

What to Eat More Of

Fresh proteins: chicken, turkey, lean beef, pork tenderloin, fish, shrimp, eggs



Low-carb vegetables: broccoli, zucchini, mushrooms, leafy greens, cauliflower, asparagus, green beans



Healthy fats in small amounts: olive oil, avocado, unsalted butter, full-fat plain Greek yogurt



Simple add-ons for flavor: lemon/lime juice, garlic, black pepper, paprika, chili powder (no-salt), fresh herbs



What to Limit

Processed meats and salty add-ons: bacon, sausage, deli meat, jerky, cheese-heavy meals



Sugary sauces and “hidden carbs”: BBQ sauce, ketchup, sweet marinades, honey glazes



Refined carbs: bread, tortillas, pasta, rice, potatoes, cereal, pastries



Canned foods and salty convenience items: canned soups, canned beans, canned fish, boxed mixes



(choose fresh or frozen instead)

Best Protein Picks for Beginners

HIGH-PROTEIN
LOW-CARB

Starter
Guide

Eggs + a lean protein (steak tips, turkey, chicken)



Chicken breast or tenderloins (grilled, sheet-pan, skillet)



Turkey tenderloin or extra-lean ground turkey



Salmon, cod, tuna steak, or shrimp (fresh or frozen)



Firm tofu (pressed and browned) if you want a plant-based option



Smart Low-Carb Sides That Don't Feel Like "Diet Food"

Roasted broccoli or Brussels sprouts (olive oil + pepper)



Zucchini (half-moons, sautéed or roasted)



Cauliflower rice (lightly browned in a skillet)



Mushrooms (seared hard for deep flavor)



Big salad greens with a simple olive oil + lemon dressing



Portions Made Simple

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Protein: aim for a palm-sized portion per person at meals.

Veggies: fill the rest of the plate with non-starchy vegetables.



Fat: use a drizzle of oil or a small pat of butter for cooking - not a “pool.”



Salt: don't chase flavor with salt. Chase it with acid (lemon), herbs, garlic, and pepper.



Common Beginner Mistakes



Going too low on calories: protein + veggies only can leave you starving. Add a little healthy fat for satisfaction.



Thinking “low-carb” means “unlimited cheese and bacon.” Those can push sodium up fast.



Overcooking lean meat: dry chicken makes you quit. Use a thermometer and pull the chicken at 165°F / 74°C.



Forgetting prep: keep a few proteins and frozen vegetables ready so you don't default to takeout.

Simple Daily Rules (Keep It Easy)

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Build every meal around a fresh protein.



Choose vegetables as your default side (not bread, rice, or potatoes).



Use no-salt seasonings + lemon as your “secret weapon.”



Drink water; keep sweet drinks for special occasions.



If you snack, choose protein first (Greek yogurt, cottage cheese, eggs).

Quick Low-Sodium Flavor Wins



Lemon + olive oil + parsley + garlic = instant dressing/marinade (no salt needed).



Chili powder (no-salt) + black pepper = bold “BBQ-style” flavor without sugary sauce.



Fresh herbs finish the plate: parsley, basil, dill, chives.



A squeeze of citrus at the end makes food taste “seasoned” even when it isn’t.

Friendly note:

This book is about everyday, heart-smart choices - not medical advice. If you have a health condition or take medication, check with your clinician about the best protein and sodium targets for you.