28 DAY CHALLENGE

FOOD LIST

Food List

Before we kick off the challenge we have to talk a little bit about nutrition. This is time to get you organized with foods and start a little bit of prep.

The primary focus with nutrition during this challenge are as follows

- Fuel your goals
- Fuel your hormones
- Reduce inflammation from food

Fuel Your Goals

Calories

Fueling your goals consists of providing the correct energy to your body to achieve your targets.

We will be covering calories during the challenge as if you are looking to gain muscle or lose fat then calories are undoubtedly a factor.

We will talk about this in more detail later on but I think it's fair to say we understand that muscle gain will require a calorie surplus and fat loss a calorie deficit.
Due to the effective nature of this program it will be possible to build muscle and lose fat at the same time, but only if close to maintenance calories.

Protein

Protein is very important for muscle recovery and muscle growth. Protein also is a great food choice as it boosts satiety. Meaning you feel fuller for longer.

Carbs & Fats

Both are very important for achieving goals and optimizing hormone function, so we will be consuming a balance of both.

Fuel Your Hormones

Fueling your hormone production is a crucial part of this challenge.
To produce testosterone, the body needs a variety of nutrients and hormones, including:

Cholesterol: Testosterone is synthesized from cholesterol, so an adequate intake of dietary cholesterol is important for testosterone production.
Zinc: Zinc is an essential mineral that is important for testosterone production. Low levels of zinc have been linked to low testosterone levels in men.

Vitamin D: Vitamin D is important for maintaining healthy bones, but it is also important for testosterone production. Low levels of vitamin D have been linked to low testosterone levels in men.

Magnesium: Magnesium is an essential mineral that is important for many bodily functions, including testosterone production. Low levels of magnesium have been linked to low testosterone levels in men.
Protein: Protein is important for building and repairing tissues, including the tissues involved in testosterone production.

Also we can use carbohydrates for their cortisol blunting effect. Having a certain amount of cortisol is fine but chronically elevated levels can be a real problem.

Cortisol can reduce testosterone levels in the body. Cortisol is a stress hormone that is released by the adrenal glands in response to stress, and it plays a critical role in the body's stress response. Cortisol is involved in many bodily functions, including metabolism, immune function, and the regulation of testosterone.
When cortisol levels are high, they can interfere with the production and regulation of testosterone, leading to a decrease in testosterone levels in the body.

Foods To Avoid.

Whilst its clear we can eat anything within our calorie targets and still hit weight change targets this isn't always

Optimal - Some foods will cause digestive issues and other problems that will reduce progress in other areas.
Easy - Some foods make this harder, such as very calorie dense foods that are easy to overeat.

Highly Processed Food Clearout

It's best to avoid high processed foods during this challenge and focus on whole foods. Think about the ingredients list. If it's full to the brim of ingredients then it probably isn't optimal for these goals.

High Calorie Density Foods

A lot of "health foods" are high calorie density too and can slow down people's progress. Some of these would be nuts/seeds/protein bars/oils/. These aren't a problem as such (for some people looking to increase calories they are very useful it's just something to be aware of.

First Week Nutrition

For the first few days of the program we are going to use a simple structure to get you started.

This structure will be focussing on whole foods from this list below and having 3-4 meals a day depending on your goals.

After the first few days we then get more focussed with the nutrition and looks at calories etc in more detail.

If you are relatively heavy or looking to gain weight I suggest starting with 4 meals per day.

If you are relatively heavy or looking to lose weight then start with 3 meals per day and 1 snack.

Protein sources.

Choose a few of these you like to make some of your meals over the first couple of days. Don't worry about protein amounts too much just yet. Just remember you need protein in every meal/snack.

The approximate protein quantities per serving for some common protein sources in grams:
Meat:

Beef (85g or 3 oz.): 22 grams of protein
Chicken (85g or 3 oz.): 18 grams of protein
Pork (85g or 3 oz.): 22 grams of protein
Lamb (85g or 3 oz.): 22 grams of protein

Seafood:

Salmon (85g or 3 oz.): 22 grams of protein
Tuna (85g or 3 oz.): 20 grams of protein
Shrimp (85g or 3 oz.): 18 grams of protein
Cod (85g or 3 oz.): 15 grams of protein

Eggs:

One large egg: 6 grams of protein

Dairy:

Milk (1 cup or 245g): 8 grams of protein
Cheese (28g or 1 oz.): 7 grams of protein
Greek yogurt (170g or 6 oz.): 17 grams of protein
Whey protein powder (28g or 1 scoop): 20-25 grams of protein

Carbs & Fats

If like me you suffer from digestive problems this section is really important for you.

There are certain foods that have been associated with inflammation in the body. Here are some common foods that may cause inflammation:

Processed and packaged foods: These foods often contain high amounts of added sugars, unhealthy fats, and artificial ingredients that can cause inflammation in the body.
Fried foods: Fried foods are high in unhealthy fats and are often cooked at high temperatures, which can produce harmful compounds that can cause inflammation.
Sugary beverages: Sugary drinks like soda, energy drinks, and sports drinks are high in added sugars and can cause inflammation in the body.
Refined carbohydrates: Foods like white bread, pasta, and pastries are high in refined carbohydrates, which can cause inflammation in the body.
Alcohol: Drinking excessive amounts of alcohol can cause inflammation in the body, especially in the liver.

Trans fats: Trans fats are a type of unhealthy fat that is found in many processed foods and can cause inflammation in the body.

FODMAP's

Bad for some people, but ok in moderation for others. If you struggle with digestive complaints it's a good idea to start with the low fodmap fruit/veg/carbs.
FODMAPs are a group of short-chain carbohydrates that are poorly absorbed in the small intestine, and may cause digestive symptoms in some people, especially those with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). FODMAPs are not inherently inflammatory, but they can trigger gastrointestinal symptoms, which can sometimes be confused with inflammation.

However, some foods that are high in FODMAPs may also be pro-inflammatory, which can exacerbate inflammation in people who are already sensitive to these foods. For example, some high FODMAP foods like wheat, rye, and barley are also high in gluten, which is a protein that can trigger an inflammatory response in people with celiac disease or gluten sensitivity.

Here is a list of high FODMAP foods, categorized by type of FODMAP:
Oligosaccharides:

Wheat products such as bread, pasta, and cereal
Rye
Barley
Onions
Garlic

Shallots
Leeks
Artichokes
Asparagus
Brussels sprouts
Cabbage
Cauliflower
Mushrooms
Snow peas
Green peas
Lentils
Chickpeas
Kidney beans
Disaccharides:
Milk
Yogurt
Soft and fresh cheeses like cottage cheese and ricotta

Monosaccharides:

Honey
Agave nectar
High fructose corn syrup
Apples
Mangoes
Pears
Watermelon
Cherries

Polyols:

Stone fruits like peaches, plums, and cherries
Apples
Pears
Blackberries
Cauliflower
Mushrooms
Snow peas
Sweeteners like sorbitol, mannitol, xylitol, and maltitol

Here is a list of low FODMAP fruits and vegetables:
Low FODMAP Fruits:

Banana
Blueberry
Cantaloupe
Grapes
Honeydew melon

Kiwi
Lemon
Lime
Mandarin oranges
Orange
Papaya
Pineapple
Raspberry
Strawberry

Low FODMAP Vegetables:

Bell peppers
Bok choy
Carrots
Cucumber
Eggplant
Green beans
Kale
Lettuce
Olives
Potatoes (except sweet potatoes)
Spinach
Squash (summer, winter, butternut)
Tomatoes
Zucchini

Other

White rice
Gluten free oats

Fats

Dietary fats play an important role in maintaining good health and are essential for proper bodily function. Here are some of the best sources of dietary fat. I tend to avoid nuts as they can cause digestive issues for a lot of people and also can often cause overconsumption of calories.

Nuts and seeds: Nuts and seeds are rich in heart-healthy fats, such as monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, as well as fiber and other important nutrients. Some examples include almonds, walnuts, chia seeds, flaxseeds, and pumpkin seeds.
Fatty fish: Fatty fish, such as salmon, sardines, and mackerel, are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which are important for brain function, heart health, and reducing inflammation.
Avocado: Avocado is a great source of monounsaturated fats, as well as fiber, potassium, and other important nutrients.

Olive oil: Olive oil is a rich source of monounsaturated fats and has been linked to a reduced risk of heart disease, stroke, and other chronic conditions.

Coconut and coconut oil: Coconut and coconut oil contain medium-chain triglycerides (MCTs), which are easily digested and used for energy in the body.
Dairy products: Dairy products, such as cheese, yogurt, and milk, are good sources of healthy fats, including conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), which has been linked to various health benefits.