

## Hello there Rebel!

In this quick Nerd Fitness Diet guide and cheat sheet, we're going to walk you through the nutritional strategy and diet leveling system that has helped thousands and thousands of busy people like yourself lose weight, build muscle, and get in shape the right way.

This leveling system has been pulled from our premium course [The Nerd Fitness Academy](#), which allows you to actually earn experience points and level up a character each time you level up to the next level of the NF Diet.

If you want more specific instruction, along with workouts, boss battles, recipes, and a supportive community, I'd recommend you [check it out!](#)

As you hopefully already know from Nerd Fitness, how you eat will account for 80-90% of your success or failure when it comes to getting in shape. That's why getting started with this leveling system will help you more than any amount of exercise.

### **Speaking of exercise, along with the Nerd Fitness Diet, you can level up your life by exercising in the following way:**

- Follow the workouts and boss battles laid out in the [Nerd Fitness Academy](#)
- Go for daily walks - I hear walking to Mordor is all the rage
- Do a bodyweight training routine like the Nerd Fitness Bodyweight Workout
- Strength train as laid out in our Strength Training 101 ebook

This is a diet that has more flexibility than Paleo, Keto, or Whole30, but still allows you to get the results you're after. Note that this is NOT a 30-day diet. Instead, it's a philosophy and a lifestyle blueprint for fixing your relationship with food that you can follow for the next decade. This diet is built on the premise of slowly easing your way into nutritional changes rather than making one big drastic change.

*NOTE: We don't recommend you go "all or nothing" for a month. That's a recipe for disaster and causes most people to give up. Instead, we're looking for permanent improvement and changes over long periods of time that give you sustained results!*

Our overall goal is to get your nutrition from where you are now to a plate that looks like this:



2/3rds of the plate with vegetables and/or fruit. 1/3rd of the plate is your protein (chicken, fish, grass fed beef). Foods like sweet potatoes, rice, legumes, and yams should be occasionally mixed in when the situation calls for more carbs.

That's the eventual long term WIN we're looking for, but we're going to take our sweet time getting there.

**There are 3 big rules that apply to all levels of the Nerd Fitness Diet, which are part of our overall philosophy:**

**Eat real food.** You're a smart person, I know it! And you ALSO know what real food is. Minimize the steps between food being grown/raised and entering your digestive tract. The less steps, the better! Keep it simple. We don't care about what cavemen ate 100,000 years ago. We care about eating actual food today. If you HAVE to ask "is this healthy?" it's probably a no. This doesn't mean you can't occasionally eat unhealthy foods - increase your ratio of good foods to unhealthy food as you move up in levels.

**No cheat days.** We make a conscious decision to occasionally eat unhealthy foods, but it's not a bad thing nor are you doing anything wrong. It's not cheating, it's a decision you make and then you get right back on track. You're in control, and you're an adult. If you want to eat pizza and drink beer, go for it. But then get right back on track.

**Never miss two in a row!** Never have two bad meals in a row. If we eat an unhealthy meal, our next meal is the most important meal of our lives. We know that every decision counts, and 50% compliance is better than zero! If you ate an unhealthy breakfast, the day is NOT ruined. It means you had one unhealthy meal and nothing more. You can still have two healthy meals that day and no momentum is lost. We're not militant, but we operate within the guidelines of the level we're on.

**Below you'll see 10 levels, each of which slightly more difficult than the level that precedes it.**

Work your way through each levels at your own pace. You might fly through Level 1 if you don't drink soda these days, but Level 5 might take you two months. That's okay!

**A quick note on levels:** Once you get past Level 7, you are getting into hardcore territory in difficulty and compliance. Levels 8-10 are only for people who are aiming to get to a very low body fat percentage as quickly as possible - say for a competition, a wedding, or vacation. These levels also might have a side effect of decreased athletic performance, increased irritability, and more compliance challenges if you live with or spend time with others that eat a typical American diet.

It is Team Nerd Fitness's belief that Level 7 is optimal for achieving a damn good physique and still having fun and occasionally consuming unhealthy foods or beverages.

As you progress, you must continue the habits you've established in the previous levels. These are written as if you are completing them. Because you are...it just might take a while for all of the small wins to add up to allow you to fully identify with each level.

**Quick note:** you absolutely can combine the Nerd Fitness Diet with Intermittent Fasting. Make it work for you!

Download and print the [10 Level Cheat Sheet], which is the last page of this PDF, and read each level's description below.

These are quick descriptions of each level, pulled from our flagship course, [The Nerd Fitness Academy](#). We know that knowledge isn't enough - you also need accountability, support, and a blueprint to follow!

If you struggle with adhering to a plan, even one such as this that slowly transitions your diet, consider joining [The Nerd Fitness Academy](#) to give yourself the best chance to succeed!

Good luck, Rebel!

## Level 1: I'm Clueless But Ready to Start

I am a complete food newbie.

I eat whatever I want, whenever I want. I don't really bother with portion sizes or learning about what's good or bad. I just eat what I want!

I haven't cooked a meal in forever, and most of my food comes from take-out or drive through. I know I should change HOW I eat, but I'm not quite sure where to begin. I'm not sure how to count calories. I definitely don't bother figuring out how much protein, fat, and carbs I eat either.

**I can level up to LEVEL 2 when:** I spend one week tracking my food diligently. I don't make any changes, but I'm just AWARE of the foods that I am eating. Whether it's taking pictures of every meal, keeping a simple food journal, or tracking calories through an online tracker, I track EVERYTHING I eat.

## Level 2: Awareness and Tracking

I don't eat differently, but I've started counting calories and have tried to keep my food intake at a certain amount based on my goals. I'll be tracking my calories for the next 2 weeks.

I know what carbs, proteins, and fats are. I still eat fast food, and I still order out a lot, but I try to focus on eating LESS food overall than I was eating before.

I know that cutting back 500 calories per day from what I was eating on average before can get the weight loss process started, so that's what I focus on.

**I can level up to LEVEL 3 when:** I start minimizing liquid calories for one week. Liquid calories are a HUGE problem for weight gain, and I'm going to work on cutting back on them. Whether it's juice, gatorade, soda, frappuccinos, or alcoholic beverages, I make a significant progress over a one week period to drink less liquid calories.

## Level 3: Liquid Calories Reduced

I have reduced liquid calories in my diet significantly.

I used to drink soda for caffeine, now I drink black coffee, diet soda, or tea instead. I know that skim milk, juice, and other drinks are akin to sugar water, and I'm working on cutting these back.

I have a glass of red wine or whiskey with dinner and some beer on the weekends, but

otherwise I'm pretty good about this.

I drink a ton of water – more than I ever have in my life!

I've also started educating myself further on what "healthy eating" actually means. So, I try to make one meal per day healthy, and I try to make sure each meal has a protein source in it.

I've decided to start with breakfast, making sure it has a good amount of protein and some fruit, compared to my old breakfast which was bagels, cereal, muffins, and/or toast.

I'm getting much better at mindful eating. Instead of eating while watching TV or playing video games, I only eat! I understand that we can often eat WAY more calories than we intended to eat when our mind is preoccupied elsewhere, so I do my best to JUST eat, have conversations with loved ones or perhaps read a good book.

**I can level up to LEVEL 4 when:** I have swapped out grains completely at breakfast for a high protein breakfast for two weeks straight. Instead of a bagel, cereal, muffin, or donut...I eat a breakfast that is high protein: bacon and eggs, or a homemade omelet. Or scrambled eggs and fresh fruit. Or a whey protein smoothie.

## Level 4: Vegetables > Carbs

I've learned that fat is not the enemy! Simple carbohydrates are, with sugar being the most evil of all. Sugar is what's making us unhealthy, and I'm going to start weaning myself off of it deliberately.

For that reason, I've started working on minimizing consumption of sugar and unhealthy carbohydrates.

I've purge my freezer of any treats and ice cream and cleared the candy from my desk at work.

I've cut out almost all liquid calories. Other than the occasional alcoholic beverage on weekends, all I drink is coffee, tea, and water. I have cut back on diet soda too, as I know they oftentimes are filled with chemicals and preservatives that aren't good for me.

I have started to learn about the importance of vegetables, understanding that they

are what truly make my body function properly, and try to make myself eat at least one vegetable per day. I'm still not much of a chef, so I've picked ONE vegetable. I know how to cook and make sure I keep it in stock, even if it's something as simple as frozen or canned veggies.

**I can rank up to LEVEL 5 when:** I consume a vegetable with every lunch or every dinner, replacing a normal carbohydrate or starch, for 10 total days in a 2 week period, and I go one week without eating pasta. Instead of french fries, I order broccoli. Instead of white bread, I'm eating asparagus.

## Level 5: No Pasta, No Sweets

I have a pretty good grasp about what's healthy food and what's not. I'm a smart person and I have made a few key changes to how I attack my daily nutrition.

Liquid calories have been removed for a while now. I now crave water as much as I used to soda! Soda water with a lime wedge for the win!

For at least 6 days a week, I am no longer eating pasta, bagels, muffins, or other empty calories.

Candy and sweets are a VERY rare occasion. AKA ordering dessert after dinner is a treat once every two or three weeks (instead of nightly).

Every meal has a quality protein source, and every meal has a vegetable. I'm still eating things like rice, potatoes, and some bread (though I'm cutting back on those things in favor of more protein or vegetables in some cases).

**I can rank up to LEVEL 6 when:** I have gone 12 out of 14 days without eating bread OR pasta, and 12 out of 14 days with a vegetable in at least 2 meals per day.

## Level 6: Bye Bye Bread

I have eliminated bread from my diet with the exception of a few times per month. I know bread and pasta are calorically dense and nutritionally empty, so I minimize them.

I still eat rice, potatoes, beans, dairy, and yeah...I love pizza, so I still have it once a month. For the most part carbs are limited to rice and potatoes.

All meals now have plenty of protein and healthy fats (nuts, olive oil, avocado, fatty meats). I know that how I eat is becoming more of a lifestyle, rather than a simple diet I'm just following to lose weight. This is NOT a one month change, or something I force myself to do because I'm scrambling until I can get back to how things were.

Next, I have started to eliminate snacking between lunch and dinner. I make sure my meals have enough fats, vegetables, and quality protein so that I am not hungry between meals.

Because I'm drinking boatloads of water and eating meals with plenty of protein, I no longer feel the need to eat while bored between meals. I say no to dessert, and instead choose to eat more calories at another meal if I'm hungry.

I know that cutting back on carbohydrates is the fastest path to continued success, so I do a BASIC counting system and make sure to keep my daily carb consumption under 150 grams per day.

**I can rank up to LEVEL 7 when:** I have gone two weeks without pasta, bread, or pizza, and every meal has vegetables and protein. I'm starting to lower and be more aware of my dairy consumption. I feel like it's time for me to kick things into high gear, and I want to take my diet to the next level.

## Level 7 (HEALTHY TARGET): Minimize Dairy and Snacking

I now follow the Nerd Fitness lifestyle, and I'm finding my groove.

I understand the concepts, I love how eating right makes me feel, and I love the effect it's having on my outward appearance. It turns out my diet IS 80-90% of the equation, and by focusing on my diet, I'm seeing results faster than I ever have in the past...and I'm not slowing down.

I still eat rice, quinoa and beans, though I try to not eat TONS of them. If I eat starches, I aim for sweet potatoes and yams. I try to keep my daily carb consumption around or under 100 grams per day.

When I DO eat carbs (such as those listed above), I try to eat them in the few hours following my workout.

I have started to minimized dairy consumption. I may or may not be lactose intolerant, but I'm going to minimize dairy consumption when possible.

My bodyfat percentage is still dropping, and I know eating more healthy fats and less dairy could potentially help me feel less lethargic, so I'm giving it a try. If I consume dairy, it's done so in the window directly after working out so that my body can process more of it for recovery and muscle building.

I don't snack anymore. I don't keep snacks in my home either. I don't keep snacks at the office. I don't go to the vending machine. I eat big healthy meals full of protein, healthy fats, and vegetables.

Fast food is a distant memory too. If I do get stuck eating fast food, I go to places like Chipotle rather than McDonalds.

I've learned to listen to my body, and I know what "hungry" feels like vs "bored."

I'm all in. I'm noticing changes, I'm feeling better, and I considering taking this to the next level.

**I can rank up to LEVEL 8 when:** I have gone 12 of 14 days without legumes or dairy. Although beans that have been properly prepared are high in protein, there are also very high in carbohydrate count, so they are the next thing to be eliminated from my diet.

## Level 8: No Legumes, Soy, or Dairy

I have eliminated soy, legumes, and dairy from my diet. Sorry beans, but you've been let go. I have big plans and it involves me getting truly slim and stepping up my game!

I still consume carbs thanks to the occasional consumption of rice, sweet potatoes, yams, and quinoa.

I allow myself to take one day per week (or three meals per week total) where I am more lax on my diet, but I understand these decisions are not CHEAT DAYS, as the term "cheat"



implies I'm doing something wrong.

Instead, I understand that I have 100% control over the choices I make, and I sometimes choose to eat foods that fall outside of my normal consumption patterns. No big deal, moving on, nothing to see here!

My diet consists mostly of protein, vegetables, fruits, and nuts.

**I can rank up to LEVEL 9 when:** When I have gone 12 of 14 days in two weeks without consuming rice.

## Level 9: No Rice!

I now consume almost exclusively meat and other healthy protein sources, nuts, vegetables, and fruit.

Rice, it's your turn to take a bow and exit. I have since eliminated rice from my diet, which now primarily consists of healthy fats, high quality protein sources, lots of vegetables, and carbs only from yams, sweet potatoes, and fruit.

My carb consumption is now minimal, hovering between the 50 and 100 grams per day range. I eat more carbs on days when I am strength training (or going for runs), and then on off-days or recovery days, I keep my carbs closer to the 50 gram mark.

I don't snack. I eat big healthy meals with high quality sources of protein and at least three or four massive servings of vegetables every day, especially vegetables like broccoli, kale, and spinach.

I now focus most of my eating decisions based around whether or not they are contributing to my greater goals – a certain physique or physical feat. I KNOW how important my diet is to getting results here, and I try not to jeopardize my results by sabotaging my diet efforts.

**I can rank up to LEVEL 10 when:** My body fat percentage is less than 12% for men, and less than 18% for women. I have been testing my body fat with calipers or a proper testing procedure and am confident I'm in a position to attempt an uber strict diet because I have very specific goals that I am trying to reach.

## Level 10: No Fruit and Minimal Sweet Potatoes

I eat to fuel my training and physique goals. I understand that cycling certain macronutrients and paying close attention to my food intake on each day can help me reach my goals.

I am aiming for the lowest possible body fat percentage, as quickly as possible, even though I know my athletic performance might suffer as a result.

My diet is strictly Level 10 at this point, and I have also eliminated fruit from my diet. I eat boatloads of vegetables, fat in reasonable quantities, and lots of protein.

I ONLY eat sweet potatoes and yams based around my training schedule – consuming them in the post workout window. I know nuts are very high in calories and those have been cut from my diet mostly.

I know there are certain instances where dropping 1-5% of my body fat percentage very quickly is advantageous for my situation: a wedding, a vacation, a photoshoot, performance, and so on.

This level of difficulty is not meant to be maintained for long amounts of time, but I can move to this level when I need to turbocharge my fat loss.



# The Nerd Fitness Diet

1

## Help, I'm Clueless!

*I eat whatever I want, whenever I want. Most of my food comes from a drive-through or a microwave.*



2

## Awareness & Tracking

*I haven't changed what I eat, but I am more aware now. I'm tracking most things I eat and drink and have started looking at food labels.*



3

## Reduce Liquid Calories

*I've minimized the amount of calories I drink. I've swapped out sodas, juice, milk, and sports drinks for water, black coffee, and tea.*



4

## Veggies > Empty Carbs

*I've begun to replace starchy, empty carbs with green leafy vegetables in many of my meals. At least 50% of meals contain at least one vegetable.*



5

## No Pasta, No Sweets

*Heavy carbohydrate meals and sugary sweets are a very rare treat (once a month) now. Most of my meals are protein, vegetables, and healthy fats.*



6

## Bye Bye Bread

*I've now eliminated almost any kind of bread from my diet altogether. Carbs are limited to rice and potatoes and every meal I eat has a vegetable now.*



7

## Minimize Potatoes & Dairy

*I've removed white potatoes from my diet and replaced them with yams or sweet potatoes. I've also minimized my dairy consumption.*



8

## No Legumes, Soy, or Dairy

*I've eliminated beans, other legumes, soy, and dairy completely. I still consume rice, sweet potatoes, and quinoa with meals occasionally.*



9

## No Rice or Quinoa

*I've eliminated rice now and almost exclusively consume meat, healthy proteins, nuts, vegetables, and fruit.*



10

## No Fruit & Low Yams

*I've eliminated fruit and only consume sweet potatoes based on my training schedule. I realize my current diet isn't easy to sustain long term, but am training for an event or athletic performance.*

