Protein is integral to the health and maintenance of your body. Amino acids, the structural units that make up proteins, are the building blocks for bone, muscle, cartilage, skin and blood. They also are precursors to vital enzymes, hormones and vitamins. In addition to orchestrating important body functions, protein helps to maintain a healthy body weight. Foods rich in protein are more satiating than fat or carbohydrates. As a result, consumption of higher protein diets have shown to be effective in weight loss, fat loss and preservation of lean muscle mass.

While the amount of protein needed depends on age, gender and physical activity, the minimum requirement is 0.4g per pound of body weight. You can easily calculate your own minimum requirement by multiplying 0.4 times your weight in pounds. Below are some examples of higher protein foods for you to do an estimation based on your typical intake:

- Hamburger patty, 4 oz–28g protein
- Chicken breast, 3.5 oz–30g protein
- Egg, large–6g protein
- Milk, 1 c.–8g protein
- Peanut butter, 2 Tablespoons–8g protein
- Beans, ½ c. cooked, 7–10g protein

Not meeting the protein requirements can have a variety of consequences including weakened immune system, failure to recover or heal properly, hair loss, nail loss and hormone imbalances. While most Americans tend to meet the minimum requirement, the protein is not spaced properly throughout the day. Aim to eat a small amount of protein with every meal for maximum benefit.

When it comes to the subject of exactly how much protein should we be consuming there are some mixed recommendations out there. The first thing to consider when assessing your protein intake is your goals.

**GENERAL HEALTH**

The Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for protein, 0.8 g/kg of body weight per day, is designed to maintain nitrogen balance in the body for the average adult. So if your 165 lbs (75kg) you should be ingesting around 60g of protein per day.

**FOR ATHLETES**

When considering athletes the average recommendation is 1.2 to 1.4 g/kg of body weight for endurance athletes and 1.2 to 1.7 g/kg of body weight for strength and power athletes.

**KEY POINTS**

If trying to gain or lose weight, figuring out your Lean Body Mass is crucial for measuring your protein intake as if you have a significant amount of fat weight, you don’t want to be measuring your needs based on un wanted weight, the same goes if you’re trying to gain weight. Also keeping a good Carbohydrate to protein ratio is key as carbs play a major role in protein function, especially when we’re talking about building muscle. For calculating your lean body mass contact a fitness professional.
HIP FLEXOR STRETCH

Start in a kneeling lunge position: one leg is forward in a bent knee position with the other directly behind, knee in a 90° bend. The back toe should be tucked.

Place the hands on the front knee, keeping the pelvis tucked forward and core engaged. Gently push the hips forward to increase the stretch in the back hip flexor.

Make sure you only push forward to a position that doesn’t compromise the straight posture in the hips or back. Hold each stretch for about 45 seconds then switch legs.