Eat Clean to Stay Lean

The key to staying lean is to eat clean. So many people now a days are doing it the wrong way. When they want to lose weight, they pick a popular diet which limits particular food groups or has you eating certain pre-packaged meals. These “fad” diets are a huge NO NO. Several of them include artificial ingredients which are not filling and will in turn make you hungrier. Additionally, many of these diets promote calorie cutting or counting which is NOT sustainable long term. Let’s face it. If you are too restrictive with your calories, you are going to want to binge eat and ruin all of the progress you just made. You won’t be able to maintain the diet, and you will eventually succumb to filling your belly with the delicious unhealthy options you really want.

This brings me back to my point. You need to eat clean to stay lean. In order to do this, I am not suggesting a fad diet or a calorie counting program you can only keep up with for a week or so. I am suggesting a clean eating lifestyle change

Your moderate day should help you fuel your body for some medium difficulty workouts as well as workouts that may include a post workout cardio session such as high intensity interval training. Don’t forget to drink plenty of water throughout the day and it’s important to always include a multi vitamin balance to ensure you are getting all of your required micronutrients.

Let’s start with the basics. In order to eat clean, you need to eat clean, healthy foods. This includes foods like: lean protein, good for you carbs and fats, fresh fruits, vegetables- and at least 5-6 times a day. I am a strong believer in you can eat as much as you want to as long as it is the right foods. I guarantee if you combine this with drinking lots of water and regular exercise, you can turn your body into a lean mean fighting machine.

1.) Deep dive into the Clean Eating Lifestyle:

This is a balanced diet that focuses on whole grains, fruit, vegetables, fats, and protein. Here is a list of what you can and can't eat:

Lean Muscle Menu:

Healthy fats, such as nuts and seeds, oil used for cooking or salad dressing, butter (and nut butters), olives, and avocados- (3-4 servings per day).
Fibrous vegetables, including just about anything your mother said you had to eat if you wanted dessert (as many servings as you want).
Complex carbohydrates, such as whole grains (bread, cereal, pasta), legumes (beans and peas), and tubers (potatoes and other root vegetables)- (2-3 servings per day).
Milk and other dairy products, which includes all varieties of cheese and yogurt
Fruits- Fresh fruit only (no Starbursts Candy doesn't count)- (2-3 servings a day).
Meat and other protein-rich foods, including eggs and protein powder- (as many servings as you want).

What you can eat:

Any item on the list above
Eat enough food per day (around 5-6 small meals a day)
Eat breakfast every day within an hour of getting up
Eat lean protein at every meal
Eat 2-3 servings of complex carbohydrates every day (no refined carbohydrates)
Have 2-3 servings of healthy fats every day
Drink 2-3 liters of water (about 12 8-ounce cups) every day and have water be primary beverage of choice

What you can't eat:

Overprocessed foods, especially white flour and sugar
Artificial sweeteners
Sugary beverages
Alcohol- Occasionally is okay but be mindful of alcohol choice (limit beer as it is high in carbohydrate count)
Foods with chemical additives (food dyes, sodium nitrite, etc.)
Artificial foods (processed cheese slices, deli meat, etc.)

2.) Clean Eating Lifestyle Weekly Example:

Monday

Breakfast	Snack	Lunch
1/2 cup old-fashioned quick cooking oats 1 cup skim milk Sliced apples and walnuts on top Coffee/ Tea	Greek yogurt ½ banana Honey ¼ cup sliced almonds	Tossed spinach salad with grilled chicken Scoop of red quinoa Sliced avocado
Snack	**Dinner**	**Snack**
Celery 2 spoonfuls raw nut butter (no added oil/sugar)	Grilled Salmon Sautéed onion, green pepper, grape tomatoes 1 cup brown rice	1 cup berries

Tuesday

Breakfast	Snack	Lunch
Protein shake Handful of almonds Banana	2 hard boiled eggs	Whole wheat grilled chicken wrap Celery and carrots 2 spoonfuls of hummus
Snack	**Dinner**	**Snack**
Apple 2 spoonfuls raw almond butter	Sirloin steak (5 oz.) Broccoli 1 cup brown rice	1 orange

Wednesday

Breakfast	Snack	Lunch
2 eggs (including the yolk) 3 strips of turkey bacon Coffee/tea 1 piece of whole wheat toast	Handful almonds Carrots and celery sticks	Salmon salad with cucumbers and tomatoes ½ cup of olive oil/ lemon for dressing

Snack	Dinner	Snack
1 apple	Grilled halibut Roasted vegetables 1 baked sweet potato	1 orange

Thursday

Breakfast	Snack	Lunch
1 cup muesli Sliced apples and walnuts on top 1 cup skim milk Coffee/tea	Protein shake	Brown rice sushi- 6-piece roll

Snack	Dinner	Snack
2 hard boiled eggs Handful almonds	Grilled cod/ halibut filet Roasted asparagus 1 cup quinoa	1 Apple

Friday

Breakfast	Snack	Lunch
½ cup old fashioned quick cooking oats Sliced apples and walnuts on top 1 cup skim milk Coffee/Tea	Brown rice cakes 2 spoonfuls roasted pepper hummus	Grilled Tuna wrap with spinach Apple

Snack	Dinner	Snack
Protein shake	Grilled chicken breast Sweet potato Sautéed spinach	1 handful of almonds

Saturday

Breakfast	Snack	Lunch
2 hardboiled eggs 2 pieces of turkey sausage Coffee/tea	Greek yogurt Honey 10 almonds	Cooked turkey salad Scoop of cannellini beans ¼ of an avocado sliced
Snack	**Dinner**	**Snack**
1 apple	Grilled chicken 1-2 cups whole wheat penne Mixed vegetables	4 squares of dark chocolate

Sunday

Breakfast	Snack	Lunch
Protein pancakes- consists of protein powder, egg, cinnamon, and ½ banana Bowl of fresh blueberries	1 string cheese	Turkey burger on a whole wheat bun Lettuce/ Tomato for topping

Dinner	Snack
1 grilled tuna steak 1 cup brown rice 1 cup green beans Small garden salad	1 yogurt 1 cup apple slices

3.) 10 foods that help build lean muscle:

Here are some of my favorites...

Eggs- Eggs are the bomb! I eat them most mornings as they contain high-quality protein, healthy fats, and other important nutrients like B vitamins and choline. Just 1 egg has 6g protein, 5g fat, 71 calories, and as an added bonus, they taste extra yummy when served with turkey bacon on the side. :) At least that's how Devin likes them! Don't think of eggs as only a breakfast food. They make a great snack food to hold you over in between meals too!

Salmon- Salmon is an awesome food to build muscle because it has an incredible amount of protein (around 20g per 100g serving) and natural Omega- 3 fatty acids. Wild raised and farm raised salmon options are the best (even though they are a bit pricier). Salmon is essential for healing, growth, maintaining muscle mass and metabolism. Also, the healthy fat content in salmon helps you feel fuller longer.

Chicken Breast- I love me some CHICK'N! Chicken breast is lean and has the most protein by weight, making it ideal for people who want to lose fat. It is a staple food in the clean eating lifestyle. One skinless cooked chicken breast contains 26 grams of high-quality protein. It also contains generous amounts of B vitamins, niacin, and B6, which is very important if you are active.

Tuna- Tuna is a high-quality protein source with almost no fat. It includes several essential amino acids, and it helps in the maintenance of lean muscle tissue. One 3-ouch serving contains 20.1 grams of protein, 2.5 grams of fat and 109 calories. It is also quick, easy, and cheap to buy if you go with the canned options.

Lean Beef- Beef is at the top of the list when it comes to the best muscle-building foods. It is packed with dense proteins, essential amino acids, B-vitamins, minerals, and creatine. Beef also contains a mixture of saturated fat which supports healthy testosterone levels and heart health. Also...an added benefit...beef is known to lower levels of anxiety and stress! Heck yes. Solid choice here ladies and gents.

Brown rice- Whoever said you should cut all carbohydrates to lose weight was crazy. Good carbohydrates (complex carbs) are important components of a healthy balanced diet. You need to incorporate carbohydrates in your training routine since your body uses carbs for energy. Brown rice is great in building lean muscle mass as it packs in 5 grams of protein per cup, it is high in branched-chain amino acids, and it is filling! Brown rice makes for a great addition to your protein courses at dinner time.

Cottage Cheese- I know this might sound weird but I love cottage cheese. Now before you start judging me let me blow your mind with some interesting facts! One cup of low-fat cottage cheese packs 28 grams of protein and includes the important muscle-building amino acid leucine. It also contains live cultures- good bacteria- that will help you breakdown and absorb all the nutrients you need to build lean muscle mass.

Greek yogurt- Speaking of good bacteria, Greek yogurt takes the cake! Greek yogurt offers a ton of high-quality protein and gut boosting probiotics. It also contains a mixture of fast- digesting whey protein and slow- digesting casein protein. I suggest sticking with the plain flavors and adding a little honey or fruit to the top as it packs a lot less sugar than the flavored options.

Quinoa- Oh quinoa. I'll be honest...I didn't start eating quinoa until a few years ago. First off, I had NO idea what it was (or how to cook it) and second, I would have never guessed the benefits it offers! Quinoa is a great carbohydrate to give your body the energy it needs to hit a hard training day.

Just 1 cup packs 8 grams of protein and a ton of magnesium and phosphorus. Magnesium plays a huge role in the function of your muscles and nerves, which we use every time we train.

Nuts- Let's get nutttttty! Ok I'm weird. But for real, nuts are the bomb. First off, they make a great grab-and-go snack. They are also among one of the best sources of plant-based proteins out there (for all my vegans/vegetarians in the house). Also, they are the perfect blend of protein, fat, fiber, and high-quality calories. If you're having a hard time packing in enough calories to drive your muscle gain, eating nuts could be a great way to load in those extra calories and nutrients.