysine is essential for cross-linking collagen fibers, giving skin its strength.
- Leucine and arginine help trigger the regeneration of damaged skin.

When your diet lacks enough protein—or when you don't consume a wide variety of amino acids—your body slows down the replacement of skin cells. The result? Dullness. Sagging. Fine lines that deepen over time. Moisturizers may offer a quick fix, but they can't make up for a shortage of raw materials.

HAIR: FRAGILE SIGNALS OF HEALTH

Hair is made of keratin, a tough, fibrous protein formed from amino acids. When your body faces a nutrient shortage, it triages resources, and hair growth is not at the top of the list.

That's why inadequate protein intake often results in:

- Slower hair growth
- Increased shedding
- Brittle or thinning strands

Biotin gets the headlines, but it's protein that makes hair possible in the first place. Without it, you're just styling what's left.

NAILS: A REFLECTION OF YOUR DIET

Like hair, nails are made of keratin. And like hair, they respond quickly to dietary shifts. Signs your nails are suffering:

- Ridges or splitting: potential protein deficiency
- Softness or peeling: low amino acid intake
- Slow growth: lack of key nutrients needed for keratin production

Continued...

NAILS: A REFLECTION OF YOUR DIET

These aren't just cosmetic annoyances. They're subtle clues that your body is running low on the tools it needs to build and reinforce itself.

Every cell in your skin, hair, and nails is built from the inside. And it starts with what's on your plate.

THE PROTEIN PRESCRIPTION FOR BEAUTY

You don't need mystery potions or ten-step routines. You need consistency, quality, and enough fuel to keep the engine running.

Aim for a variety of sources:

- Animal-based: **eggs, poultry, fish, dairy, lean meats**
- Plant-based: **lentils, beans, quinoa, soy, pumpkin seeds**
- Supplemental: **whey or high-quality plant-based powders**

And remember: Your beauty isn't skin deep. It's built layer by layer, cell by cell, amino acid by amino acid.

BUILD, DON'T COVER

Protein is the "beauty product" that doesn't wash off, rub away, or fade by noon.

It lives in your skin's elasticity, your hair's strength, your nails' resilience. And every time you sit down to a protein-rich meal, you're not just feeding hunger. You're investing in the architecture of your appearance.

So the next time you think about self-care, don't start at the surface. Start at the source. Because real radiance isn't applied. It's assembled. And protein holds the blueprint.

CHAPTER 6

THE FAT YOU FORGOT ABOUT

Why Monitoring Saturated Fat Matters in a High-Protein Diet

Protein gets the spotlight. But when you eat more of it, something else often tags along for the ride.

Saturated fat.

Not because protein is the problem, but because of where it comes from.

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THE SILENT PASSENGER IN PROTEIN-RICH FOODS

You start eating more steak. More eggs. More cheese. Maybe some bacon sneaks in because, hey—it has protein, right?

Here's the catch:

While these foods offer protein, they also come with higher levels of saturated fat, which—when consumed in excess—can pose risks to your heart, liver, and metabolic health. Not all fats are created equal. And too much saturated fat, especially when it replaces unsaturated fat or fiber-rich foods, is associated with:

- Increased LDL cholesterol
- Elevated cardiovascular risk
- Higher levels of systemic inflammation

Why does that matter?

Because LDL cholesterol is one of the most reliable predictors of cardiovascular risk. Elevated LDL can lead to plaque buildup in the arteries, which increases the risk of heart attacks and strokes.

Continued...

THE SILENT PASSENGER IN PROTEIN-RICH FOODS

According to the American Heart Association, here are the general LDL cholesterol guidelines:

- Optimal: Less than 100 mg/dL
- Near optimal/above optimal: 100—129 mg/dL
- Borderline high: 130—159 mg/dL
- High: 160—189 mg/dL
- Very high: 190 mg/dL and above

If your LDL is well-controlled and within optimal or near-optimal ranges, you likely have more flexibility with your saturated fat intake. But if your levels are borderline or high, being mindful of saturated fat—especially from protein sources—is essential.

THE GOOD NEWS: IT'S NOT ALL OR NOTHING

Eating a high-protein diet doesn't mean you're doomed to eat a high-saturated-fat diet. You just need to choose your protein sources more intentionally.

Let's compare:

PROTEIN SOURCE	SATURATED FAT (PER 100G)	NOTES
Chicken breast (skinless)	~1g	Lean, low-fat
Wild venison	~0.7g	Exceptionally lean
Salmon	~2g	Higher in heart-healthy omega-3s
Ribeye steak	~9g	High protein, high saturated fat
Ground beef (80/20)	~8g	Choose 90/10 or 95/5 for leaner
Eggs	~3g (per 2 eggs)	Nutrient-rich, watch volume
Cottage cheese (2%)	~1.3g	Solid low-fat protein
Greek yogurt (2%)	~1.5g	Opt for plain, lower-fat versions

THE SMART STRATEGY: PRIORITIZE LEAN AND CLEAN

When bumping up your protein intake, think of each food as carrying a package deal. Some packages—like wild game, poultry, fish, and legumes—deliver maximum benefit with minimal saturated fat.

Others—like processed meats, fattier cuts, or full-fat dairy—deliver protein but at the cost of extra fat.

You're not avoiding fat. You're minimizing the less beneficial kinds so your protein strategy supports all of your goals, not just muscle.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

To stay on track, aim to:

- Limit processed meats (sausages, bacon, deli cuts)
- Choose lean cuts (round, loin, sirloin)
- Include fatty fish (omega-3s offset saturated fat concerns)
- Balance animal proteins with plant sources (beans, lentils, tofu)
- Use cooking methods that reduce fat content (grilling, baking, steaming)

And remember: flavor doesn't have to suffer. Seasoning, herbs, and healthy oils can bring lean proteins to life.

FUEL THAT LOVES YOU BACK

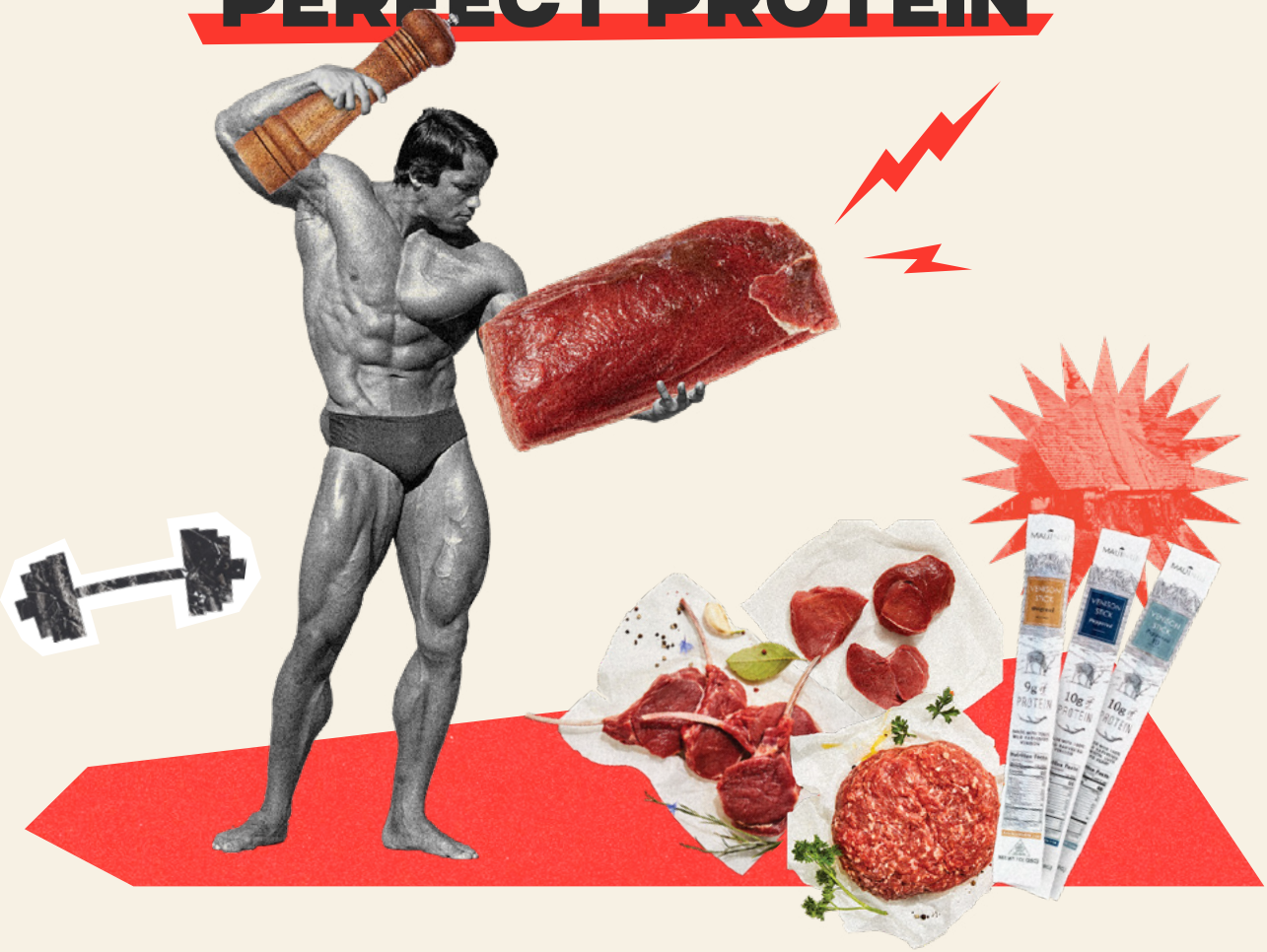
There's no need to fear fat, but it's smart to respect it. Especially when your mission is longevity, energy, and lifelong strength.

High-protein diets work best when they're built on lean, high-quality foundations.

By paying attention to saturated fat, you keep your heart as strong as your muscles. You nourish more than your performance—you support your future.

And that's what this entire guide is about: Making every bite a building block. For health. For strength. For life.

VENISON IS NATURE'S PERFECT PROTEIN



The proteins your body evolved to thrive on disappeared with industrialized agriculture. Most red meat today comes from stressed animals fed unnatural diets, altering their nutritional profile.

Maui Nui Venison delivers what your body recognizes: truly wild, stress-free harvested red meat with 21g of complete protein per 100g serving, an optimal omega fatty acid profile, and superior bioavailability. The difference isn't just ethical—it's biological.

For a limited time, Pump Club members get a complimentary 12-pack of Maui Nui Venison Sticks (a $79 value, while supplies last) with the purchase of their best-selling Starter Box, featuring four of Arnold's favorite fresh cuts.

CLAIM YOUR FREE MAUI NUI VENISON STICKS NOW

CHAPTER 7

THE WILD DIFFERENCE

Why Nature's Protein Might Be the Best You've Never Tried

Imagine stepping back in time—before aisles of pre-packaged meat, before factory farms, before protein powders.

Your protein came from the land. From the hunt. From nature itself.

And while we've made incredible advances in food safety, supply chains, and convenience, somewhere along the way, we lost something essential:

The nutritional superiority of wild foods.

WHAT MAKES WILD PROTEIN DIFFERENT?

At first glance, wild proteins—like venison, elk, bison, or wild-caught fish—might seem like just another lean meat.

But they're not.

These proteins have a completely different nutrient profile, shaped by an animal's natural diet, free movement, and lack of industrial intervention. Compared to conventional meat, wild proteins often offer:

- Higher protein density (more protein per calorie)
- Lower saturated fat
- More omega-3 fatty acids
- More conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) — associated with improved metabolic health
- No antibiotics, hormones, or feedlot contamination

Wild game animals are not fattened with corn. They roam, forage, and move—just as they evolved to. And that changes everything.

THE OMEGA FACTOR

Let's talk fats—specifically, the kind that keep your heart healthy and your brain sharp.

Grass-fed and wild proteins contain significantly more omega-3 fatty acids and a better omega-3 to omega-6 ratio than grain-fed meats. Why does this matter?

Wild meats are also richer in conjugated linoleic acid (CLA)—a naturally occurring fatty acid.

Studies suggest CLA may:

- Improve body composition **(more muscle, less fat)**
- Support immune function
- Reduce inflammation

You won't find this in ultraprocessed meats. But it's there—in every bite of wild venison or elk.

NUTRIENT DENSITY: MICRONUTRIENTS THAT MATTER

Wild proteins don't just offer macros. They deliver a spectrum of micronutrients often stripped from conventional cuts:

- Zinc for hormone support and immune function
- Iron in its most bioavailable form
- Vitamin B12 for red blood cell formation and energy
- Selenium, niacin, and phosphorus for total-body function

When you eat wild, you're not just getting protein—you're getting a complete nutritional upgrade.

FINAL THOUGHT: WILD IS WORTH IT

Wild protein might not be as convenient as a drive-thru burger. But it offers something fast food never will:

Nutrient-dense, inflammation-fighting, muscle-building fuel that brings you back to your roots.

If you want to build a stronger, healthier body—one that lasts—it's worth remembering: Sometimes the best protein isn't new. It's wild. And it's why Maui Nui is a staple of our diet.

CHAPTER 8

PROTEIN BY DESIGN

How to Use Protein for Strength, Fat Loss, and Lifelong Performance

You can eat perfectly and still fall short.

Because the power of protein isn't just in how much you consume. It's in how you use it.

The right protein strategy turns your goals into results. Muscle gain. Fat loss. Recovery. Longevity.

Protein isn't a one-size-fits-all number—it's a tool you tailor to your body and your mission.

Let's explore how to do that.

MUSCLE GAIN: BUILDING THE FOUNDATION

If you're training to get stronger or bigger, protein becomes your construction crew.

Goal: Muscle protein synthesis (MPS) > muscle breakdown

Strategy: Eat 1.6—2.4 g/kg of bodyweight in protein daily (roughly 0.6—1.2 g/lb)

Timing: Total intake matters most, but spacing protein evenly across 3—5 meals helps maximize MPS

FAT LOSS: BURN FAT, NOT MUSCLE

Protein does two key things when you're dieting:

1. Preserves lean muscle while in a calorie deficit
2. Keeps you full longer to make sticking to your plan easier

Continued...

FAT LOSS: BURN FAT, NOT MUSCLE

Goal: Maintain muscle while burning fat

Strategy: Aim for the higher end of intake: 2.0—2.4 g/kg (0.9—1.1 g/lb)

Focus: Pair protein with volume-rich, high-fiber foods (like vegetables) to feel full with fewer calories

BODY RECOMPOSITION: BUILD MUSCLE, LOSE FAT SIMULTANEOUSLY

Yes, it's possible—especially for beginners, returners, or those dialing in protein and training for the first time.

Strategy: 1.8—2.2 g/kg of bodyweight (0.8—1.0 g/lb)

Training: Combine strength training 3—5x per week with high-protein intake and a small calorie deficit

Mindset: It's a slower process than pure muscle gain or fat loss, but it's the most sustainable

PERFORMANCE: FUEL THE ATHLETE

Endurance athletes, hybrid athletes, and high-performers need protein to recover faster and prevent overtraining.

Goal: Optimize repair, minimize soreness, and maintain lean tissue

Strategy: 1.4—2.2 g/kg of bodyweight (0.6—1.0 g/lb)

Add-ons: Prioritize carbs around workouts for fuel; protein comes in strongest during recovery

LONGEVITY: STAY STRONG AS YOU AGE

As you get older, your body becomes less efficient at processing protein. This means you need more to maintain the same level of muscle and function.

Strategy: Aim for at least 1.2—1.8 g/kg of bodyweight daily (0.55—0.75 g/lb)

Frequency: Include 20—40g of protein in every meal, especially breakfast

Training: Resistance training + protein = the anti-aging formula

SIMPLE DAILY PROTEIN TEMPLATES

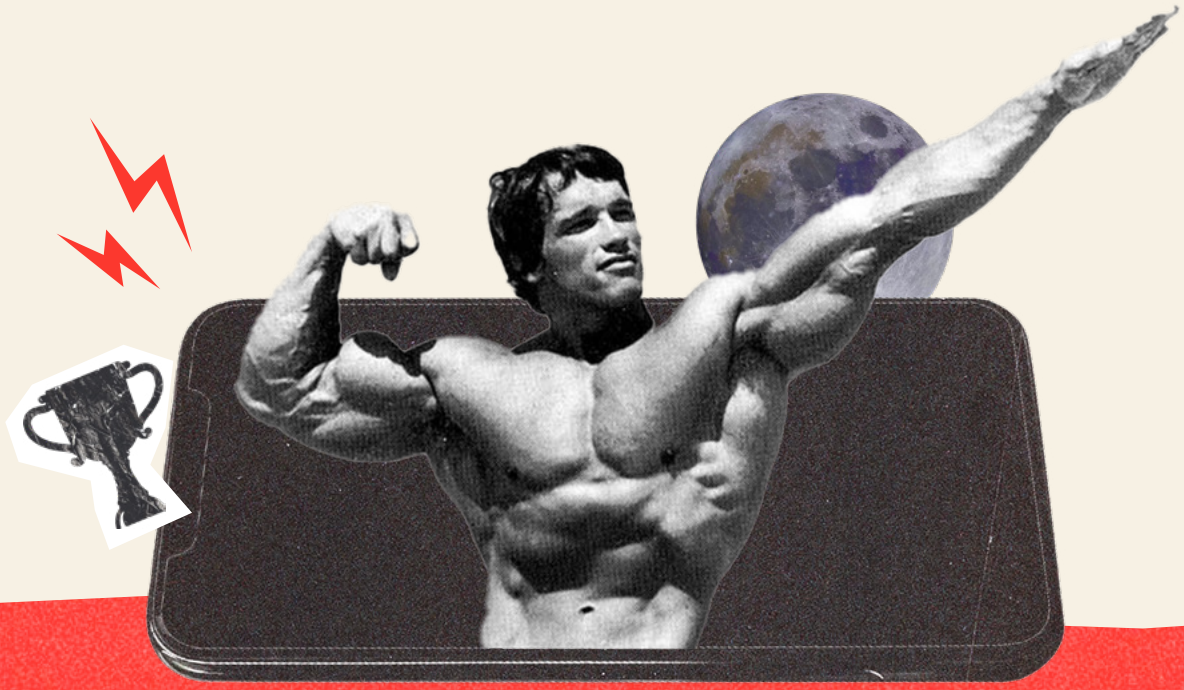
Endurance athletes, hybrid athletes, and high-performers need protein to recover faster and prevent overtraining.

GOAL	TOTAL DAILY PROTEIN	MEALS PER DAY	PROTEIN PER MEAL (G)
Muscle Gain	1.6—2.4 g/kg	4—5	25—40
Fat Loss	2.0—2.4 g/kg	4—6	30—40
Recomposition	1.8—2.2 g/kg	3—5	25—35
Performance	1.4—1.8 g/kg	3—4	20—30
Longevity	1.2—1.6 g/kg	3—4	25—30

MAKE PROTEIN WORK FOR YOU

The best protein plan is the one that aligns with your lifestyle, goals, and body. If you've struggled to reach your goals, protein might be the missing link. Not just in quantity, but in quality, timing, and strategy.

Start where you are. Fuel like you mean it.
And let your body do the rest.



WANT TO TRAIN WITH ARNOLD?

The Pump app is your chance to access workouts, tips, and lessons from Arnold Schwarzenegger. But it's so much more than programs. You'll experience live Q&As with Arnold, get advice from top experts in fitness and nutrition, use a habit tracker to help you build unbreakable routines, and interact with the most positive community you've ever seen.

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YOUR PUMP CLUB TEAM

Arnold Schwarzenegger

Former Mr. Olympia, Conan, Terminator, and Governor of California

Adam Bornstein

Editor in chief for The Pump Club, New York Times bestselling author, founder of Born Fitness, dad of two boys, pop-a-shot-champion

Daniel Ketchell

Editor in chief for The Pump Club, Chief of Staff for Arnold Schwarzenegger, Rucking and deadlifts, Dodgers fanatic, girl dad.

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