

# PROTEIN POWER



## THE PROS OF PROTEIN

Did you know that nearly everything your body does requires protein? Protein is an essential nutrient that helps build and preserve muscle, bone, skin and nails. It also helps keep you feeling full and satisfied, which can help prevent overeating and may help you manage weight.

## GO GREEN WITH PLANT PROTEIN

People tend to think of meat when they think about protein, but some plant foods are protein sources, too, including almonds and other nuts, seeds, beans and legumes, soy foods like tofu and tempeh. While Americans currently consume more than the recommended amount of meat and poultry, according to NHANES data, 60% of the population is not meeting the recommendations for some plant-based proteins, including nuts, seeds and soy products!

Plant-based proteins tend to be higher in fiber than animal-based proteins, with less saturated fat and higher levels of unsaturated fats, making them a heart-smart choice. Think about combining protein sources together for an extra boost—for example, toss almonds into a quinoa and veggie salad.

## KNOW YOUR NUTS

Not all nuts are created equal when you're talking about plant-based protein. Ounce for ounce, **almonds are one of the tree nuts highest in protein.**

BASED ON A ONE-OUNCE PORTION*	ALMOND	BRAZIL	CASHEW	HAZELNUT	MACADAMIA NUT	PECAN	PISTACHIO	WALNUT
Calories	160	190	160	180	200	200	160	190
Protein (g)	<b>6</b>	4	5	4	2	3	6	4

## SPREAD IT OUT

People tend to skimp on protein-rich foods throughout the day and then load up at dinner, but some research shows that spacing out your protein intake evenly throughout the day may be the most beneficial to health. Ideally, aim for 20 to 30 grams of protein at each meal? Sound hard to get? It's easier than you think! Almonds, for example, are a versatile source of protein that can be incorporated into any meal of the day. Here are some simple ways you can add almonds to your breakfast, lunch, dinner or snacks!



### Breakfast

Power-Packed Almond Maple Granola (8g) with 6-ounce container Greek plain nonfat yogurt (17g) + small banana (1g) = 26g

### Lunch

Almond Harvest Salad (30g) + whole-wheat dinner roll (2g) = 32g

### Dinner

Pan-Seared Salmon with Roasted Brussels Sprouts and Almonds (35g) + 1/2 cup brown and wild rice mix (3g) = 38g

### Snack

1 ounce almonds (6g) + small apple (0g) = 6g



If you like to mix things up, other almond forms contain protein too, such as almond butter (7g per 2 tbsp serving) and almond flour (6g per 1/2 cup serving). For these recipes and more, visit [Almonds.com](http://Almonds.com).

# FUEL UP: ADD ALMONDS FOR A PROTEIN- POWERED SNACK

Need an afternoon pick-me-up to power you through until dinner? Almonds are the easy snack that fits in anywhere, everywhere and anytime, too. A healthy handful of almonds (about 23) provides a delicious combo of hunger-fighting protein (6 grams), filling fiber (4 grams) and good fats that marry convenience with a satisfying crunch.



## SOY AND WASABI ALMONDS

### Description:

Wake up those taste buds with whole almonds and a mixture of soy sauce and wasabi paste.

### Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup whole natural almonds
- 2 tbsp soy sauce
- 1 tsp wasabi paste
- 1 tsp black (or regular) sesame seeds

### Preparation:

Place the almonds into a frying pan with the soy sauce and wasabi paste. Stir to mix, then heat gently for 2 to 3 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the soy sauce has evaporated. Add the sesame seeds and stir to coat. Remove from the heat and cool.

Calories: 165

## PERPLEXED BY PROTEIN? COMPLETE VS. INCOMPLETE

Amino acids are known as the building blocks that make up protein. Your body, the amazing machine that it is, can make all of the amino acids it needs except for nine. Those nine amino acids are considered essential because they must come from the food you eat.

A food is considered a “complete” protein when it contains all nine essential amino acids. Complete proteins mainly come from animal-based products (meat, poultry, dairy, eggs, fish), soy and certain grains, such as quinoa.

Plant-based foods, such as nuts, beans, grains, rice, vegetables and legumes are “incomplete” proteins, because they are missing one or more of the nine amino acids. But fear not: incomplete proteins in different plant foods can easily be combined to make a complete protein. While once believed that the various plant foods had to be eaten at the same time for that magic to happen, we now know that combining a variety of plant protein sources throughout the day works just the same as far as your body is concerned.

### FIGURING OUT YOUR NEEDS

The amount of protein you need to eat each day depends on your body weight. The Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) for protein for adults is 0.8 gram per kilogram of body weight.<sup>3</sup> For a woman weighing 130 pounds, that’s 47 grams a day.

The RDA is the minimum amount needed to meet basic nutrition needs, but it may not necessarily be the optimal amount for good health. A growing body of research suggests that a higher amount of protein in the diet may be beneficial for healthy aging, weight management and more, in the range of 1.0 to 1.6 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight for adults.<sup>4,5</sup>

Most Americans actually eat enough protein overall, getting in the range of 1.2 to 1.5 grams per kilogram of body weight each day<sup>6</sup>; but they often need to make leaner and more varied protein choices.<sup>7</sup>

To figure out your protein needs, use this formula:

**STEP 1:** *Body weight in pounds divided by 2.2 = kilograms of body weight*

**STEP 2:** *Kilograms of body weight multiplied by protein need amounts (0.8 to 1.5g) = range of total daily grams of protein*

**Example: For a person weighing 130 pounds, that is a range of 47 to 89 grams a day.**

**STEP 1:** *130 lbs divided by 2.2 = 59 kilograms body weight*

**STEP 2:** *59 kilograms x 0.8 g = 47 grams protein/day*  
*59 kilograms x 1.5 g = 89 grams protein/day*

1. U.S. Department of Agriculture and Health and Human Services. 2015. “Scientific Report of the 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee.” Accessed July 9, 2015. <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015-scientific-report/PDFs/Scientific-Report-of-the-2015-Dietary-Guidelines-Advisory-Committee.pdf>.

2. Layden DK et al. Defining meal requirements for protein to optimize metabolic roles of amino acids. *Am J Clin Nutr.* 2015; 101(Suppl):1330S-8S. <http://ajcn.nutrition.org/content/101/6/1330S.full.pdf>.

3. Institute of Medicine. *Dietary Reference Intakes for Energy, Carbohydrate, Fiber, Fat, Fatty Acids, Cholesterol, Protein, and Amino Acids (2002/2005)*. This report may be accessed via [www.nap.edu](http://www.nap.edu).

4. Paddon-Jones D, et al. Protein and healthy aging. *Am J Clin Nutr.* 2015; 101 (Suppl):1339S-45S. <http://ajcn.nutrition.org/content/101/6/1339S.full.pdf>.

5. Leidy HJ, et al. The role of protein in weight loss and maintenance. *Am J Clin Nutr.* 2015;101 (Suppl):1320S-9S. <http://ajcn.nutrition.org/content/101/6/1320S.full.pdf>.

6. Rodriguez NR, Miller SL. Effective translation of current dietary guidance: understanding and communicating the concepts of minimal and optimal levels of dietary protein. *Am J Clin Nutr.* 2015;101 (Suppl):1353S-8S. <http://ajcn.nutrition.org/content/101/6/1353S.full.pdf>.

7. USDA. Protein - ChooseMyPlate.gov <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/protein-foods-nutrients-health>.

\*U.S. Dietary Guidelines recommend that the majority of your fat intake be unsaturated. Scientific evidence suggests, but does not prove, that eating 1.5 ounces of most nuts, such as almonds, as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease. One serving of almonds (28 grams) has 13 grams of unsaturated fat and only 1 gram of saturated fat.