

# Endomorph Diet 101: Food List, Sample Menu, Benefits, More

## What Is an Endomorph?

An endomorph is one of the three main body types, or somatotypes, as defined by the body type diet. “Endomorphs tend to have a larger bone structure and are curvier,” says Phil Catudal, a Los Angeles-based personal trainer and coauthor of *Just Your Type: The Ultimate Guide to Eating and Training Right for Your Body Type*. But that doesn’t mean you’re “fat.” Although this word often has a negative connotation, it can be used as a neutral term because it’s natural for some people to have larger or thicker bodies. “We want to dispel this myth and encourage people to embrace the many good things about this body type,” like curves and powerful muscles, he says.

## How the Body Type Diet Works and How to Know if You’re an Endomorph

Endomorphs are primarily characterized by their propensity to store fat, as well as a wider waistline and bigger bone structure. Catudal says that endomorphs tend to gain weight more easily compared with ectomorphs and mesomorphs. Even when eating a similar diet as another body type, an endomorph will tend to hold on to more excess fat, he says.

In addition, this excess fat often deposits around the waist. “This visceral body fat hangs out around your organs and is related to insulin resistance,” says Marta Montenegro, PhD, a specialist in fitness nutrition based in Miami.

Insulin resistance is when your cells have trouble responding to the insulin that your pancreas pumps out, which ultimately affects your blood glucose levels. Insulin resistance affects the way your body processes carbohydrates. Accordingly, proponents of the endomorph diet advise limiting these, especially highly processed, refined carbs, which contain fewer nutrients and less dietary fiber than whole grains, says Montenegro. With more body fat, the thinking goes, you'll also burn fewer calories compared with a naturally muscular body, like a mesomorph, adds Catudal.

All this means that you'll have to keep a tighter watch on calories, the diet says. Catudal suggests a higher protein intake (40 percent of calories per day), a good amount of fat (40 percent of calories per day), and a lower-carbohydrate diet (20 percent of calories per day), aiming for 1,300 to 1,500 calories per day to start. Maximize carbs and calories, and build volume by focusing on eating a lot of fiber-rich veggies. "These are the carbs that will keep you full," says Catudal.

Before you adopt any new diet, you should check with a registered dietitian nutritionist to find the best nutrition plan for your individualized needs.

## Endomorph Hybrid Types

You can also have a hybrid body type. "Hybrid body types come from a combination of DNA and bad habits over time," says Catudal. Some people are skewed meso-endomorphs, which are characterized by larger bodies that are strong but don't have defined muscles. If that's you, he recommends a combination of strength training and cardio for exercise, plus a nutrition plan that's aimed at fat loss.

You could also be a mesomorph or an ectomorph who has a larger waist, a figure that some people describe as an apple shape. This could put you more at risk for metabolic problems, so Catudal advises watching

carbohydrates in a similar way as the endomorph recommendations below.

## Which Popular Diets May Work Best for Endomorphs

Since endomorphs tend to carry more fat and are more likely to have insulin resistance, Catudal recommends eating a balanced diet that's lower in carbohydrates in order to support fat loss.

Indeed, one study suggested that reducing the amount of carbs in your meals can improve insulin function within a day and may be a powerful way to lower your risk of prediabetes. What's more, because fat burns fewer calories than muscle, an endomorph likely has a metabolism that runs slower compared with a naturally muscular mesomorph, meaning that you'll want to eat fewer calories in the beginning of the diet.

Catudal often recommends [paleo-diet-style](#) plans (aka a caveman diet), which focus on fruit, veggies, meats, fish, [nuts](#) and seeds, and oils. Though [paleo dieters typically avoid](#) legumes, he gives the green light to beans and lentils, which are packed with weight-friendly and digestion-slowing [fiber](#). Yet, as you'll see, you can also incorporate grains into an endomorph diet.

## Food List for an Endomorph

The thinking goes that endomorphs do best when they focus on reducing calorie intake and taking in more protein, healthy fats, and low-carb foods. Catudal says this approach will help them trim fat, reduce their waistline, and improve insulin resistance. Here are the foods you're allowed to eat on an endomorph diet.

## Meat and Fish

- Chicken
- Turkey
- Salmon
- Cod

## Dairy

- Yogurt
- Milk

## Fruit and vegetables

- Berries
- Apples
- Pears
- Asparagus
- Zucchini
- Tomatoes
- Onions
- Greens (spinach, kale, romaine)

## Nuts and seeds

- Nut and seed butter
- Almonds
- Pistachios
- Sunflower seeds

- Pumpkin seeds

## Grains and starchy vegetables

- Sweet potatoes
- Squash
- Quinoa
- Brown rice
- Beans
- Oats

# A 7-Day Sample Menu for the Endomorph Body Type

## DAY 1

**Breakfast** 2 scrambled eggs plus 1 egg white and spinach

**Snack** Sunflower seeds and a piece of fruit

**Lunch** Olive oil-massaged kale salad topped with cucumbers, bell peppers, and salmon

**Snack** Deli meat wrapped around asparagus spears

**Dinner** Grilled chicken breast over zucchini noodles and tomato sauce

## DAY 2

**Breakfast** Cottage cheese with slivered almonds and cinnamon

**Snack** Sliced veggies and hummus

**Lunch** Stir-fry made with chicken and peppers over brown rice

**Snack** Sliced apple with peanut butter

**Dinner** Turkey tacos wrapped in lettuce and topped with a slice of avocado

### DAY 3

**Breakfast** Egg frittata made with tomatoes, onions, and spinach

**Snack** Protein shake

**Lunch** Grilled chicken salad with garbanzo beans, tomatoes, and tzatziki sauce

**Snack** Hummus and sliced veggies (bell pepper, celery)

**Dinner** White fish drizzled in olive oil, roasted broccoli and cauliflower

### DAY 4

**Breakfast** Smoothie made with Greek yogurt, berries, and almond milk

**Snack** Sliced veggies and hummus

**Lunch** Open-faced turkey, veggie, and avocado sandwich on whole-wheat toast

**Snack** Pistachios and cubed cantaloupe

**Dinner** Sliced steak stir-fry over cauliflower rice

## DAY 5

**Breakfast** Omelet made with peppers and spinach, topped with avocado slices

**Snack** Protein bar

**Lunch** Quinoa mixed with chopped veggies and cubed chicken breast, tossed with vinaigrette

**Snack** Carrots dipped in peanut butter

**Dinner** Salmon, steamed broccoli, sautéed mushrooms

## DAY 6

**Breakfast** 2 hard-boiled eggs with blueberries

**Snack** Greek yogurt with sliced almonds

**Lunch** Mediterranean lentil salad with sun-dried tomatoes, kalamata olives, and chopped raw veggies

**Snack** Protein shake

**Dinner** Veggie and bean soup with a grilled chicken breast

## DAY 7

**Breakfast** Greek yogurt layered with apples, cinnamon, and walnuts

**Snack** Hard-boiled egg and sliced avocado

**Lunch** Sweet potato stuffed with shredded chicken, drizzled with low-sugar barbecue sauce

**Snack** Hummus and veggies

**Dinner** Shrimp and veggie kabobs with cauliflower rice

## Advantages of the Endomorph Diet

Not only do proponents of the endomorph diet say it may help people with this body type lose weight — they say it may help their health in other profound ways. Indeed, it's the potential health problems that pose the biggest challenge for endomorphs, says Melina Jampolis, MD, an internist and board-certified physician nutrition specialist in Los Angeles. "An endomorph likely has a genetic component to being a bit heavier. If you look at somatotypes, many people with [type 2] diabetes are considered to be endomorphs," she says.

But even if you're considered overweight, it's more important to look at where you're carrying this fat. If excess fat lands on your hips, thighs, and butt (a classic pear shape), you likely have fewer risk factors for metabolic disease compared with someone who stores fat in their midsection (a classic apple).

Metabolic syndrome is a cluster of risk factors — a large waistline, inactivity, insulin resistance — that raise your risk for heart disease and stroke. Insulin resistance is often present in those who have prediabetes and type 2 diabetes, raising blood glucose levels slightly (but not high enough to be full-blown diabetes).

"When you carry weight in your belly, you're more than likely less responsive to insulin compared to someone who carries weight more diffusely through their body," says Dr. Jampolis.

In fact, researchers concluded that waist circumference was predictive of type 2 diabetes in overweight and obese adults. The link was even stronger in women.



# Disadvantages of the Endomorph Diet

Besides there being a lack of large, long-term studies on the endomorph diet and the body type diet as a whole, this eating plan can pose some challenges that may prove insurmountable for some people.

First comes the hurdle of cutting carbs.

Because of a potential overproduction of insulin, your body likely doesn't manage carbs as well as the other body types. "I tell patients to eat lower levels of carbs and more healthy fats, particularly monounsaturated fatty acids," says Jampolis. Examples of monounsaturated fats (MUFAs) are nuts, avocado, and olive oil. "It's also especially important to make most or all grains whole grain," she says.

The problem arises because while it's easy to tell someone to eat less bread, rice, pasta, crackers, and potatoes, it can be more difficult to put the rule into practice, especially if you're accustomed to eating this way. That may make this type of diet more difficult to stick to for some folks. For instance, while a past study found that people with type 2 diabetes who followed a low-carb diet lost weight and were able to lower their insulin medication, they also discovered that they were unlikely to stick to the diet after six months.

Reducing calorie consumption can also be challenging. "An endomorph has to be the strictest about their diet, including total calories and how many calories come from carbs, but if they do those things, they can slim down," says Catudal. You'll also have to maintain the same way of eating even after reaching your goals; otherwise, your body may bounce back to its starting point. "The way you got there is the lifestyle you have to maintain to stay there," he says.

Following a body type diet for an endomorph may help you adopt healthy eating patterns and exercise to improve insulin sensitivity and lose fat (particularly visceral fat) that may be putting your health at risk.

That said, Jampolis doesn't agree with dieting for your somatotype. But when you move toward a healthier pattern of eating — and for someone with excess fat around their waist it could be reducing overall carb intake — you can trim your waistline to reduce your risk for health problems. Focus on your waist circumference rather than hitting a specific goal weight: Women should have a waist that's under 35 inches, and the target for men is less than 40 inches.

## Endomorph Workout: Which Exercises Are Best for This Body Type?

Just as important as diet is regular physical activity. "If you're struggling to balance your weight and deposit fat around your waist, you need more cardio," says Montenegro. Cardio will effectively burn calories. Be sure to check with your doctor before beginning any exercise program.

Start with low- to moderate-intensity cardio at least three to five times a week for 30 to 45 minutes (depending on your starting fitness level) to burn fat and boost your cardiorespiratory fitness and stamina, along with body weight exercises like push-ups and planks to increase muscle (and thus metabolism), recommends Catudal. After you get into the groove of exercise and start to build fitness, you'll add strength training or [high-intensity interval training \(HIIT\)](#) to the mix. HIIT is a good goal. A meta-analysis of 39 studies concluded that interval workouts were effective in reducing overall body fat and belly fat in overweight and obese adults.

