by Goodstead

My Health Protocol

Prepared for Dana

Edition 1, November 16, 2026

An edition of one. Every number, session and schedule in this document was built from one person's answers. It should not be followed by anyone else.

Health that stands you in good stead.

Dana's protocol at a glance

Dana, this protocol was built from the answers you gave on November 16, 2026. Nothing in it is generic: the numbers come from your body and schedule, the training uses dumbbells and a treadmill, and the order of the changes reflects where the evidence says you have the most to gain.

You told us you want to lose body fat, have more energy and sleep better. The most valuable move toward that is the first item on your scorecard: eat about 1,650 calories a day. You are not starting from zero either. Your scorecard opens with what is already working in your favor.

Do the phases in order. People fail health plans by starting everything on a Monday, and succeed by adding a few things at a time and keeping them.

YOUR DAILY NUMBERS

CALORIES	PROTEIN	FIBER	STEPS
1,650	120	25	8,500
a day	g a day	g a day	a day

STRENGTH	IN BED BY	FLUIDS	LAST CAFFEINE
2	10:15 PM	76	1:30 PM
days a week	up at 6:15 AM	oz a day	daily cutoff

WHAT 90 DAYS ADDS UP TO

24	169	60	270
strength sessions	extra miles walked	more hours of sleep	meals built around protein

Counts assume you follow the plan about four days out of five. They describe the work, not a promised result.

Read this first

This protocol is general wellness information. Software built it from the answers Dana gave, using published research and official guidelines. It is not medical advice, it does not diagnose or treat any condition, and no clinician has reviewed it. Use it alongside your own doctor, not in place of one.

How to read the evidence grades

A	**Strong**	Randomized trials, or meta-analyses of trials.
B	**Good**	Consistent large observational studies or major guideline consensus.
C	**Early**	Early or limited evidence: reasonable, optional.

Anything that would grade lower than C, or that has been contradicted by better studies, is left out. The section called What we left out explains the popular ones.

Stop and get help if

- Chest pain or pressure, pain spreading to the arm or jaw, or fainting: stop and call 911.
- Severe or sudden shortness of breath, a racing or irregular heartbeat that does not settle, or sudden weakness or trouble speaking: get emergency care.
- Sharp joint pain, pain that lingers more than 48 hours, or swelling: stop that exercise and see a clinician or physical therapist.
- Dizziness, confusion or shakiness during exercise or after cutting food: stop, eat or drink something, and tell your clinician.
- Thoughts of harming yourself: Call or text 988 (988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline), any time.

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01 Start here

Your goals, what moves each one, and your first seven days.

Your goals, and what moves each

You chose these when you answered the questions. A few things in this plan move each goal more than the rest, so they are where your effort goes first.

GOAL	WHAT MOVES IT MOST	WHAT TO WATCH
Lose body fat Eating, Training	• About 1,650 calories a day, with 120 g of protein a day. • Strength training 2 days a week, so that what comes off is fat and not muscle. • 8,500 steps a day.	Your weekly average weight, and your waist once a month.
More energy Sleep and light, Eating, Training	• Up at 6:15 AM every day, with daylight in the first hour. • Last caffeine by 1:30 PM. • Protein at breakfast, and a 10-minute walk after meals.	Your 1 to 5 energy rating each evening.
Sleep better Sleep and light	• Up at 6:15 AM every day, weekends included. • In bed by 10:15 PM, with the lights down an hour before. • Last caffeine by 1:30 PM, and nothing heavy in the last 3 hours.	Hours slept, and how steady your wake time is.

HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

- Begin with your first seven days, on the next page. A shorter “Start here” guide came with this protocol and holds the same pages.
- Then follow the 90-day rollout in order. It adds a few habits at a time on purpose.
- Aim for four days out of five, not perfection. The plan is built to work at that level.
- Check-in emails arrive on days 3, 7, 30, 60 and 90. They are short, and one click stops them.
- New editions are included with your purchase. Update your answers when your life changes, and at day 90. Your order page shows how long they run.

Your first seven days

This week has two jobs. Get up at 6:15 AM every day. And make a start on the first change on your scorecard, "Eat about 1,650 calories a day". Close is enough this week. Everything else can settle in around those two.

Day 1 Set the anchor

- Get up at 6:15 AM. Drink a glass of water and get ten minutes of daylight.
- Do your baseline tests and write the results on the tracking page.
- Print "Your plan on one page" and put it where you will see it.

Why. A fixed wake time is the habit the rest of the day hangs on, and the tests give you a starting line.

Day 2 Stock the kitchen

- Shop from the grocery list in "A week of meals".
- Up at 6:15 AM again.

Why. You eat what is in the house, so the shopping comes before the eating.

Day 3 First session

- Strength A, at half the effort you think you can manage. Read each exercise in "How to do each exercise" first.
- A 10-minute walk after dinner.

Why. Half effort lets you learn the movements without being too sore for day 6.

Day 4 One full day of food

- Eat Monday from your week of meals, whatever day it is.
- Note your step count tonight without trying to change it.

Why. One day shows you what your numbers look like on a plate.

Day 5 Walk a little more

- Add about 1,000 steps to yesterday. Your target of 8,500 comes later.
- Last caffeine by 1:30 PM.

Why. Small steps hold. Big jumps do not.

Day 6 Second session

- Strength B, at the same easy effort.
- A 10-minute walk after dinner.

Why. A second session is what turns one workout into a routine.

Day 7 Count and plan

- Count the boxes you ticked on the tracking page. Four days in five is the target.
- Put next week's sessions in your calendar.
- If the week was too much, repeat it before you add anything.

Why. A week you can repeat is worth more than a week you have to recover from.

AFTER DAY 7

Carry on with Phase 1 of the 90-day rollout. It is these same habits, held for the rest of the month. Check-in emails arrive on days 3, 7, 30, 60 and 90, and one click stops them.

02 Scorecard

What is already working, and the changes that matter most for you.

> **Why this is in your plan.** A plan that asks for everything at once tends to get dropped. This page ranks the 7 changes that matter most for you by the strength of the evidence, the size of the benefit and how far you are from the target today.

What you already do right

4 of 16
habits already yours

Already yours. No nicotine, no daily sugary drinks, time with friends or family twice a week and a dental visit in the past year.

Still to build. Strength training twice a week, cardio or walking at the guideline level, seven hours of sleep, caffeine done by early afternoon, protein at most meals, five servings of vegetables and fruit a day, three drinks a week or fewer, a regular practice for stress, sunscreen most mornings, brushing twice a day and cleaning between your teeth, checkup and screenings up to date and knowing your blood pressure.

A count of the everyday habits this plan grades A or B. It does not measure your health.

You do not smoke
The largest single risk factor is already off your list.

Twice-daily brushing and regular dental visits
The base is there. One addition, cleaning between your teeth, finishes the job.

The seven changes that matter most

#	CHANGE	GRADE	PHASE
1	**Eat about 1,650 calories a day** Hold 1,650 calories with 120 g protein. Weigh in a few mornings a week and watch the weekly average, not the daily number. **Why this ranks here.** On paper, a 15% deficit works out to about 0.3 lb to 0.6 lb a week. Real results vary. In the Diabetes Prevention Program, adults with prediabetes who aimed to lose 7% of their weight and be active 150 minutes a week cut new diabetes by 58% over about three years.	A	Phase 1

#	CHANGE	GRADE	PHASE
2	**Walk more: 8,500 steps a day, 150 brisk minutes a week** You are near 4,000 steps. Add 1,000 a day each week, and make 90 minutes a week brisk to start. You can speak in full sentences but would rather not sing. **Why this ranks here.** Going from almost nothing to something is where the largest benefit sits: even 15 minutes a day was associated with a 14% lower death rate and three more years of life expectancy.	B	Phase 1
3	**Strength train 2 days a week** Strength A, Strength B: 30 minutes each. Start lighter than you think you need. **Why this ranks here.** In large cohort studies, strength training, even 30 to 60 minutes a week, is linked to 10 to 17% lower rates of death, heart disease, cancer and diabetes. The World Health Organization recommends it at least twice a week for every adult.	B	Phase 1
4	**Build up to 25 g of fiber a day** Add one high-fiber food a week: chia or flax at breakfast, beans at lunch, berries as a snack, a second vegetable at dinner. **Why this ranks here.** Across 185 studies and 58 trials, the highest fiber intakes went with 15 to 30% lower rates of death, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and colorectal cancer.	A	Phase 2
5	**Start a 5-minute daily calm-down practice** Five minutes of cyclic sighing or guided meditation at the same time every day. Attach it to something you already do, like your morning coffee. **Why this ranks here.** You rated your stress 4 out of 5 and have no regular practice. Mindfulness programs show small but consistent improvements in anxiety and low mood in trials, and stress this high tends to spill into sleep and eating.	A	Phase 2
6	**Reach 120 g of protein a day** About 40 g at each of 3 meals. Fix breakfast first. **Why this ranks here.** In strength-training trials, extra protein stopped adding muscle beyond about 1.6 g per kg a day. It is harder to reach when you are eating less, so plan it first.	A	Phase 2
7	**Sleep 7 hours or more: in bed by 10:15 PM** Fix the wake time at 6:15 AM first. Then move bedtime 15 minutes earlier each week. **Why this ranks here.** You are averaging about 6.5 hours. Adults who regularly sleep under seven have higher rates of weight gain, diabetes, heart disease and depression, and short sleep makes every other change in this plan harder.	B	Phase 3

Worth doing once the list above is routine

Book a checkup and catch up on screenings, sunscreen on your face every morning, move your last caffeine to 1:30 PM, drink 76 oz (about 10 cups) of fluids a day, trim alcohol and keep it away from bedtime and brush twice and clean between your teeth every night. These ranked lower for you, so they wait.

03 Prevent and measure

Screenings to raise with your clinician, and what to track at home.

> **Why this is in your plan.** You told us you are not sure your screenings are up to date. Most of the conditions on this list cause no symptoms early on, so a test is the only way to find them. Good habits lower risk. They do not replace being checked.

Screenings to ask about

This list is generic for your age and sex. Your clinician will tailor it to your history.

SCREENING	WHAT THE GUIDELINES SAY, AND WHY
Blood pressure	Every year at minimum. A validated home cuff gives you better data than the clinic. **Why.** High blood pressure usually has no symptoms. Measuring it is the only way to know.
Cholesterol panel	About every 5 years when results are normal, more often if not. The 2026 heart-association guideline also advises measuring Lp(a) once in adulthood, with ApoB as an optional extra. Ask about both. **Why.** High cholesterol causes no symptoms. A blood test is the only way to find it.
Blood sugar (A1c or fasting glucose)	Recommended from 35 to 70 if you carry extra weight. When results are normal, repeating it every 3 years is a reasonable approach. **Why.** Blood sugar can run high for years without symptoms.
Colorectal cancer	From 45 to 75. Colonoscopy every 10 years or a home stool test every year are both accepted options. **Why.** Screening can find growths before they turn into cancer, when they can be removed.
Mammogram	Every 2 years from 40 to 74. **Why.** A mammogram can find breast cancer before it can be felt.
Cervical cancer	Every 3 to 5 years from 21 to 65, depending on the test used. **Why.** Screening finds cell changes before they become cancer.

SCREENING	WHAT THE GUIDELINES SAY, AND WHY
Menopause symptoms	In November 2025 the FDA began removing the boxed warnings about heart disease, breast cancer and dementia from menopause hormone therapy. The labeling now points to starting within 10 years of menopause or before 60, and a warning about cancer of the uterine lining stays on estrogen taken alone. Whether it suits you depends on your own history, so it is a question for your clinician. This plan takes no position. **Why.** The labeling changed recently, so advice you were given a few years ago may be out of date.
One-time blood tests	Hepatitis C testing is recommended once between 18 and 79, HIV testing at least once between 15 and 65, and the CDC recommends a hepatitis B test at least once for every adult. Many people have never been offered them. **Why.** These infections can go unnoticed for years, and each can be treated.
Vaccines	Vaccine advice has been changing. Ask your doctor or pharmacist which vaccines you are due for, and check the current CDC adult schedule. **Why.** Protection from some vaccines fades, and what is advised changes with age.
Eyes, ears, teeth, skin	A baseline eye exam at 40, then as advised (every 1 to 2 years from 65). Dental visits on the schedule your dentist sets. A skin check if you have many moles, fair skin, past sunburns or a family history of skin cancer. **Why.** Slow changes in sight, hearing, teeth and skin are easy to miss on your own.
Mood	Screening for depression is recommended for all adults, and for anxiety up to age 64. If either has been weighing on you, say so at your visit. **Why.** Depression and anxiety are common and treatable, and they are often missed unless someone asks.

What to measure at home

MEASURE	HOW, AND WHY
Weight	Same scale, on waking, 3 or 4 mornings a week. Track the weekly average only. **Why.** Weight swings from day to day with water and salt. The weekly average shows the trend.
Waist	At the navel, once a month. A waist under half your height is the target. **Why.** It follows fat around the middle, which a scale cannot tell apart from muscle.
Blood pressure	Seated, rested five minutes, two readings, a few mornings a month. Keep a log and take it to your clinician. **Why.** A run of home readings tells your clinician more than one reading in the office.
Resting heart rate	On waking, before you get up. **Why.** It tends to fall as fitness improves.

Sleep	Average hours and wake-time consistency, from a wearable or a notebook. **Why.** Both hours and regular timing matter, and memory is a poor judge of either.
Steps	Your phone already counts them. Look at the weekly average. **Why.** It is the simplest honest measure of how much you move.
Energy and mood	A 1 to 5 rating each evening. **Why.** It is the earliest signal that the plan is working or too much.

TAKE THIS TO YOUR APPOINTMENT

Questions for your clinician

1. I am starting a new exercise and nutrition plan. Is there anything in my history that should change it?
2. Which screenings am I due for at my age?
3. Should I have my cholesterol, blood sugar and blood pressure checked, and is it worth measuring ApoB or Lp(a) once?
4. I am in the age range for perimenopause or menopause. Which symptoms are worth treating, and is hormone therapy an option for me now that the FDA has revised its warnings?

04 Eating

Your targets, your plate, and meals that hit both.

> **Why this is in your plan.** You told us you want to lose body fat. That is decided mostly by how much you eat, so this section starts with a calorie number. The numbers below come from your height, weight, age and activity, and the meals from how you told us you eat.

Your targets

TARGET	AMOUNT	HOW, AND WHY	GRADE
Calories	**1,650 a day**	It is an estimate, from a standard equation for resting energy use and your activity level. Adjust it by what happens over two to three weeks. **Why.** About 15% under your estimated maintenance of 1,950. A moderate deficit, chosen because it can be kept up.	B
Protein	**120 g a day**	About 40 g at each of 3 meals. That is 1.6 g per kg of a reference weight, so the target does not overshoot. **Why.** In strength-training trials, extra protein stopped adding muscle beyond about 1.6 g per kg, and the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans advise 1.2 to 1.6.	A
Fiber	**25 g a day**	Add about 5 g a week and drink more water as you go. **Why.** People eating 25 to 29 g a day had markedly lower rates of heart disease, diabetes and colorectal cancer.	A
Fat and carbohydrate	**About 55 g fat, 170 g carbohydrate**	These two flex. Trade one for the other to suit the meal. **Why.** Hit calories, protein and fiber and the split between fat and carbohydrate matters far less than the internet suggests.	B
Vegetables and fruit	**5 servings a day**	Roughly 3 vegetable and 2 fruit. A serving is a cupped handful. **Why.** About five servings a day is the intake linked to the lowest mortality in long-term cohort data.	B

Adjust by the trend, not the day

Check after two weeks. If your weekly average weight has not moved, take 100 to 150 calories off. If you are losing more than 1.8 lb a week or training feels flat, add 100 to 150 back.

Five rules that do most of the work

Protein at every meal B

Start each meal by choosing the protein, about 40 g.

Why. Protein is the most filling part of a meal, and a daily total is easier to reach in parts than all at once.

Plants at every meal B

Vegetables, fruit, beans or whole grains at every sitting.

Why. This is where your fiber comes from.

Mostly food without an ingredient list B

Cook from whole foods most of the time. Packaged food with a short ingredient list is fine.

Why. In a tightly controlled 20-person trial, people ate about 500 more calories a day on an ultra-processed diet than on a minimally processed one matched for nutrients, and rated both as equally filling.

Drink water, coffee and tea B

Keep sweet drinks for an occasional treat.

Why. Liquid sugar does nothing for hunger, and it is the easiest thing to remove from any diet.

Olive oil, nuts and fish as your default fats A

Make these the fats you reach for first.

Why. A Mediterranean pattern with extra-virgin olive oil or nuts cut major cardiovascular events by about 30% in a large randomized trial.

YOUR PLATE

Half the plate vegetables and fruit, a quarter protein, a quarter whole grains, beans or potatoes, with a thumb of olive oil, nuts or avocado.

Why. A plate you can picture is easier to follow than numbers, on the days you do not want to count.

Upgrades, based on what you told us

NOW	INSTEAD	WHY
A breakfast that is mostly carbohydrate	**A breakfast built around protein, such as "Greek yogurt bowl" (28 g)**	The first meal is where most people fall furthest short on protein.

NOW	INSTEAD	WHY
3 servings of vegetables and fruit a day	**Fruit with breakfast, a vegetable at lunch, two at dinner**	Tying each serving to a meal you already eat is what makes it stick.
Fish less than twice a week	**Salmon, sardines, trout or mackerel twice a week. Tinned counts.**	This is the most reliable way to get omega-3 fats, and it is what heart guidelines recommend.
Regular salt at your own stove and table	**A potassium-enriched "lite" salt. Not with kidney disease or a medicine that raises potassium**	The 2025 U.S. blood pressure guideline supports the swap for home cooks. Several blood pressure and heart medicines raise potassium, so if you are unsure, ask your pharmacist first.

Meals that fit you

Why these. These were chosen for your eating style, your allergies, the foods you told us you will not eat and how much you like to cook. Protein and fiber are typical values for the portions shown.

BREAKFAST	HOW TO BUILD IT	PROTEIN	FIBER
Greek yogurt bowl	1 cup plain Greek yogurt, 1 cup berries, 1 tbsp chia, 1 tbsp ground flax, a small handful of walnuts	28 g	13 g
Eggs and greens	3 eggs scrambled with spinach and tomato, 1 slice seeded whole-grain toast, a piece of fruit	25 g	8 g
Protein overnight oats	1/2 cup oats, 1 scoop protein powder, 1 tbsp chia, milk or soy milk, berries on top. Make it the night before.	32 g	11 g

LUNCH	HOW TO BUILD IT	PROTEIN	FIBER
Big salad with protein	A large bowl of greens, 5 oz chicken, 1/2 cup chickpeas, chopped vegetables, olive oil and vinegar, fruit after	42 g	12 g
Salmon and white bean salad	1 can salmon or tuna, 1/2 cup white beans, greens, olive oil and lemon	38 g	11 g
Grain bowl	3/4 cup cooked quinoa or brown rice, 5 oz chicken, 5 oz baked tofu or 1 cup chickpeas, roasted vegetables, half an avocado	38 g	11 g

DINNER	HOW TO BUILD IT	PROTEIN	FIBER
Stir-fry	5 oz chicken, 5 oz shrimp or 7 oz tofu, a bag of frozen stir-fry vegetables, 3/4 cup brown rice	38 g	9 g

DINNER	HOW TO BUILD IT	PROTEIN	FIBER
Pasta, rebuilt	Lentil or whole-wheat pasta, marinara, lean ground turkey or a cup of lentils, a large side salad	38 g	13 g
Taco night	Fish, chicken or black-bean tacos on corn tortillas with cabbage slaw and avocado	32 g	11 g

SNACKS	HOW TO BUILD IT	PROTEIN	FIBER
Fruit and a handful of nuts	An apple or pear with 1 oz almonds or walnuts	6 g	8 g
Greek yogurt or skyr	A single-serve plain cup, with berries if you like	17 g	2 g
Edamame	1 cup shelled, with salt	18 g	8 g
Hummus and vegetables	1/4 cup hummus with carrots, peppers and cucumber	5 g	6 g

A SAMPLE DAY

Greek yogurt bowl + Big salad with protein + Stir-fry + Edamame

About 126 g protein and 42 g fiber. A full week of meals with a grocery list follows this section. So does a guide to eating out.

Protein, by the serving

Chicken or turkey breast	5 oz cooked	**42 g**
Salmon	5 oz cooked	**34 g**
Canned tuna	1 can, drained	**25 g**
Lean beef	5 oz cooked	**37 g**
Shrimp	5 oz cooked	**30 g**
Eggs	3 large	**19 g**
Greek yogurt, plain	1 cup	**22 g**
Cottage cheese	1 cup	**25 g**

Fiber, by the serving

Lentils or black beans	1 cup cooked	**15 g**
Raspberries or blackberries	1 cup	**8 g**
Chia seeds	2 tbsp	**10 g**
Avocado	1/2 fruit	**5 g**
Pear or apple, skin on	1 medium	**5 g**
Oats	1/2 cup dry	**4 g**
Broccoli or Brussels sprouts	1 cup cooked	**5 g**

Alcohol, caffeine and timing

Alcohol: Hold at 6 or fewer a week. Fewer is better.

Keep at least three alcohol-free days a week and nothing within 3 hours of bed.

Why. The current Dietary Guidelines advise drinking less for better health, and pooled studies find no survival benefit from light drinking. Alcohol also raises the risk of at least seven types of cancer, and the more you drink, the higher the risk.

Caffeine: Last caffeine by 1:30 PM

Up to 400 mg a day (about four 8-oz coffees) is not generally associated with negative effects for most adults.

Why. Caffeine taken even 6 hours before bed measurably cuts sleep, so yours stops 9 hours before your target bedtime.

Timing: A 12-hour overnight break

For example, breakfast after 6:15 AM and the kitchen closed 2 to 3 hours before bed.

Why. It keeps food away from bedtime, and late meals worsen reflux and sleep. Narrower eating windows are optional: in trials they did not beat ordinary calorie control for weight loss.

Notes for your situation

Each note is here because of an answer you gave about your health, your age or how you eat.

Perimenopause and after

Keep protein at the target above, eat calcium-rich food and do not skip strength training.

Why. Falling estrogen speeds the loss of muscle and bone. These are the three levers with the best evidence.

05 A week of meals

Seven days built to your numbers, with one grocery list.

Why this is in your plan. Targets are easy to agree with and hard to shop for, so this week turns your numbers into meals. Each day is built to land close to your targets of 1,650 calories, 120 g of protein and 25 g of fiber. The seven days average about 1,650 calories, 123 g of protein and 36 g of fiber.

Monday

1,650 cal 126 g protein 36 g fiber

Breakfast	Greek yogurt bowl
Lunch	Salmon and white bean salad
Dinner	Stir-fry
Extras	Greek yogurt or skyr, Pumpkin seeds, 2 tbsp

Tuesday

1,660 cal 123 g protein 34 g fiber

Breakfast	Protein overnight oats
Lunch	Leftovers, on purpose
Dinner	Pasta, rebuilt
Extras	Greek yogurt or skyr

Wednesday

1,650 cal 133 g protein 37 g fiber

Breakfast	Tofu scramble
Lunch	Burrito bowl
Dinner	Steak or salmon with two vegetables
Extras	Protein shake, A piece of fruit

Thursday

1,640 cal 116 g protein 37 g fiber

Breakfast	Greek yogurt bowl
Lunch	Turkey and hummus wrap
Dinner	Taco night
Extras	Greek yogurt or skyr, Pumpkin seeds, 2 tbsp

Friday

1,650 cal 119 g protein 39 g fiber

Breakfast	Protein overnight oats
Lunch	Salmon and white bean salad
Dinner	Chicken fajitas
Extras	Apple with peanut butter

Saturday

1,650 cal 124 g protein 29 g fiber

Breakfast	Tofu scramble
Lunch	Leftovers, on purpose
Dinner	Stir-fry
Extras	Cottage cheese and berries

Sunday

1,650 cal 121 g protein 43 g fiber

Breakfast	Greek yogurt bowl
Lunch	Burrito bowl
Dinner	Pasta, rebuilt
Extras	Cottage cheese and berries

MAKE THE WEEK EASIER

Cook the rice or quinoa once, for the whole week. Wash and chop the vegetables the day you shop. Double any dinner and the next lunch is done. Swap any day for another, and repeat the days you like.

One grocery list for the week

Amounts cover one person for the seven days as written. Check your kitchen first. Buy the fish and meat for the end of the week closer to the day, or freeze it.

Produce

Berries, fresh or frozen	**5 1/2 cups**
Salad greens or spinach, 5-oz bags	**3**
Vegetables to roast, such as broccoli, peppers and zucchini	**2 cups**
Vegetables to eat raw, such as carrots and cucumber	**1 cup**
Bell peppers	**4**
Onions	**2**
Avocados	**1**
Apples or pears	**2**
Fruit, your choice	**1 piece**
Lemons or limes	**1**
Cabbage slaw mix	**1 bag**

Meat and fish

Chicken breast or thighs	**2 lb**
Lean ground turkey	**8 oz**
Sliced turkey breast	**4 oz**
Steak, chicken or salmon	**6 oz**
White fish, such as cod or tilapia	**5 oz**

Dairy, eggs and chilled

Plain Greek yogurt	**24 oz**
Plain Greek yogurt or skyr, single cups	**3**
Cottage cheese	**12 oz**
Guacamole	**1 tub**
Milk or soy milk	**1 1/2 cups**
Firm tofu	**14 oz**
Hummus	**1 tub**

Cans, grains and bread

Rolled oats	**1 cup**
Whole-grain wraps	**1**
Corn tortillas	**5**
Brown rice or quinoa, dry	**1 1/2 cups**
Lentil or whole-wheat pasta	**4 oz**
Black beans	**2 cans**
White beans	**1 can**
Marinara sauce	**1 jar**
Canned salmon or tuna	**2 cans**
Salsa	**2 jars**

Frozen

Stir-fry vegetables	**2 bags**
Mixed vegetables	**2 bags**

PANTRY. CHECK YOU HAVE THESE

Olive oil, Chia seeds, Ground flaxseed, Protein powder, Walnuts, Pumpkin seeds, Peanut butter, Tamari or soy sauce.

What goes in each meal, and how to make it

One serving of each. Calories are estimates from typical portions, rounded to the nearest 10, so treat them as a guide. The extras in the week are snacks and small additions, such as a piece of fruit, that bring a day up to your numbers. Fiber runs above your target on these days. If that is more than you eat now, build up to it over a few weeks and drink more water as you go.

BREAKFAST

Greek yogurt bowl — 28 g protein, 410 cal

1 cup plain Greek yogurt, 1 cup berries, 1 tbsp chia, 1 tbsp ground flax, a small handful of walnuts

Protein overnight oats — 32 g protein, 460 cal

1/2 cup oats, 1 scoop protein powder, 1 tbsp chia, milk or soy milk, berries on top. Make it the night before.

Stir everything together in a jar and leave it in the fridge overnight.

Tofu scramble — 30 g protein, 410 cal

7 oz firm tofu with peppers and spinach, 1/2 cup black beans, salsa

Crumble the tofu into a hot pan with the peppers and cook 5 minutes. Add the spinach and beans, and season with salt and cumin.

LUNCH

Salmon and white bean salad — 38 g protein, 440 cal

1 can salmon or tuna, 1/2 cup white beans, greens, olive oil and lemon

Leftovers, on purpose — 36 g protein, 500 cal

Last night's protein, a bag of microwaved frozen vegetables, a cup of rice or a potato

Burrito bowl — 35 g protein, 490 cal

1/2 cup black beans, 1/2 cup brown rice, fajita vegetables, salsa, plus 4 oz chicken

Cook sliced chicken, peppers and onion in a hot pan for 6 to 8 minutes, until the chicken is cooked through. Warm the beans and rice, and build the bowl.

LUNCH, CONTINUED

Turkey and hummus wrap — 34 g protein, 500 cal

Whole-grain wrap, 4 oz turkey, hummus, spinach, raw vegetables and an apple on the side

DINNER

Stir-fry — 38 g protein, 570 cal

5 oz chicken, a bag of frozen stir-fry vegetables, 3/4 cup brown rice

Cook the sliced chicken in a hot pan with a little oil until done, and set it aside. Cook the vegetables 4 to 5 minutes, return the chicken and add a splash of tamari.

Pasta, rebuilt — 38 g protein, 580 cal

Lentil or whole-wheat pasta, marinara, lean ground turkey, a large side salad

Cook the pasta by the packet. Brown the turkey, add the marinara and warm through, then toss together.

Steak or salmon with two vegetables — 42 g protein, 530 cal

6 oz steak, chicken or salmon with two vegetable sides cooked in olive oil

Cook the steak or chicken in a hot pan until done to your liking, with chicken at 165°F inside. Salmon roasts at 425°F in 10 to 12 minutes. Cook the vegetables in olive oil.

Taco night — 32 g protein, 500 cal

Fish tacos on corn tortillas with cabbage slaw and avocado

Season the fish with chili powder and cook it in a hot pan, about 3 minutes a side. Warm the tortillas and fill.

DINNER, CONTINUED

Chicken fajitas 45 g protein, 560 cal

4 oz chicken with peppers and onions on 2 corn tortillas, with salsa, 1/2 cup black beans and a spoonful of guacamole

Cook sliced chicken, peppers and onion in a hot pan for 6 to 8 minutes, until the chicken is cooked through. Warm the tortillas and the beans.

SNACKS

Greek yogurt or skyr 17 g protein, 120 cal

A single-serve plain cup, with berries if you like

Protein shake 25 g protein, 130 cal

1 scoop protein powder in water or milk or soy milk

Apple with peanut butter 4 g protein, 190 cal

1 apple with 1 tbsp peanut butter

Cottage cheese and berries 20 g protein, 170 cal

3/4 cup cottage cheese with a handful of berries

More meals that fit you

Trade any meal in the week for another of the same kind. One with similar calories keeps the day close to your numbers. The grocery list covers the week as written, so add what a swap needs.

BREAKFAST

Smoked salmon toast 26 g protein, 390 cal

2 slices seeded whole-grain toast, 3 oz smoked salmon, a quarter of an avocado mashed, cucumber and tomato

LUNCH

Grain bowl 38 g protein, 620 cal

3/4 cup cooked quinoa or brown rice, 5 oz chicken, roasted vegetables, half an avocado

Roast the chicken and vegetables at 425°F for about 20 minutes with oil and salt, until the chicken reaches 165°F inside. Cook the grain by the packet.

Big salad with protein 42 g protein, 630 cal

A large bowl of greens, 5 oz chicken, 1/2 cup chickpeas, chopped vegetables, olive oil and vinegar, fruit after

Roast the chicken at 425°F for about 20 minutes, until it reaches 165°F inside, or buy it cooked. Dress the salad just before you eat.

DINNER

Burger night, upgraded 35 g protein, 540 cal

Lean beef burger on a whole-grain bun, with a big salad or roasted vegetables where the fries would be

Cook the patty about 4 minutes a side in a hot pan, until cooked through. Toast the bun and pile on lettuce, tomato and onion.

Salmon rice bowl 46 g protein, 590 cal

5 oz cooked salmon over 3/4 cup brown rice with cucumber, shredded carrot, 1/2 cup edamame and a splash of tamari

Roast the salmon at 425°F for 10 to 12 minutes, or use leftover salmon. Build the bowl over warm rice.

SNACKS

Fruit and a handful of nuts 6 g protein, 260 cal

An apple or pear with 1 oz almonds or walnuts

Edamame 18 g protein, 190 cal

1 cup shelled, with salt

06 Eating out

What to order, by kind of place.

Why this is in your plan. You eat out about 4 times a week. That is about one meal in five, so how you order matters as much as how you cook.

Six rules that work anywhere

1. **Choose the protein first.** Find the grilled, baked or roasted protein on the menu and aim for about 40 g. That is a piece a little larger than your palm. **Why.** Protein is the most filling part of a meal, and it is the number that is hardest to make up later in the day.
2. **Add a vegetable.** Ask for a salad, cooked vegetables or fruit in place of fries or chips. Most kitchens will do it. **Why.** It brings the fiber a restaurant meal usually lacks.
3. **Sauces and dressings on the side.** Ask for them separately and add your own. **Why.** A lot of what makes a restaurant meal heavy is in the sauce. On the side, you decide how much goes on.
4. **Drink water, unsweetened tea or coffee.** Order it as soon as you sit down. **Why.** Sweet drinks and refills are the part of a restaurant meal that is easiest to miss.
5. **Decide the portion before you start.** Box half when it arrives, or share a main and add a side salad. **Why.** Many restaurant plates hold two meals, and it is easier to decide before you are eating than during.
6. **Pick one treat.** The bread, the drink or the dessert. **Why.** One of them makes it a night out. All three make it a different meal.

BEFORE YOU GO

- Read the menu online before you leave and choose then. It is easier than choosing at the table.
- Eat your normal meals earlier in the day. Arriving very hungry makes every choice harder.
- If a meal runs over, make the next meal a normal one. Skipping it to make up tends to backfire.

What to order

Why these orders. Each order puts a protein and a vegetable on the plate. Menus and recipes differ from place to place, so use these as patterns and ask when you are unsure.

KIND OF PLACE	ORDER	GO EASY ON
Burgers and fast food	A grilled chicken sandwich with a side salad in place of fries. Or a single burger with all the vegetables, and a side salad or fruit.	Fries, shakes, large sodas and double patties.

KIND OF PLACE	ORDER	GO EASY ON
Mexican	A burrito bowl with chicken or steak, beans, fajita vegetables, salsa and lettuce. Or grilled fish tacos on corn tortillas with slaw.	The chip basket, queso, sour cream and large flour tortillas.
Italian and pizza	Grilled chicken with vegetables or a salad. Or a starter-size pasta in tomato sauce with a salad first.	The bread basket, cream sauces and deep-dish crusts.
Chinese and other stir-fry	Chicken or beef stir-fried with vegetables, with steamed rice on the side. Or tofu and vegetables stir-fried, with steamed rice on the side.	Battered and fried dishes, sweet sauces and fried rice.
Japanese and sushi	Sashimi or two simple rolls with edamame and a salad. Or grilled chicken with vegetables and the sauce on the side.	Tempura, rolls with mayonnaise or cream cheese, and heavy pours of soy sauce.
Indian	Tandoori chicken with a vegetable dish and a small portion of rice. Or chana masala or dal with a vegetable dish and a small portion of rice.	Cream-based curries, fried starters and a full basket of naan.
Mediterranean and Middle Eastern	Grilled chicken or a kebab with salad, hummus and a little rice. Or lentil soup with a large salad.	Fried sides and extra pita.
Steakhouses and grills	A small steak or grilled chicken with two vegetable sides. Or grilled fish with two vegetable sides.	The largest cuts, loaded potatoes, creamed sides and the bread.
Sandwich shops and delis	Turkey or chicken on whole-grain bread with every vegetable they have, and mustard in place of mayonnaise. Or a salad or bowl with a double portion of turkey or chicken.	Footlong sizes, chips, cookies and sweet drinks.
Breakfast and brunch	A vegetable omelet with fruit or whole-grain toast. Or oatmeal with fruit, and yogurt on the side.	Stacks of pancakes or waffles, syrup, pastries and large juices.
Coffee shops	An egg sandwich or egg bites with a piece of fruit. Or a plain yogurt cup with fruit.	Blended drinks, flavored syrups and the pastry case.
Salad and bowl places	Greens and a grain with a double portion of chicken, beans and plenty of vegetables.	Crispy toppings, candied nuts and creamy dressings.
Gas stations and airports	Hard-boiled eggs, a plain yogurt cup, a cheese stick, a pack of nuts and a tuna pouch.	Candy, chips, pastries and energy drinks.

FOR YOU

Drinks. A drink with dinner counts toward your week. Your number is in the Eating section. It is easy to count the drinks at home and forget the ones with dinner.

07 Training

2 strength days, 2 cardio days, and a daily walking habit.

Why this is in your plan. You told us you can train 4 days a week for about 30 minutes. So your week has 2 strength days and 2 cardio days. Strength training is how you keep muscle and bone, and cardio is how you keep your heart and lungs fit. You need both, and neither replaces the other.

Break up sitting. Stand and move for 2 to 5 minutes every half hour to hour. In a controlled trial, five minutes of walking every half hour lowered both blood sugar and blood pressure.

Your week

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Strength A 30 min	**Easy brisk or incline walking** 30 min	Steps and mobility only	**Strength B** 30 min	Steps and mobility only	**Pick-ups (from phase 2)** 30 min	Easy day: a long walk or nothing at all

Every day: 8,500 steps and five minutes of mobility. Swap days to fit your life, but keep a day between strength sessions that train the same muscles, so they have time to recover.

Your strength sessions

Why these exercises. Each session covers the main movements: legs and hips, a push, a pull and your trunk. The exercises were picked for the equipment you told us you have (dumbbells). The reason for each one is in “How to do each exercise”.

Warm-up: Five minutes of easy movement, then one or two lighter sets of your first two lifts. A rehearsal at a light weight makes the first working set smoother and safer. Sets and reps are shown for each phase of the 90 days.

Strength A Squat, push, pull

EXERCISE	PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3	HOW
Goblet squat	2 × 10–15	3 × 8–12	3 × 6–10	Hold the weight at your chest and sit between your heels.
Dumbbell bench or floor press	2 × 10–15	3 × 8–12	3 × 6–10	Palms facing each other if your shoulders are touchy. Lower slowly.
One-arm dumbbell row	2 × 10–15	3 × 10–12	3 × 8–12	Hand and knee on a bench. Pull your elbow to your hip.
Dead bug	2 × 6 a side	2 × 8 a side	3 × 8 a side	Low back pressed into the floor. Extend the opposite arm and leg slowly.
Farmer carry	2 × 20–30 s	3 × 30–40 s	3 × 40–60 s	Heavy weight in each hand, tall posture, walk.

Strength B Hinge, press, pull

EXERCISE	PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3	HOW
Hip thrust	2 × 10–15	3 × 8–12	3 × 6–10	Shoulders on a bench or couch, drive through your heels and pause at the top. Add a dumbbell on your hips when it gets easy.
Dumbbell overhead press	2 × 10–15	3 × 8–12	3 × 6–10	Ribs down, press straight up, and finish with your arms by your ears.
Prone Y-raise	2 × 10–15	3 × 10–12	3 × 8–12	Face down, thumbs up, raise your arms into a Y.
Split squat	2 × 10–15	3 × 10–12	3 × 8–12	Long stance, drop the back knee straight down. Hold dumbbells when ready.
Side plank	2 × 20–30 s	3 × 30–40 s	3 × 40–60 s	Knees bent to start. Hips high and stacked.

How to progress

- Add reps before you add weight.
  Why. Reps are the smaller step, so your joints and your form keep up.
- When every set reaches the top of the rep range, go up by the smallest increment available.
  Why. Muscle adapts when the work keeps getting a little harder, and small jumps are the ones you can repeat.
- If a session feels terrible, do the first set of everything and go home.
  Why. Showing up is the habit. One set keeps it alive.

- Take every fifth week lighter: same exercises, half the sets.

  Why. A planned easy week lets your body catch up before small aches turn into injuries.

> **The pain rule**
>
> Muscle effort and next-day soreness are expected. Sharp pain, joint pain or anything that lingers past 48 hours is not: stop that exercise and get it looked at. Training through joint pain is how a small problem becomes a long layoff.

Cardio

Easy effort: 105 to 122 beats a minute

You can speak in full sentences but would rather not sing. This is where most of your minutes go. Use brisk or incline walking.

Why. Easy minutes build your aerobic base, and you can recover from them day after day.

Pick-ups, on a steep treadmill incline

Phase 1: None yet. Build the walking base first. Phase 2: 6 rounds: 1 minute brisk, 2 minutes easy. Once a week. Phase 3: 4 rounds: 3 minutes hard, 3 minutes easy. Once a week. Hard means breathing heavily but in control. The full 4 × 4 arrives in your next edition, once this feels routine.

Why. You told us you are new to training. Short harder efforts raise fitness in less time than easy work alone, and starting gently lets your legs and lungs get used to them.

Steps: 8,500 a day

You are near 4,000. Add about 1,000 a day each week until you arrive.

Why. The mortality benefit of walking climbs steeply and levels off around 8,000 to 10,000 steps a day for your age group.

On days with no workout: three hard minutes C

Take the stairs fast, walk hard uphill or carry the shopping briskly enough to be short of breath, for a minute or two, about three times a day.

Why. In a study of 25,241 adults who did no formal exercise, those averaging three such bursts a day were 38 to 40 percent less likely to die over the next seven years than those who did none. That is a link, not proof of cause, so treat it as a bonus on top of the plan.

PHASE	STRENGTH	CARDIO	WHY
Phase 1: Install Weeks 1–4	Learn the movements. Finish every set knowing you had 3 or 4 more reps in you.	90 minutes a week of easy effort, in any chunks you like.	Light loads let you learn each movement, and give your joints and tendons time to get used to the work.

PHASE	STRENGTH	CARDIO	WHY
Phase 2: Build Weeks 5–8	Add a third set. When you reach the top of the rep range on every set, add the smallest weight available.	120 minutes a week, one session as intervals.	The movements are familiar now, so more sets and a little more weight are what keep you improving.
Phase 3: Push Weeks 9–12	Heavier, fewer reps on the first two lifts of each session. Stop 1 or 2 reps short of failure.	150 minutes or more a week, one session as intervals.	Heavier sets build strength, and you have eight weeks of practice behind you. 150 minutes is the weekly amount the guidelines advise.

Daily mobility, five minutes

- Cat-cow, 8 slow reps
- Hip-flexor stretch, 30 seconds each side
- Open-book rotation, 6 each side
- Deep squat hold or ankle rocks, 30 seconds
- Doorway chest stretch, 30 seconds

Why. Five minutes a day keeps your hips, spine and shoulders moving through their full range, which the strength exercises need.

Joint care: the injuries that derail training after 40

- Achilles and calf: slow calf raises are in your plan for this reason.
- Shoulders: pull as much as you push.
- Low back: hinge at the hips and brace before you lift.
- Raise volume or weight by small steps. Most injuries are a too-much-too-soon problem.

Why. You reported no joint trouble, and at 47 the aim is to keep it that way. An injury costs more training than any missed session.

Baseline tests

Do these in week one and write the results on the tracking page. Repeat at days 30, 60 and 90.

Why. You cannot see fitness change from week to week. These numbers show it, and they are yours, not an average.

30-second chair stand	Arms crossed, count full stands from a standard chair in 30 seconds. **Why.** It measures leg strength, the kind you use to get out of a chair and climb stairs.
Push-ups	As many good reps as you can, from the floor or from a bench. Use the same setup when you retest. **Why.** It measures upper-body strength with no equipment.
One-mile walk	Time a flat mile at the fastest pace you can hold. Note your heart rate at the end. **Why.** It measures aerobic fitness. As that improves, the mile gets faster or your heart rate at the end gets lower.
Resting heart rate	On waking, before coffee, three mornings. Record the average. **Why.** It tends to fall as fitness improves.

08 How to do each exercise

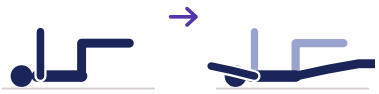
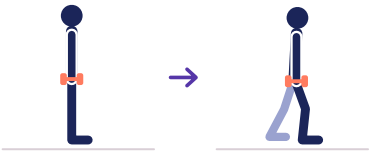
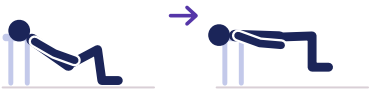
Why each exercise is in your plan, how to do it, what to watch for and a diagram.

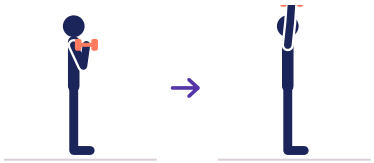
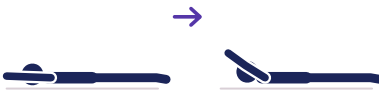
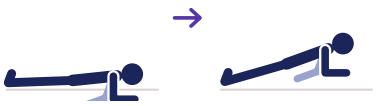
> **Why this is in your plan.** Good form is what lets you add weight safely. These are the exact exercises in your sessions. Each one opens with what it trains and why it is in your plan.

These are the fuller steps for the exercises in your training section, in the order you meet them. Read an exercise through before your first session with it, and do a light practice set first. “Video search” under each diagram opens a search for that exercise. Choose a video from a physical therapist or a certified coach.

Start lighter than you think you need, and add load only when every repetition looks the same. Stop any exercise that causes sharp pain, and ask a clinician or a qualified trainer before you try it again.

EXERCISE	WHY IT IS HERE, AND HOW TO DO IT	START AND FINISH
Goblet squat	**Why it is here.** It trains your thighs and hips, and holding the weight at your chest teaches you to stay upright. Chosen to fit the equipment you have. **Set up.** Hold one dumbbell or kettlebell against your chest with both hands, elbows pointing down. Stand with feet a little wider than your hips. **Move.** Sit down between your heels with your chest tall until your elbows reach the inside of your knees. Stand up by pushing the floor away. **Watch for.** Heels lifting, or the weight drifting away from your chest.	 Video search
Dumbbell bench or floor press	**Why it is here.** It trains your chest, shoulders and the backs of your arms. Dumbbells let each arm find its own path. Chosen to fit the equipment you have. **Set up.** Lie on a bench or the floor with a dumbbell in each hand above your chest and your feet flat. **Move.** Lower the weights until your upper arms are about level with your body, or touch the floor. Press back up. **Watch for.** Letting the weights drift toward your face, or dropping them fast.	 Video search

EXERCISE	WHY IT IS HERE, AND HOW TO DO IT	START AND FINISH
One-arm dumbbell row	**Why it is here.** It trains your upper back and the fronts of your arms, one side at a time, with the bench taking your weight. **Set up.** Put one hand and the same-side knee on a bench, or lean a hand on a sturdy surface. Keep your back flat and let the weight hang from the other arm. **Move.** Pull the weight toward your hip with your elbow close to your side. Lower until your arm is straight. **Watch for.** Twisting your body open, or yanking the weight up.	 Video search
Dead bug	**Why it is here.** It trains your trunk to stay still while your arms and legs move, with your back resting on the floor. **Set up.** Lie on your back with your arms straight up and your knees bent above your hips. Press your lower back gently into the floor. **Move.** Lower one arm and the opposite leg toward the floor, then return. Change sides. **Watch for.** Your lower back lifting off the floor. Shorten the reach if it does.	 Video search
Farmer carry	**Why it is here.** It trains your grip, shoulders and trunk at once. It is carrying the shopping, made heavier. **Set up.** Pick up a heavy weight in each hand with a flat back. Stand tall with your shoulders back. **Move.** Walk with short, steady steps for the set distance or time. Set the weights down with a flat back. **Watch for.** Leaning to one side, or shrugging.	 Video search
Hip thrust	**Why it is here.** It trains your glutes directly, with your back supported. Chosen to fit the equipment you have. **Set up.** Sit on the floor with your shoulder blades against a bench or couch, feet flat and knees bent. **Move.** Drive through your heels and lift your hips until your body is level from shoulders to knees. Pause for a second, then lower. **Watch for.** Arching your lower back at the top. Keep your ribs down and your chin tucked.	 Video search

EXERCISE	WHY IT IS HERE, AND HOW TO DO IT	START AND FINISH
Dumbbell overhead press	**Why it is here.** It trains your shoulders and the backs of your arms. It is the strength you use to put something on a high shelf. **Set up.** Stand or sit tall with a weight in each hand at shoulder height, palms facing forward or toward each other. **Move.** Press straight up until your arms are by your ears. Lower to your shoulders under control. **Watch for.** Leaning back and arching your lower back. Keep your ribs down and squeeze your glutes.	 Video search
Prone Y-raise	**Why it is here.** It trains the muscles below your shoulder blades. It stands in for a pulldown when you have nothing to pull on. Chosen to fit the equipment you have. **Set up.** Lie face down with your arms overhead in a Y and your thumbs up. **Move.** Lift your arms a few inches by squeezing your shoulder blades down and back. Pause and lower. **Watch for.** Lifting your chest, or shrugging toward your ears. No weight is needed.	 Video search
Split squat	**Why it is here.** It trains one leg at a time, which builds balance and evens out a weaker side. **Set up.** Take a long step forward and keep both feet where they are, with your back heel lifted. **Move.** Lower straight down until your back knee is just above the floor. Push up through the front foot. Finish one side before you change. **Watch for.** Leaning forward, or the front heel lifting.	 Video search
Side plank	**Why it is here.** It trains the muscles at the sides of your trunk, which keep you steady when you carry something in one hand. Chosen to fit the equipment you have. **Set up.** Lie on one side with your elbow under your shoulder and your legs straight and stacked. **Move.** Lift your hips until your body is one straight line. Hold, then change sides. **Watch for.** Hips dropping or rolling forward. Bend your knees to make it easier.	 Video search

09 Sleep and light

Up at 6:15 AM. In bed by 10:15 PM. Everything else serves those two times.

> **Why this is in your plan.** You told us you sleep about 6.5 hours a night. Sleep is where you recover from training, and short sleep makes every other change in this plan harder. The two times above are worked back from the wake time you gave us.

Up at 6:15 AM, seven days a week B

Keep weekends within an hour.

Why. A fixed wake time is the anchor for your body clock. In a large cohort, how regular sleep was predicted mortality better than how long it was.

In bed by 10:15 PM B

You are going to bed around 11:15 PM. Move it 15 minutes earlier each week until you get there.

Why. Your wake time is fixed at 6:15 AM, so bedtime decides how much sleep you get. This one gives you eight hours in bed for seven or more asleep.

Daylight within an hour of waking B

Aim for about ten minutes outside on a bright day, longer when it is overcast.

Why. Morning light sets your body clock for the day. In a study of 88,000 people, brighter days and darker nights went with lower death rates.

Last caffeine by 1:30 PM A

Decaf or herbal tea after that. Tea, cola and energy drinks count too.

Why. In a controlled trial, a large dose of caffeine (400 mg, about four cups of coffee) taken six hours before bed still cut sleep by more than an hour. A pooled analysis of trials suggests stopping coffee about nine hours before bed.

Lights down at 9:15 PM, screens off at 9:45 PM C

Dim, warm light for the last hour. Charge your phone outside the bedroom.

Why. Bright light late in the evening tells your body clock it is still day. The phone is also the most common reason bedtime drifts later.

Cool, dark, quiet C

About 65 to 68 degrees F (18 to 20 C), blackout shades or a sleep mask, and earplugs or steady background noise if you need them.

Why. Your body cools as you fall asleep, and a cool room helps it along. Light and noise cause brief wakings you may not remember.

Nothing heavy in the last 3 hours B

No large meals, no alcohol, no hard training.

Why. Alcohol helps you fall asleep and then breaks the second half of the night. A full stomach, or a body still wound up from training, makes it harder to settle.

Empty your head on paper C

Five minutes before bed, write tomorrow's to-do list.

Why. In a sleep-lab trial, young adults who spent five minutes writing tomorrow's to-do list fell asleep faster than those who wrote about what they had already done.

When it is not working

Naps

Up to 20 or 30 minutes, before 3 PM.

Why. Longer or later naps borrow from the night.

10 Mind and stress

Small daily practices with real trial evidence behind them.

> **Why this is in your plan.** You rated your stress 4 out of 5 and have no regular practice yet. Stress that stays high tends to spill into sleep and eating. These practices are small on purpose, so that they survive a busy week.

5 minutes of meditation a day A

Sit, breathe, and bring your attention back each time it wanders. That return is the exercise. Free options: Healthy Minds Program, UCLA Mindful, Insight Timer.

Why. Across 47 trials, mindfulness programs produced small but consistent improvements in anxiety, depression and pain.

Cyclic sighing for fast relief B

Two inhales through the nose, the second a short top-up, then a long slow exhale through the mouth. Three breaths work in the moment.

Why. Five minutes a day improved mood more than mindfulness meditation in a month-long randomized trial.

Three good things, written down B

Two minutes at night. Be specific: “the walk with Sam after dinner” rather than “family”.

Why. In a randomized trial, people who wrote down three good things each night for a week were happier and less low for up to six months, mostly those who kept the habit.

Two hours a week outdoors B

Parks, woods or by water. Your walks count.

Why. People who spent at least 120 minutes a week in nature reported better health and wellbeing.

Two real conversations a week B

In person or by voice, with people who matter to you.

Why. Strong relationships were associated with a 50% greater likelihood of survival across 148 studies, an effect on the scale of quitting smoking.

No phone for the first and last 30 minutes of the day C

Light, water and movement first. News and email can wait.

Why. It keeps the first and last half hour of your day for you, not for whatever is on the phone.

When habits are not enough

Low mood or worry that lasts more than two weeks, or that gets in the way of work, sleep or relationships, deserves a professional, the same way a persistent physical symptom would. In trials, exercise is an effective treatment for depression, and so are therapy and medication. If you ever have thoughts of harming yourself: call or text 988 (988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline).

11 Water, heat and cold

How much to drink, and what sauna and cold exposure are worth.

> **Why this is in your plan.** You told us you drink about 4 glasses of water a day. Most people need no special water or gadget, only enough of the ordinary kind. Sauna and cold are here because people ask, and this page says what each is worth.

Hydration

76 oz (about 10 cups) of fluids a day B

About 92 oz (about 12 cups) on training days, more in heat. Water, coffee, tea and milk all count.

Why. The number follows the National Academies' adequate intake for total fluids, and it is well above what you drink now.

Front-load the day C

A large glass on waking, one with each meal, one mid-morning and one mid-afternoon. Taper after 8:15 PM.

Why. Tying each glass to something you already do is what makes the total happen. Tapering in the evening is so you are not up at night.

Check the color C

Pale yellow means you are on track. Dark means drink. Completely clear all day means you can ease off.

Why. The color of your urine is a free, rough check, and it allows for heat and sweat in a way a fixed number cannot.

Around exercise B

Drink to thirst. For sessions over an hour, or in real heat, add 16 to 24 oz (0.5 to 0.7 L) per hour and some salt.

Why. Thirst is a good enough guide for most sessions. Long or hot ones are where sweat gets ahead of it, and you lose salt as well as water.

Skip the upgrades B

Electrolyte mixes are for long, sweaty sessions, not desk days. For taste, a basic certified filter is plenty. Home and habits covers lead, wells and PFAS.

Why. Alkaline, hydrogen and "structured" water have no outcome evidence.

Sauna and cold

Sauna B

Optional, and only worth it if you have easy access. Start with 10 to 15 minutes at 160 to 190 F (70 to 90 C), two or three times a week, and build toward 20 minutes.

Why. In a 20-year study of Finnish men, four to seven sessions a week went with about 40% lower death rates than one. That is association, not proof, but the signal is strong and consistent.

Sauna safety B

Drink water before and after. No alcohol. Leave if you feel light-headed. Check with your clinician first if you have low blood pressure or take blood-pressure medication.

Why. Heat lowers blood pressure and you lose fluid in sweat. That is where the risks come from.

Cold C

A cold finish to your shower is a reasonable alertness tool. Do not plunge right after strength training.

Why. Evidence for health benefits is thin, so this is optional. In a 12-week trial, cold plunges straight after lifting blunted muscle and strength gains.

12 Supplements

Keep, add, skip. Few in number, each with a job.

> **Why this is in your plan.** You told us you take one product already. Each gets a verdict below. Most supplements do nothing useful, and a few do harm. Each one on your list had to earn its place twice: by the evidence, and by something in your answers that says it may be worth it for you. Each line says which answer put it there.

Four rules before you buy anything

- Food first. A supplement fills a specific gap; it does not fix a diet.
- Buy products with a USP Verified, NSF Certified or Informed Choice seal. Supplements are not tested before sale.
- Start one new product at a time, two weeks apart, so you can tell what does what.
- Tell your clinician and pharmacist everything you take, and stop supplements two weeks before surgery unless told otherwise. Some interact with medicines, and some affect bleeding.

Your list, and why each one is on it

SUPPLEMENT	VERDICT	GRADE	WHY IT IS HERE, WHAT WE KNOW, DOSE AND CAUTIONS
Creatine monohydrate	ADD	A	**Why it is on your list.** Your plan includes strength training, and creatine only does its work alongside it. **What we know.** The most-studied sports supplement there is. With strength training it adds strength and lean mass. **Dose.** 3 to 5 g a day, any time, every day. No loading phase. **Take care.** Some people hold a pound or two of extra water in muscle at first. Tell your clinician you take it before any blood test of kidney function.
Omega-3 (EPA + DHA)	OPTIONAL	C	**Why it is on your list.** You told us you eat fish about once a week, and the usual advice is twice. **What we know.** Eating fish twice a week is the usual advice. If that will not happen, this is an optional substitute: in a trial of nearly 26,000 adults, 1 g a day did not lower rates of heart disease or cancer overall. **Dose.** About 1 g of combined EPA and DHA a day, with a meal. **Take care.** More is not better. Fish oil slightly raised the risk of atrial fibrillation in trials, and the risk grew with the dose. Check with your prescriber if you take a blood thinner.

SUPPLEMENT	VERDICT	GRADE	WHY IT IS HERE, WHAT WE KNOW, DOSE AND CAUTIONS
Psyllium husk	CONSIDER	A	**Why it is on your list.** You told us you eat about 3 servings of vegetables and fruit a day, so your fiber is likely to be short of your 25 g target for now. **What we know.** A bridge while your food fiber climbs. It is the best-studied fiber supplement: across 28 trials, about 10 g a day lowered LDL cholesterol by roughly 13 mg/dL. **Dose.** Start with 1 teaspoon (about 5 g) in a full glass of water once a day. Build to twice a day over two weeks. **Take care.** Always with a full glass of water. Take it 2 hours away from medications.
Protein powder (whey)	CONSIDER	B	**Why it is on your list.** You told us you only sometimes get a real serving of protein at meals, and your target is 120 g a day. **What we know.** It is food, not a supplement in the usual sense, and it is the easiest way to close a protein gap at breakfast. **Dose.** One scoop (20 to 25 g) wherever a meal falls short of 40 g. **Take care.** Independent testing has found lead in many protein powders, plant-based ones especially. Choose one whose maker publishes independent tests for contaminants.
Collagen peptides	OPTIONAL	C	**Why it is on your list.** You told us lines and skin texture are something you would like to improve. **What we know.** Small, mostly industry-funded trials show modest improvements in skin elasticity and joint comfort. Reasonable to try for three months. **Dose.** 10 g a day, in coffee or a smoothie. **Take care.** It is an incomplete protein and does not count toward your daily target.

Add means worth starting. Keep means you already take it and can carry on. Consider means reasonable, and your call. Optional means fine to skip.

What you already take

PRODUCT	VERDICT	WHY
Multivitamin	KEEP	A basic once-daily is fine. Avoid megadose formulas.

Skip these

PRODUCT	WHY WE LEAVE IT OUT
Testosterone boosters and fat burners	No meaningful effect in trials, and a leading cause of supplement-related liver injury.
Detox teas, cleanses and “liver support”	Your liver and kidneys do this already. Many of these products are laxatives.
Vitamin E and beta-carotene supplements	Trials found no benefit, and beta-carotene raised lung cancer risk in people who smoke. The US Preventive Services Task Force recommends against both for preventing heart disease or cancer.
NMN, NR and resveratrol	Interesting in mice. No human trial shows they improve health or lifespan, and pooled NMN trials found no significant benefit for blood sugar or cholesterol.
High-dose vitamin D	More is not better. In a trial of nearly 26,000 adults, 2,000 IU a day did not lower rates of cancer, heart disease or fractures. Keep your total at or under 4,000 IU a day unless your clinician directs otherwise.
Urolithin A, nattokinase and sulforaphane pills	Early evidence only. A urolithin A trial missed both of its main targets, three years of nattokinase did not slow artery-wall thickening, and there is little evidence that sulforaphane pills add anything to eating broccoli.
Greens powders as a vegetable replacement	They do not carry the fiber or the evidence that vegetables do.
BCAAs	Redundant once you eat enough protein.
IV vitamin drips	Expensive, invasive, and no better than a glass of water for people who can eat and drink.
Anything sold as a “proprietary blend”	You cannot check the dose of anything in it.

13 Skin

Three products, used every day, beat twelve used occasionally.

> **Why this is in your plan.** You told us your skin is normal, that you would like to improve lines and texture, and that you do not wear sunscreen every day. The products below were picked for that. Sun is the largest cause of skin aging you can act on, and the main cause of skin cancer.

Your routine

MORNING

1. Cleanse: water in the morning.

   Why. A light start is enough in the morning. Washing too hard strips the oils that keep skin comfortable.

2. Moisturize with a plain ceramide lotion.

   Why. It holds water in the outer layer of your skin, which keeps it from drying and cracking.

3. Sunscreen: a broad-spectrum SPF 30 or higher, on face, neck, ears and the backs of your hands. Every day, all year.

   Why. In a four-and-a-half-year randomized trial, adults who applied sunscreen every day showed no measurable increase in skin aging. Regular use also lowered later melanoma.

NIGHT

1. Cleanse: a gentle cleanser at night.

   Why. It takes off the sunscreen, oil and dirt of the day, so the next step can reach your skin.

2. Retinoid: adapalene 0.1% gel (sold over the counter) or a retinol serum. A pea-sized amount, two nights a week for two weeks, then every other night, then nightly as your skin allows.

   Why. Alongside sunscreen, a retinoid is the product with good trial evidence for lines and texture. Starting slowly limits the dryness and peeling that make people give up.

3. Moisturize with a plain ceramide lotion.

   Why. It offsets the dryness a retinoid can cause.

For what you want to improve

Lines and texture

Sunscreen every morning and a retinoid at night. Everything else is optional.

Why. You told us lines and texture are what you would like to improve. These are the two products with good trial evidence.

Body and sun

- Moisturize arms, legs and hands after showering, especially in winter and after 50.
  Why. Skin makes less of its own oil with age, and dry indoor air takes more.
- Sunscreen on any skin that will see more than a few minutes of midday sun. Reapply every two hours outdoors.
  Why. Sunscreen wears off with sweat, water and time.
- Seek shade and wear a hat when the sun is strongest, roughly 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in summer.
  Why. Shade and clothing give steady protection that does not wear off.
- Look over your skin regularly. See a dermatologist about any spot that looks different from the others, or that changes, itches or bleeds.
  Why. Skin cancer is easier to treat when it is found early, and you are the person most likely to notice a change.

Not worth your money, and why

- Ten-step routines. Three products, used daily, outperform twelve used occasionally.
- Collagen creams. The molecule is too large to get through skin.
- Tanning beds. Their UV light is a known cause of skin cancer.
- “Medical-grade” as a selling point. It is a marketing term, not a standard.

14 Teeth and gums

Four minutes a day, and a dentist who knows your name.

> **Why this is in your plan.** You told us you brush twice a day and clean between your teeth 2 days a week. Decay and gum disease build without pain and cost a lot to fix. A few minutes a day is the best-proven way to head them off.

Brush for two minutes, twice a day, with fluoride toothpaste A

A powered brush is worth considering. Angle the bristles into the gumline and let the brush do the work.

Why. Brushing with fluoride toothpaste is one of the best-proven ways to prevent cavities. Across trials, powered brushes removed 21% more plaque and reduced gum inflammation 11% more than manual ones after three months.

Clean between your teeth every night B

Floss, or interdental brushes where they fit, before you brush.

Why. A brush cannot reach between teeth. Trials suggest cleaning there reduces gum inflammation more than brushing alone, though they are small and short.

Spit, do not rinse B

If you use mouthwash, use it at a different time of day.

Why. Rinsing washes the fluoride away. Leaving the film of toothpaste on your teeth keeps it working.

Keep sugar to mealtimes B

Limit sugary drinks and snacks between meals.

Why. Sipping a sweet drink through the afternoon keeps teeth bathed in sugar, and the bacteria that cause decay feed on it.

See your dentist on the schedule they set B

There is no single right interval. It depends on your risk. Replace your toothbrush every three to four months, or sooner if the bristles fray.

Why. Cavities and gum disease are painless until they are expensive. An exam finds them early.

15 Home and habits

The unglamorous list that quietly moves risk.

> **Why this is in your plan.** You told us your tap water comes from a city or town supply and your home was built before 1986, and the water advice below follows from that. Some risks come from your air, your water, your car and your ears, not from food or exercise. Each item here is cheap, and most are done once.

Around the house

Test your home for radon

Test kits are inexpensive. The EPA recommends testing all homes below the third floor and fixing levels at or above 4 pCi/L.

Why. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer, and you cannot see or smell it.

Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms

One on every level and outside sleeping areas. Test them when the clocks change.

Why. Carbon monoxide has no smell, and a fire at night can fill a home with smoke before anyone wakes. An alarm is the only warning.

Seat belt on, phone down

Every trip, every seat. Put the phone out of reach before you start the car.

Why. Road crashes are a leading cause of death through middle age. This is the cheapest risk reduction on the page.

Protect your hearing

Earplugs or earmuffs for mowers, power tools and concerts.

Why. Loud noise damages hearing for good, and the damage adds up.

Cleaner indoor air

Run the range hood when you cook. A HEPA filter in the bedroom is worth it during wildfire smoke or if you have allergies.

Why. Cooking puts smoke and fine particles into the air indoors. Air pollution is one of the fourteen brain risks listed below.

Keep learning something hard

A language, an instrument, a trade skill.

Why. Mental challenge, like physical challenge, appears to build reserve.

Your drinking water

Read your water report B

Your water utility has to send its customers a water-quality report every year by July 1. Search for the utility's name and "consumer confidence report", or use the "Find your local CCR" page on epa.gov. If you rent, ask your landlord for it.

Why. You told us your tap water comes from a city or town supply. The report lists what was found in it and how that compares with the legal limits, so you can act on facts.

Check for lead in older plumbing B

Ask your water utility or a licensed plumber whether the pipe from the street to your home is lead, and ask about a lead test. Until you know, drink and cook with cold water only, run the tap first when water has sat for hours, and clean the faucet screen now and then. Boiling does not remove lead.

Why. You told us your home was built before 1986. Lead pipes are more likely in homes built before 1986, and older faucets and solder can add lead too. The EPA's health goal for lead in drinking water is zero.

PFAS, the "forever chemicals" B

Look for PFOA and PFOS in your water report. Utilities must publish their results from 2027 and meet the limit by 2029, a date the EPA proposed in 2026 to extend to 2031 for systems that ask.

Why. There is now a national limit for the two best-studied PFAS in public water, 4 parts per trillion each. Your utility's numbers tell you whether a filter is worth buying.

Match any filter to the problem B

For lead, choose one certified to remove lead. For PFAS, the EPA says to look for certification to NSF/ANSI 53 or NSF/ANSI 58 with a PFAS claim on the label. It noted in 2024 that those standards did not yet promise to reach the new federal limit. Change cartridges on schedule. If your report or test is clean, a basic filter for taste is all you need.

Why. A filter is certified for particular contaminants, not for everything, and an expired cartridge works less well.

Plastics and food

Tiny plastic particles have been found in human arteries. In a 2024 study of 257 people having artery surgery, those with plastic in the plaque were about four and a half times as likely to have a heart attack, a stroke or to die over the next three years. The authors wrote that the result does not prove the plastic was the cause, and a 2022 World Health Organization review found too little evidence to judge the risk. So these are cheap precautions, not proven protection.

Do not heat food in plastic C

Move food to glass or ceramic before it goes in the microwave.

Why. In lab tests of plastic food containers, three minutes in a microwave released as many as 2 billion tiny particles from each square centimeter of plastic.

Carry tap water in glass or steel C

Filter your tap water if your report or test calls for it.

Why. A study of three bottled-water brands counted about 240,000 plastic particles in a liter, most of them too small for earlier methods to see. The researchers say tap water has been shown to carry far fewer.

Fourteen things that protect your brain

A Lancet commission estimates that close to half of dementia cases are linked to fourteen risk factors that can be changed. Here is where each one lives in this protocol.

Physical inactivity	Training
High blood pressure	Prevention, Eating
High LDL cholesterol	Prevention, Eating
Diabetes	Prevention, Eating, Training
Excess weight	Eating, Training
Smoking	Prevention
Excess alcohol	Eating
Depression	Mind
Social isolation	Mind
Hearing loss	Home and habits
Vision loss	Prevention
Head injury	Home and habits
Air pollution	Home and habits
Less education	Home and habits

A two-year trial of the whole package B

In the U.S. POINTER trial, 2,111 adults aged 60 to 79 at higher risk of decline took up exercise, a MIND-style diet, mental and social challenge and regular health checks. Thinking scores improved in both groups, and a little more in the group with structured coaching than in the group that guided itself. The trial measured test scores, not dementia, and had no group that changed nothing.

Why. It is the closest thing there is to a test of these habits together, so it is worth knowing what it did and did not show.

Blood pressure is a brain habit too B

Know your numbers and ask your clinician what your target should be.

Why. The 2025 U.S. blood pressure guideline recommends a top number under 130 for adults with high blood pressure, in part to protect against memory loss and dementia.

16 What we left out

Popular, heavily marketed, and not in your protocol on purpose.

> **Why this is in your plan.** You will be sold these things. Each one is here so that you know it was looked at, and why it did not earn a place. Leaving things out is how the plan stays short enough to follow.

LEFT OUT	WHY
Extended water fasts	Real risks to muscle, electrolytes and heart rhythm for benefits that have not been shown in people.
Detoxes and cleanses	No toxin has ever been identified that they remove.
Continuous glucose monitors without diabetes	Normal blood sugar rises after meals. Tracking it in healthy people has not been shown to improve health.
Hydrogen, alkaline and structured water	No outcome evidence.
PEMF mats, grounding sheets and red-light beds	Marketing has run far ahead of human outcome data.
Hormones or peptides bought online	These are prescription drugs with real risks. If you think you need one, that is a conversation with a physician, with blood work.
Cutting out whole food groups without a medical reason	It rarely lasts, and what lasts is what works.
Cutting out seed oils	Canola, soybean, sunflower and similar oils are rich in polyunsaturated fat, which the body needs and which helps lower LDL cholesterol. The American Heart Association supports these fats as part of a healthy diet. The useful part of the advice is eating less ultra-processed food.
Apple cider vinegar for weight loss	The 2024 trial behind most of the headlines was retracted by its journal in September 2025 over data and analyses that could not be relied on. Vinegar belongs on a salad.
“Adrenal fatigue” tests and supplements	No endocrinology society recognizes it, and a review of 58 studies found nothing to show it is a real condition. Tiredness that does not lift is real and worth a proper look, so take it to a clinician, not to the supplement aisle.
Chasing a perfect day	The plan is built to work at about 80% compliance. Missing once is noise. Missing twice is the start of a new habit, so never miss twice.

17 Your day, hour by hour

One good day, built from your wake time. Repeat it.

Why this is in your plan. A list of habits does not say when to do them. This page puts every daily habit from the sections before it into one day, counted from your 6:15 AM wake time, with training in the morning as you asked. Each line gives its reason.

6:15 AM	**Wake**	Same time every day. A large glass of water before anything else. **Why.** A fixed wake time anchors your body clock, and every other time on this page is counted from it.
6:25 AM	**Teeth and sunscreen**	Brush for two minutes, spit and do not rinse. Moisturizer, then SPF 30 on face, neck and hands. **Why.** Tied to getting up, so neither one gets skipped.
6:35 AM	**Daylight**	Ten minutes outside, longer if it is overcast. Do your 5 minutes of breathing or meditation out there if you can. **Why.** Morning light sets your body clock for the day.
6:55 AM	**Train**	30 minutes: today's session from your training plan. On other days, an easy walk. **Why.** You told us the morning is your best time to train. Done first, it cannot be crowded out by the day.
7:45 AM	**Breakfast**	40 g protein and something with fiber. Take with it: Creatine monohydrate. **Why.** The first meal is where most people fall furthest short on protein.
9:45 AM	**Move and drink**	Stand up and move for a few minutes every half hour to hour through the day. Refill your water. **Why.** You told us you sit for work. In a controlled trial, short walking breaks lowered blood sugar and blood pressure.
12:15 PM	**Lunch**	40 g protein, vegetables, and a 10-minute walk afterwards. **Why.** A short walk after eating takes the edge off the rise in blood sugar.
1:30 PM	**Last caffeine**	Decaf or herbal tea from here on. **Why.** Nine hours before bed, the gap a pooled analysis of trials suggests.
3:15 PM	**Afternoon reset**	Water, and a protein or fruit snack if dinner is more than three hours away. Three slow sighs if the day is running hot. **Why.** A planned pause keeps you from reaching dinner overly hungry.
6:45 PM	**Dinner**	40 g protein, two vegetables. Your last meal of the day. **Why.** Early enough to leave three hours before bed.

7:30 PM	●	**Evening walk**	Ten to twenty easy minutes. **Why.** It counts toward your steps and takes the edge off the post-meal blood sugar rise.
8:15 PM	●	**Kitchen closed**	No more food or alcohol. Sip water only. **Why.** Late food and alcohol both cost you sleep.
9:15 PM	●	**Lights down**	Dim the house. Floss, brush, spit. Cleanse, retinoid, moisturize. **Why.** Dim light tells your body that night has started.
9:45 PM	●	**Screens off**	Phone on the charger outside the bedroom. Write tomorrow's to-do list and three good things from today. **Why.** A list on paper gets tomorrow out of your head.
10:15 PM	●	**In bed**	Cool, dark, quiet. **Why.** Eight hours before your 6:15 AM wake time.

And once a week

Sunday	●	45 minutes of food prep. Cook two proteins, wash the produce, portion snacks. It makes the weekday meals the easy choice.
Sunday	●	Put the week's training sessions in your calendar like meetings. What is scheduled gets done.
Any day	●	One long walk, hike or ride with someone you like. It covers movement, daylight and company at once.
Friday	●	Five minutes with the tracking page, so a slipping habit is caught in a week, not a month.

18 The 90-day rollout

Three phases. A few habits at a time, in the order that works.

Why this is in your plan. People fail health plans by starting everything on a Monday. This one adds a few habits at a time, and asks you to hold them before you add more.

1 Foundations

Days 1–30

Why now. A few new habits at a time is what a busy week can hold. The reason for each one is on your scorecard.

Install the few habits everything else stands on. Do not add anything from later phases, even if this feels easy.

- Up at 6:15 AM every day, with water and daylight first.
- A 10-minute walk after dinner.
- Eat about 1,650 calories a day
- Walk more: 8,500 steps a day, 150 brisk minutes a week
- Strength train 2 days a week
- Training: Learn the movements. Finish every set knowing you had 3 or 4 more reps in you.

DO ONCE, THIS MONTH

- Do your baseline tests and write the results on the tracking page.

FOUR WEEKS, ONE BOX A DAY



Day 30: if you hit your Phase 1 habits five days out of seven, move on. If not, repeat the phase. That is progress, not failure.

2 Build

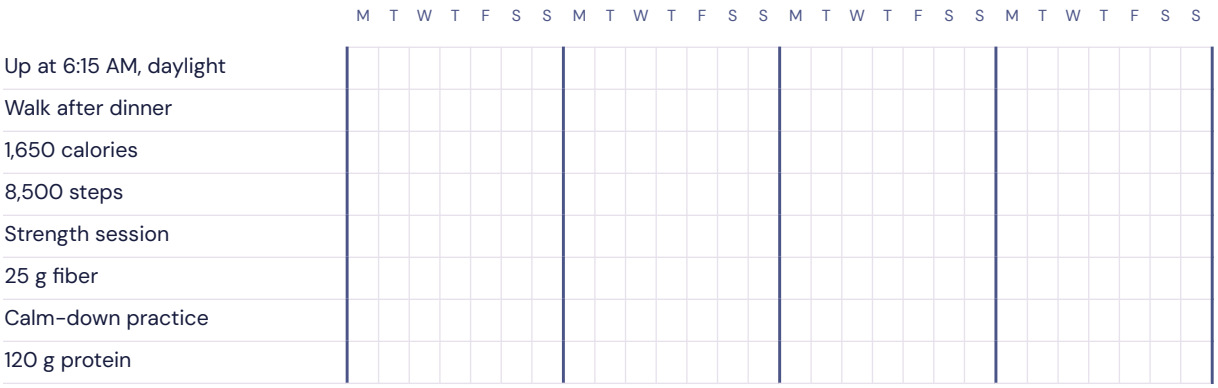
Days 31–60

Why now. The first habits should now run with little thought, which frees your attention for these.

Keep everything from Phase 1 and layer on the next changes.

- Build up to 25 g of fiber a day
- Start a 5-minute daily calm-down practice
- Reach 120 g of protein a day
- Training: Add a third set. When you reach the top of the rep range on every set, add the smallest weight available.
- Cardio: 120 minutes a week, one session as intervals.

FOUR WEEKS, ONE BOX A DAY



Day 60: repeat your baseline tests and compare.

3 Dial in

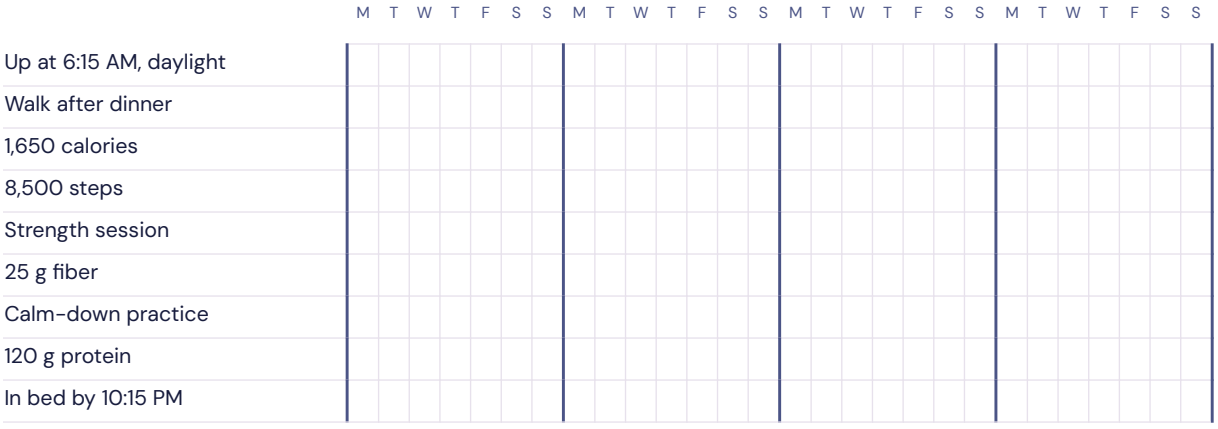
Days 61–90

Why now. These are what is left on your list, and your training is ready for heavier work.

Finish the list and push the training.

- Sleep 7 hours or more: in bed by 10:15 PM
- Training: Heavier, fewer reps on the first two lifts of each session. Stop 1 or 2 reps short of failure.
- Cardio: 150 minutes or more a week, one session as intervals.

FOUR WEEKS, ONE BOX A DAY



Day 90: retest, re-measure, and update your answers for your next edition. Your protocol should change as you do.

19 When it goes wrong

Stalls, missed weeks, travel and bad nights. What to do next.

> **Why this is in your plan.** Every plan meets weeks like these, and none of them means starting over. Knowing the next step in advance is what keeps one bad week from becoming four.

WHEN	WHAT TO DO, AND WHY
The scale has not moved in two weeks	Look at the weekly average, not single days. Weigh your portions for three days. If the average is still flat, take 100 to 150 calories off or add 1,000 steps a day. **Why.** Weight moves in steps, not a straight line, and portions drift upward without anyone noticing.
You are hungry all the time	Move protein and fiber to earlier in the day and drink water first. If you are still hungry after a week, add 100 calories. **Why.** A plan you can keep beats a faster one you cannot.
You missed a few days	Pick up at the next meal or the next session. Do not double anything to make up. **Why.** A few missed days do not change a trend. Doubling up is how people get hurt or give up.
You missed more than a week	Go back one phase and take its first week again. **Why.** Habits and fitness both fade a little with time off, so restarting lower is safer. That is the plan working as designed.
You have no time today	Do the short version: up at 6:15 AM, protein at each meal and a 10-minute walk. A strength session can be one set of each exercise. **Why.** The short version keeps the habit alive, and the habit matters more than any single day.
You are traveling	Keep the wake time and the walking. Order from the eating-out page. For strength, do squats to a chair, push-ups against a counter and a plank in your room. **Why.** The wake time and the walking are the two habits that go anywhere.
You are sick	Rest. No training with a fever or with symptoms below the neck. Come back at half the load for the first week. **Why.** Your body needs its energy to recover, and hard training while you are ill can set you back further.

WHEN	WHAT TO DO, AND WHY
Something hurts	Muscle soreness is expected. For sharp pain or joint pain, stop that exercise, do the rest of the session, and see a clinician if it lasts more than 48 hours. **Why.** Soreness is a muscle getting used to new work. Sharp pain or joint pain is a warning, and training through it tends to make it last.
You slept badly	Get up at 6:15 AM anyway and get daylight. No nap after 3 PM. Make today's session an easy walk. **Why.** Keeping the wake time protects the next night. Sleeping in moves the problem to tomorrow.
A party, a holiday or a day off the plan	Enjoy it. Make the next meal a normal one. **Why.** One day does not change a trend, and skipping meals to make up tends to backfire.
It feels too easy	Do not pull habits forward from later phases. Add the smallest weight you can, or one more walk. **Why.** Easy is the point of the first phase. The habits are being installed, not tested.
Your life has changed	A new job, an injury, a new schedule. Update your answers and build a new edition. It is included with your purchase. **Why.** This plan was built from your answers. When they change, it should too.

20 Shopping list

Everything the protocol asks you to own. Most of it is cheap.

Why this is in your plan. So that you can buy what the plan uses in one trip, and nothing it does not. Every item says what it is for. Goodstead does not sell supplements and earns no commission on anything listed here.

Essentials

ITEM	FOR	ROUGHLY
Floss or interdental brushes	Nightly	$5
Broad-spectrum SPF 30+ face sunscreen	Every morning	$12–20
Validated upper-arm blood-pressure cuff	Home readings for your clinician	$40–60
A plain alarm clock	So the phone can leave the bedroom	$10–15
A notebook, or the tracking pages printed	Daily log and weekly review	$5
Creatine monohydrate	See the supplement section	third-party tested

Optional

Electric toothbrush with a round oscillating head	Removes more plaque than a manual brush	$40–70
Adapalene 0.1% gel or a retinol serum	Night routine, from phase 2	$15–30
Digital kitchen scale	Two weeks of weighing portions teaches your eye	$15
Radon test kit	One-time home test	$20
Psyllium husk	See the supplement section	third-party tested
Protein powder (whey)	See the supplement section	third-party tested

KITCHEN STAPLES

Chicken or turkey breast, Salmon, Canned tuna, Lean beef, Shrimp, Lentils or black beans, Raspberries or blackberries, Chia seeds, Avocado, Pear or apple, skin on, Extra-virgin olive oil, Frozen vegetables, Frozen berries.

21 Tracking pages

Print these. What gets written down gets done.

> **Why this is in your plan.** A slow change is hard to feel from one week to the next, and easy to see on paper. The boxes also tell you when to move to the next phase.

Baseline and retests

MEASURE	DAY 1	DAY 30	DAY 60	DAY 90
Weight, weekly average				
Waist				
Blood pressure				
30-second chair stand				
Push-ups				
One-mile walk				
Resting heart rate				
Average sleep, hours				
Average steps				

Weekly log

Copy this page for each week. Energy and mood on a scale of 1 to 5.

DAY	SLEEP	STEPS	PROTEIN	TRAINING	ENERGY	NOTES
Mon						
Tue						
Wed						
Thu						
Fri						
Sat						
Sun						

FRIDAY REVIEW, FIVE MINUTES

1. What went well this week?

2. Which habit slipped, and what got in the way?

3. What is the one thing I will set up this weekend to make next week easier?

22 Your plan on one page

Print this page and keep it where you will see it every day.

YOUR DAILY NUMBERS

CALORIES	PROTEIN	FIBER	STEPS
1,650	120	25	8,500
a day	g a day	g a day	a day

STRENGTH	IN BED BY	FLUIDS	LAST CAFFEINE
2	10:15 PM	76	1:30 PM
days a week	up at 6:15 AM	oz a day	daily cutoff

Start with these

1	Eat about 1,650 calories a day	Phase 1
2	Walk more: 8,500 steps a day, 150 brisk minutes a week	Phase 1
3	Strength train 2 days a week	Phase 1

Each week: 2 strength days and 2 cardio days. Four days out of five is enough. If you miss a day, pick it up the next day. The detail behind every line on this page is in the sections before it.

Your day at a glance

6:15 AM	Wake
6:25 AM	Teeth and sunscreen
6:35 AM	Daylight
6:55 AM	Train
7:45 AM	Breakfast
9:45 AM	Move and drink
12:15 PM	Lunch
1:30 PM	Last caffeine
3:15 PM	Afternoon reset
6:45 PM	Dinner
7:30 PM	Evening walk
8:15 PM	Kitchen closed
9:15 PM	Lights down
9:45 PM	Screens off
10:15 PM	In bed

23 References

The studies and guidelines behind this protocol.

Each reference is listed with a link to its source at goodsteadhealth.com/evidence.

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