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# The Catalyst Food Guide

## The 4-Level Eating System

Quality, Consistency, Quantity

## Level #1: Eating REAL food

Eat meat and vegetables, nuts and seeds, some fruit, some milk, few starches and no sugar.

What qualifies as *real* food? Well, real food goes bad. Real food has an expiry date. Real food doesn't have a list of ingredients. Real food is largely found around the perimeter of the grocery store – not in the middle aisles.

Before you embark on the more



technical parts of this journey, we'd like you to switch to real food for 12 days. Why 12, and not 15? There's no magic number – we'd like you to start on Monday, eat well for a week, survive the weekend, and then practice for another. Frankly, by the time you hit Sunday, you'll already feel the benefits.

Most of our culture's issues with food come not from overeating – by food volume, that is – but by consuming too many carbohydrates. For more information, read *Enter The Zone* by Barry Sears. And you'll get more information in Level #2 as well.

Level #1 is not just for beginners. It's simple, but it's not easy. That said, many of our top – and leanest – athletes survive just fine at Level 1 only, without ever weighing and measuring food.

For 12 days, then, eat only things that appear on this list, including condiments, flavourings (like sugar and salt) and 'side dishes.' Don't worry if it tastes bland at first – your taste buds have been deconditioned to subtlety, and by next week, you'll really enjoy everything more.

## **Protein**

### **Meat and Poultry**

Beef (range fed or game)  
Chicken breast, skinless  
Ground beef (Less than 10% fat)

Lean Canadian Bacon  
Turkey breast, skinless  
Turkey breast, delistyle.

Turkey, ground  
Turkey bacon

Beef (lean cuts)  
Chicken,  
Corned beef, lean  
Duck  
Ham

Lamb, lean  
Pork, lean  
Pork Chop  
Turkey bacon  
Turkey, skinless, dark meat  
Veal

### **Fish and Seafood**

Bass (freshwater)

Bluefish  
Calamari  
Cod  
Clams  
Haddock  
Halibut  
Lobster  
Salmon  
Sardines  
Scallops  
Snapper  
Swordfish  
Shrimp

Trout  
Tuna (steak)

## **Carbohydrates**

### **Low Density Carbohydrates**

Artichoke  
Artichoke Hearts  
Asparagus  
Beans, green or wax  
Beans, black  
Bok choy

Broccoli  
Brussel sprouts  
Cabbage  
Cauliflower  
Chickpeas  
Collard greens  
Eggplant  
Hummus  
Kale  
Kidney beans  
Leeks  
Lentils  
Mushrooms (boiled)  
Onions, chopped (boiled)  
Okra, sliced  
Spaghetti squash  
Spinach  
Swiss chard  
Turnip  
Turnip greens  
Yellow squash  
Zucchini

Alfalfa sprouts  
Bamboo shoots

Broccoli

Cauliflower pieces  
Celery, sliced  
Chick peas  
Cucumber  
Green or red peppers

Lettuce, iceberg  
Lettuce, romaine  
Mushrooms  
Onions, chopped  
Radishes

Snow peas  
Spinach

spinach  
tomato

Tuna, canned in water

Egg whites  
Egg substitute

Whole egg

Cheese, nonfat  
Cottage cheese, lowfat  
Cheese, lowfat  
Mozzarella cheese, skim  
Ricotta cheese, skim

Hard cheeses

### **Fat**

Almond butter  
Almond oil  
Almonds  
Avocado  
Cashews  
Guacamole  
Macadamia nut  
Olives  
Olive oil  
Peanuts

Pistachios  
Sesame oil

Walnuts

Tossed salad  
Water chestnuts

### **Fruits**

Apple  
Applesauce (unsweetened)  
Apricots  
Blackberries  
Blueberries  
Boysenberries  
Cherries  
Grapes  
Grapefruit  
Kiwi  
Lemon  
Lime  
Nectarine  
Orange  
Orange, Mandarin  
Peach  
Pear  
Plum  
Raspberries  
Strawberries  
Tangerine  
Carrot

Lima beans  
Parsnips  
Peas  
Potato

Sweet potato

Banana  
Cantaloupe  
Cranberries  
Dates  
Honeydew melon  
Mango, sliced  
Papaya  
Pineapple,  
Prunes  
Raisins  
Watermelon

## Level #2 – Food Combinations

Now we're concerned not just with quality of food, but also quantity. In the same way that we coach exercise, we want to move from solid technique to consistency to virtuosity.

Many may never go past Level #2, and that's fine. For most people, it's enough. Luckily, it's easy: just have **a protein at every meal, a vegetable every time you have a protein, and a little fat too** (choose from the healthy fats in the list above.) How much? A bit.

A good rule of thumb (well, the whole hand):

Eat a protein the same size as your palm. Don't worry if you have smaller or larger hands – this scales nicely.

Follow with a vegetable serving the size of your whole hand, from wrist to fingertip.

Finally, add a half-handful of nuts, or a teaspoon of oil– remember, FAT doesn't make you fat. Bad carbohydrate makes you fat. As a guide, eat a serving the size of your thumb, from wrist to tip. Simple.

If you want to get really specific – *How much? When?* Then skip to Level #3: The Zone Diet.



### Level #3 – the Zone Diet

The primary goal is to balance two hormones, glucagon and insulin. Both are critical to human life, and they're both positive. Out of balance, though, we get a ton of problems: insulin insensitivity (diabetes,) inflammation disorders (heart disease,) decreased alertness, obesity, stress, and a whole host of other nasty stuff.

The goal of the Zone is to maintain that insulin/glucagon balance. You don't need to be a biochemist to understand the two:

- 1) Insulin is a storage hormone. Any blood sugar left in the bloodstream is bulldozed by insulin, either to muscles (if they want it, as in after a hard workout) or the fat cell, for use later. But for many, later never comes.....
- 2) Glucagon is a mobilization hormone. It takes energy from fat and muscle cells and delivers it to where it's needed. But too much glucagon means that too much glucose (energy) is pulled into the bloodstream, triggering an insulin release to maintain balance. It's a catch-22.

<b>Catalyst Diet</b>				<i>Weekly Tracking Sheet</i>				Zone Blocks											
<b>MONDAY</b>	C	P	F	<b>TUESDAY</b>	C	P	F	<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	C	P	F	<b>THURSDAY</b>	C	P	F	<b>FRIDAY</b>	C		
Meal #1				Meal #1				Meal #1				Meal #1				Meal #1			
7:00				7:00				7:00				7:00				7:00			
Meal #2				Meal #2				Meal #2				Meal #2				Meal #2			
10:00				10:00				10:00				10:00				10:00			
Meal #3				Meal #3				Meal #3				Meal #3				Meal #3			
12:00				12:00				12:00				12:00				12:00			
Meal #4				Meal #4				Meal #4				Meal #4				Meal #4			
3:00				3:00				3:00				3:00				3:00			
Meal #5				Meal #5				Meal #5				Meal #5				Meal #5			
6:00				6:00				6:00				6:00				6:00			
Meal #6				Meal #6				Meal #6				Meal #6				Meal #6			
8:30				8:30				8:30				8:30				8:30			
	0	0			0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0		0		
	0																		
<b>SATURDAY</b>	C	P	F	<b>SUNDAY</b>	C	P	F												
Meal #1				Meal #1															
7:00				7:00															
Meal #2				Meal #2															
10:00				10:00															
Meal #3				Meal #3															
12:00				12:00															
Meal #4				Meal #4															
3:00				3:00															
Meal #5				Meal #5															
6:00				6:00															
Meal #6				Meal #6															
8:30				8:30															
	0	0			0	0	0												

Given the two, and the current state of ridiculous obesity in our culture, would you say that we have a STORAGE problem, or MOBILIZATION problem? STORAGE, 100%. We're overstimulating insulin. And what stimulates insulin? Only carbohydrates. Good carbohydrates, like vegetables, stimulate the

release of insulin at a reasonable levels. Others, like breads, pastas, grains, and some fruit, overstimulate the release of insulin, putting too much in the bloodstream and tipping the scales. Scales? More like roller-coaster. Protein intake will help dull this response. Fat intake is neither here nor there; it doesn't cause the secretion of insulin OR glucagon. However, it will slightly dull the effect of a high-carb meal on blood sugar levels.

Using the lists above, here are the Zone blocks that correspond to each food. Amounts listed are each 1 block.

### **Meat and Poultry**

#### **Best Choices (low in saturated fat)**

Beef (range fed or game) 1 oz.  
 Chicken breast, skinless 1 oz.  
 Chicken breast, delistyle, 1 1/2 oz.  
 Ground beef (Low fat) 1 1/2 oz.  
 Lean Canadian Bacon 1 1/2 oz.  
 Turkey breast, skinless 1 oz.  
 Turkey breast, delistyle. 1 1/2 oz.  
 Turkey, ground 1 1/2 oz.  
 Turkey bacon 3 strips

#### **Fair Choices (moderate in saturated fat)**

Beef (lean cuts) 1 oz.  
 Chicken, skinless, dark Meat  
 Corned beef, lean 1 oz.  
 Duck 1 1/2 oz.  
 Ham, lean 1 oz.  
 Ham, delistyle 1 1/2 oz.  
 Lamb, lean 1 oz.  
 Pork, lean 1 oz.  
 Pork Chop 1 oz.  
 Turkey bacon 3 slices  
 Turkey, skinless, dark meat 1 oz.  
 Veal 1 oz.

#### **Poor Choices (high in saturated fat, Arachidonic Acid, or both)**

Bacon, pork 3 1/2 slices  
 Beef, fatty cuts\* 1 oz.  
 Beef, ground (>10% fat) 1 1/2 oz.  
 Hot dog, beef or pork 1 link  
 Hot dog, chicken or turkey 1 link  
 Pepperoni 1 oz.  
 Salami 1 oz.  
 Sausage, pork 2 links  
 Sausage, pork 2 patties  
 \*Arachidonic Acid

### **Fish and Seafood**

Bass (freshwater) 1 oz.  
 Bass (sea) 1 1/2 oz.  
 Bluefish 1 1/2 oz.  
 Calamari 1 1/2 oz.  
 Catfish 1 1/2 oz.

### **Low Density Carbohydrates**

#### **(Best Choices)**

#### **Cooked Vegetables**

Artichoke 4 large  
 Artichoke Hearts 1 cup  
     Asparagus (12 spears) 1 cup  
 Beans, green or wax 1 1/2 cups  
 Beans, black 1/4 cup  
 Bok choy 3 cups  
 Broccoli 3 cups  
 Brussel sprouts 1 1/2 cups  
 Cabbage 3 cups  
  
 Cauliflower 4 cups  
 Chickpeas 1/4 cup  
  
 1 oz. Collard greens 2 cups  
 Eggplant 1 1/2 cups  
 Hummus 1/4 cup  
 Kale 2 cups  
     Kidney beans 1/4 cup  
     Leeks 1 cup  
 Lentils 1/4 cup  
 Mushrooms (boiled) 2 cups  
     Onions, chopped (boiled) 1/2 cup  
     Okra, sliced 1 cup  
     Sauerkraut 1 cup  
  
 Spaghetti squash 2 cups  
 Spinach 3 1/2 cups  
 Swiss chard 2 1/2 cups  
 Turnip, mashed 1 1/2 cups  
 Turnip greens 4 cups  
 Yellow squash 2 cups  
 Zucchini 2 cups

#### **Raw Vegetables**

Alfalfa sprouts 10 cups  
 Bamboo shoots 4 cups  
 Bean sprouts 3 cups  
     Broccoli 4 cups  
     Cabbage. shredded 4 cups  
     Cauliflower pieces 4 cups  
     Celery, sliced 2 cups  
     Chick peas 1/4 cup  
     Cucumber, sliced 4 cups  
     Endive, chopped 10 cups

Cod 1 1/2 oz.

Clams 1 1/2 oz.

Crabmeat 1 1/2 oz.

Haddock 1 1/2 oz.

Halibut 1 1/2 oz.

Lobster 1 1/2 oz.

Salmon\* 1 1/2 oz.

Sardines\* 1 oz.

Scallops 1 1/2 oz.

Snapper 1 1/2 oz.

Swordfish 1 1/2 oz.

Shrimp 1 1/2 oz.

Trout 1 1/2 oz.

Tuna (steak) 1 oz.

Tuna, canned in water 1 oz.

\*Rich in EPA

### **Eggs**

#### **Best Choices**

Egg whites 2

Egg substitute 1/4 cup

#### **Fair Choices**

Whole egg\* 1

\*Arachidonic Acid

### **Protein-Rich Dairy**

#### **Best Choices**

Cheese, nonfat 1 oz.

Cottage cheese, lowfat 1/4 cup

#### **Fair Choices**

Cheese, lowfat 1 oz.

Mozzarella cheese, skim 1 oz.

Ricotta cheese, skim 2 oz.

#### **Poor Choices**

Hard cheeses 1 oz.

### **Mixed Protein /**

#### **Carbohydrate (Contain 1 block protein and 1 block carbohydrate)**

(use in moderation)

Milk, lowfat(1%) 1 cup

Soy milk 8 oz.

Soy Flour 10 grams

Yogurt, plain 1/2 cup

Escarole, chopped 10 cups

Green or red peppers 2

Green or red peppers, chopped 2 cups

Jalapeño peppers 2 cups

Lettuce, iceberg 2 heads

Lettuce, romaine, chopped 10 cups

Mushrooms, chopped 4 cups

Onions, chopped 1 1/2 cup

Radishes, sliced 4 cups

Salsa 1/2 cup

Snow peas 1 1/2 cups

Spinach 20 cups

Spinach Salad (3 cups raw spinach, 1/2 raw onion, and 1 raw tomato)1

Tomato 2

Tomato, cherry 2 cups

Tomato, chopped 1 1/2 cups

Tossed salad (3 cups shredded lettuce, 1/2 raw green pepper, and 1 raw tomato)1

Water chestnuts 1/3 cup

Water cress 10 cups

### **Fruits**

Apple 1/2

Applesauce (unsweetened) 1/3 cup

Apricots 3

Blackberries 3/4 cup

Blueberries 1/2 cup

Boysenberries 1/2 cup

Cherries 8

Fruit cocktail (light) 1/3 cup

Grapes 1/2 cup

Grapefruit 1/2

Kiwi 1

Lemon 1

Lime 1

Nectarine 1/2

Orange 1/2

Orange, Mandarin, canned in water 1/3 cup

Peach 1

Peaches, canned in water 1/2 cup

Pear 1/2

Plum 1

Raspberries 1 cup

Strawberries 1 cup

Tangerine 1

### **High Density Carbohydrates**

#### **Cooked Vegetables**

Acorn squash 1/2 cup

Beans, baked 1/4 cup

Beans, refried 1/4 cup

Beets, sliced 1/2 cup

Tempeh 1 1/2 oz.

## **Fat**

### **Best Choices (rich in monounsaturated fat)**

Almond oil 1/3 tsp.  
Almonds (slivered)  
Almonds (whole) 1 tsp.

Avocado 1 tbsp.  
Cashews 2  
Guacamole 1 tbsp  
Macadamia nut 1  
Olives 3  
Olive oil 1/3 tsp.  
Olive oil and vinegar dressing 1/3 tsp  
olive oil plus vinegar to taste  
Peanuts 6  
Peanut butter, natural 1/2 tsp.  
Peanut oil 1/3 tsp.  
Pistachios 3  
Almond butter 1/2 tsp.  
Sesame oil 1/3 tsp.  
Tahini 1/2 tsp.

### **Fair Choices (low in saturated fat)**

Canola oil 1/3 tsp.  
Mayonnaise, regular 1/3 tsp.  
Mayonnaise, light 1 tsp.  
Sesame oil 1/2 tsp.  
Soybean oil 1/3 tsp.  
Walnuts, shelled and chopped 1/2 tsp.

### **Poor Choices (high in saturated fat)**

Bacon bits, imitation 2 tsp.  
Butter 1/3 tsp.  
Cream (half and half) 1/2 tbsp.  
Cream cheese 1 tsp.  
Cream cheese, light 2 tsp.  
Lard 1/3 tsp.  
Sour cream 1/2 tbsp.  
Sour cream, light 1 tbsp.  
Vegetable shortening 1/3 tsp.

Butternut squash 1/2 cup  
Carrot 1  
Carrots, sliced 1 cup  
Carrots, shredded 1 cup  
Corn 1/4 cup

Lima beans 1/4 cup  
Parsnips 1/3 cup

Peas 1/2 cup  
Pinto beans 1/4 cup  
Potato, baked 1/4 cup  
Potato, boiled 1/3 cup  
Potato, mashed 1/4 cup  
Sweet potato, baked 1/3 cup  
Sweet potato, mashed 1/4 cup

## **Fruits**

Banana 1/3  
Cantaloupe 1/4 melon  
Cantaloupe, cubed 3/4 cup  
Cranberries 3/4 cup  
Cranberry sauce 3 tsp  
Dates 2  
Fig 1  
Guava 1/2 cup  
Honeydew melon, cubed 2/3 cup  
Kumquat 3  
Mango, sliced 1/3 cup  
Papaya, cubed 3/4 cup  
Pineapple, diced 1/2 cup  
Prunes, dried 2  
Raisins 1 tbsp  
Watermelon, cubed 3/4 cup

## **Fruit Juices**

Apple 1/3 cup  
Apple cider 1/3 cup  
Cranberry 1/4 cup  
Fruit punch 1/4 cup  
Grape 1/4 cup  
Grapefruit 1/3 cup  
Lemonade, unsweetened 1/3 cup  
Lime 1/3 cup  
Orange 1/3 cup  
Pineapple 1/4 cup  
Tomato 1 cup  
V8 3/4 cup

## Level #4 – Competitive

We call this the ‘competitive’ level because it requires an attention to detail – and strict habits – that aren’t sustainable by most for long periods. A month on Paleo? Great. Intermittent fasting? Once a year isn’t bad. But more often is pretty tough to attain, sometimes distracting, and socially limiting. Like with exercise, we weigh the cost/benefit ratio, and for most, it’s too much for long periods.

Occasionally, it may be necessary to personally tailor a food plan, including macronutrient breakdowns and specific food choices. As your Trainer for a referral if this is the case.



On the CrossFit Sickness – Wellness – Fitness continuum, it’s helpful to aim for a high level because failure still means a good result. The classic cliché of shooting for the moon and landing among the stars holds true: even if you’re not 100% fit, you still have farther to fall to become chronically ill or weak.

With this guide, our goal is to approach Nutrition along the same continuum: eat good food, in balanced proportions 80% of the time, and you’ll be okay. Eat better, and you’ll do better; eat at a more ‘elite’ level, and you’ll have farther to fall when you do slip (and everyone does.) But shooting for ‘perfection or nothing’ – as advocated by so many pulp-fiction diets, is self-defeating. Unfortunately, on a calorie-based diet, the 80% rule doesn’t apply – 20% overeating will still cause weight gain. On this system, if you’re a Level 3 eater, a big slip-up may mean only poor carbohydrate choices (but still balancing them with protein and healthy fat) or an unbalanced macronutrient intake (you didn’t have a healthy fat with your meal.) As Barry Sears, author of The Zone Diet, is fond of saying, “if you slip up, don’t worry about it: you can be back in the optimal Zone at your next meal.”

Some perspective is necessary here: our culture revolves around the sharing of food. If birthday cake is inevitable, cut carbs out of your dinner, eat the protein and healthy fat, and eat a smaller piece of cake. Is that the 100% best choice? Of course not. Is a Spartan lifestyle enjoyable? No. Great abs are wonderful, but avoiding a social life for fear or raising your bodyfat above 7% is disordered thinking. Shoot for 100%, but don’t be unhappy when you achieve 80%. Don’t let yourself off easy – limit your donut intake, of course – but use common sense: if you shoot for ‘excellent,’ you’ll finish ahead; if you shoot for mediocrity, you’ll lose ground.

In any case, if you slip, start again as soon as possible. There is NO perfect time. If lunch was full of bad choices, don't treat the day as a write-off; start fixing your metabolism at your 3pm snack. 'Tomorrow' is the enemy of nutrition.

## A Final Note: How To Get Started

If you're new to this type of exercise – short, intense, complex movement – you're likely to ask, 'how should I eat before a workout?' And that's a great question. While many workout plans in the past have paired diet with exercise, the Catalyst and CrossFit method completely intertwines what you eat with how well you perform.

If you're like most of us, you've never been called an 'athlete' before. However, it helps to eat as if you're preparing for a contest, because it's true: you're competing with your former self. When the coach starts their countdown before a challenge, you're facing off against the person you were when you walked in the door. And if you're prepared, you'll win.

First off, blood sugar levels are your most critical point of maintenance. If you enter the workout on an empty stomach, there will be a gap between when you drain yourself of chemical energy in the blood (glucose) and when you're able to break down more energy from the muscle or fat cell. During this gap, your blood sugar level will be very low (don't worry, you'll get better at buffering the effect as you go.) This may mean that you feel slightly dizzy, or even nauseous.

To bridge that gap, or protect against it occurring, eat a meal balanced in protein, carbohydrate, and fat about 90 minutes pre-workout. How do you judge? Just like you will in Level II: use your hand. Eat a protein the size of your palm, a vegetable serving the size of your open hand (wrist to fingertip,) and a little fat – a teaspoon of olive oil or fish oil, or a few almonds. Drink a big glass of water. If you're a rookie, bring some orange juice with you to help recover blood sugar levels if they do take a plunge later.

Try eat at least five small meals per day, with a little protein at each. This will help moderate blood sugar / insulin levels through the day. When you're doing it properly, you'll notice that you feel hungry but alert – instead of hungry and tired – just before mealtime.

It will take, on average, about two weeks before you've built up enough fat-metabolizing enzymes to break down fat for fuel consistently. Our elite performers are so fast at breaking down fats and sugars that they do so when they're operating at full intensity – they don't feel sick or dizzy during workouts. They don't run out of energy. They may stop and recover briefly, but then they go full-out again.

To the person on the street, these folks may appear to be genetically blessed with a 'fast metabolism.' However, they – and soon you – know the truth: that metabolism is made, not born, and can be trained to be as fast as the leanest person on earth.

Food Log

Week :

Day 1

Meal #1:

Blocks:

Comments:

Meal #2:

Blocks:

Comments:

Meal #3:

Blocks;

Comments:

Meal #4:

Blocks:

Comments;

Meal #5:

Blocks:

Comments:

Day 2

Meal #1:

Blocks:

Comments:

Meal #2:

Blocks:

Comments:

Meal #3:

Blocks;

Comments:

Meal #4:

Blocks:

Comments;

Meal #5:

Blocks:

Comments:

Day 3

Meal #1:

Blocks:

Comments:

Meal #2:

Blocks:

Comments:

Meal #3:

Blocks;

Comments:

Meal #4:  
Blocks:  
Comments;

Meal #5:  
Blocks:  
Comments:

Day 4  
Meal #1:  
Blocks:  
Comments:

Meal #2:  
Blocks:  
Comments:

Meal #3:  
Blocks;  
Comments:

Meal #4:  
Blocks:  
Comments;

Meal #5:  
Blocks:  
Comments:

Day 5  
Meal #1:  
Blocks:  
Comments:

Meal #2:  
Blocks:  
Comments:

Meal #3:  
Blocks;  
Comments:

Meal #4:  
Blocks:  
Comments;

Meal #5:  
Blocks:  
Comments:

Day 6  
Meal #1:  
Blocks:  
Comments:

Meal #2:  
Blocks:

Comments:

Meal #3:

Blocks;

Comments:

Meal #4:

Blocks:

Comments;

Meal #5:

Blocks:

Comments:

Day 7

Meal #1:

Blocks:

Comments:

Meal #2:

Blocks:

Comments:

Meal #3:

Blocks;

Comments:

Meal #4:

Blocks:

Comments;

Meal #5:

Blocks:

Comments: