**Part 3 – Establishing Your Nutritional Goals**

**Key Takeaways**

* **Fat loss** is driven by consistently eating fewer calories than you burn (caloric deficit).
* **Protein** is crucial for preserving muscle mass and achieving a lean, toned appearance.
* The **ideal protein intake** is between 0.8–1.2g per pound of body weight.
* When calories and protein are controlled, the ratio of **carbs to fats** matters less for fat loss.
* **Hydration, fiber, sodium, and saturated fat** also impact health and digestion.

**Action Steps**

1. **Estimate Your Maintenance Calories**
   * Use the [Mayo Clinic Calorie Calculator](https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/weight-loss/in-depth/calorie-calculator/itt-20402304)
   * Choose the higher number if you’re between two activity levels
2. **Create Your Caloric Deficit**
   * Multiply your maintenance calories by 0.9 for a 10% deficit
   * Example: 1700 maintenance x 0.9 = **1530 calorie goal**
3. **Set Your Protein Target**
   * Multiply your body weight (lbs) by 1.0 (or choose between 0.8–1.2)
   * Enter your protein goal in MyFitnessPal by adjusting macronutrient percentages to hit your target grams
4. **Adjust Carbs & Fats**
   * Set carbs and fats so that the total equals 100%
   * Aim for carbs and fats to be roughly equal or carbs slightly higher
5. **Set Additional Nutrient Goals**
   * Fiber: ~25g/day
   * Sodium: ~2300 mg/day (don’t exceed 3500 mg)
   * Saturated Fat: 10% of daily calories (e.g., 153 cal ÷ 9 = ~17g)
6. **Enter All Goals in MyFitnessPal**
   * Go to: More > Goals > Nutrition Goals > Calorie & Macronutrient Goals
   * Use “Additional Nutrient Goals” for fiber, sodium, saturated fat

**Common Mistakes to Avoid**

* Trusting the default MyFitnessPal calorie recommendation (use your own)
* Setting calories too low (may lead to muscle loss, fatigue, slower metabolism)
* Neglecting to track **hydration** and **fiber**, which are crucial for digestion and fat metabolism
* Overlooking **sodium and saturated fat** intake for overall health

**Related Resources**

* 🔗 [**Maintenance Calorie Calculator**](https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/weight-loss/in-depth/calorie-calculator/itt-20402304)
* 🔗 [**Meta-Analysis on Fat/Carb Ratios**](https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5568065/)