
COURSE RESOURCE

THE PROTEIN-FIRST PLATE - YOUR FOOD BUILDER

Client handout | Working With GLP-1 Clients for Personal Trainers

When appetite is low, you eat less food overall - so the food you do eat has to work harder. This handout helps you build meals protein-first, so you protect muscle, recover from training, and feel steady even on small portions. You do not have to finish a big plate. You just have to hit protein first.

SCOPE OF PRACTICE

Your trainer coaches training and general eating habits - not medical nutrition therapy. This is a general guide, not a meal plan or medical advice. It does not replace guidance from your prescriber or dietitian. If you have nausea, reflux, vomiting, or can't keep food or fluids down, tell your healthcare provider - and let your trainer know so we can adjust your sessions.

WHY PROTEIN FIRST

Protein is the nutrient that maintains and rebuilds muscle - and on a reduced appetite, muscle is the thing we most want to protect while you lose fat. Protein is also the most filling nutrient per bite, so leading with it means the calories you can manage still count toward strength and recovery.

WHY IT MATTERS

On smaller portions it's easy to fill up on bread, rice, or a few bites of a rich dish and run out of appetite before any real protein lands. Eating protein first means that even a half-eaten meal still delivered what your muscles need.

THE SIMPLE PLATE MODEL

Picture your plate in three zones. Build and eat them in this order:

- 1. PROTEIN FIRST - about half the plate, and the first thing you eat. Chicken, fish, eggs, Greek yogurt, tofu, lean beef, cottage cheese, beans/lentils.

- 2. PRODUCE SECOND - about a quarter of the plate. Cooked veg tends to sit easier than raw when you're full quickly.
- 3. CARBS/EXTRAS LAST - about a quarter. Rice, potato, bread, fruit, sauces. These are the 'if you still have room' zone, not the opener.

If you only get through the first zone, that's a win. Protein got in.

EASY HIGH-PROTEIN OPTIONS

Keep a short list of proteins you actually like and can prep with little effort. A few reliable go-tos:

Option	Why it's easy on low appetite
Greek yogurt or skyr	Soft, cold, no cooking, works as a snack or breakfast
Eggs (scrambled soft, or boiled)	Quick, soft texture, cheap, filling in small amounts
Rotisserie or pre-cooked chicken	Zero prep, portion what you want, freeze the rest
Cottage cheese	Soft, high protein per bite, sweet or savoury
Canned tuna or salmon	Shelf-stable, no cooking, mixes into anything
Tofu, edamame, lentils	Plant options; soft textures sit well
Protein shake or milk-based drink	Sip-able when chewing feels like too much

TEXTURE & PORTION TIPS FOR EARLY FULLNESS

When you get full fast, HOW you eat matters as much as what. Try these:

- Go for softer, moister textures - stews, soups with beans/chicken, scrambled eggs, yogurt, slow-cooked meat. Dry, dense, or very fatty foods often feel heavy fast.
- Use a smaller plate or bowl so a modest portion looks complete and you don't feel behind.
- Eat smaller amounts more often - think 4 to 5 mini-meals rather than 3 large ones you can't finish.
- Slow down and put the fork down between bites; fullness can arrive suddenly, and slowing lets you notice it before you overshoot into discomfort.
- Keep most drinks between meals, not during, so liquid doesn't fill the space you need for protein. Sip water across the day so you still stay hydrated.

- Front-load protein earlier in the day if evenings feel worst - you may have more appetite in the morning.

PROTEIN SNACKS & SHAKES

Snacks are where you quietly catch up on protein. A shake counts as a meal when solid food feels like too much.

- Greek yogurt with a spoon of nut butter or berries
- Cottage cheese with fruit, or savoury with pepper and tomato
- A hard-boiled egg or two, or a small tin of tuna on crackers
- Cheese and a piece of fruit
- Edamame or roasted chickpeas
- A protein shake blended with milk or yogurt and half a banana - add a little peanut butter or oats if you want it to sit longer

KEY SIGNAL

A shake is a helpful tool on rough-appetite days, not a rule about supplements. Whole-food protein is great too. If you're unsure whether a specific product or amount fits your situation, check with your dietitian or prescriber.

EXAMPLE MEALS (PROTEIN-FIRST)

Meal	Protein-first build
Breakfast	Greek yogurt bowl: yogurt first, then berries, then a sprinkle of granola on top
Lunch	Chicken and bean soup: eat the chicken and beans first, bread on the side if there's room
Dinner	Salmon or tofu, then a scoop of soft veg, then a small potato last
Snack	Cottage cheese with fruit, or a milk-based protein shake

HOW TO TRACK IT WITH YOUR COACH

- Aim to name a protein at every meal and snack - if you can name it, you likely ate it.
- Jot a quick note of which proteins actually went down easily this week; we build your list around those.

- Bring anything that consistently feels bad to eat - we'll swap textures, not push through discomfort.

EVIDENCE NOTE

General nutrition and strength guidance supports prioritising protein and resistance training to help preserve muscle during weight loss. This is directional; your course team will attach verified citations. Your individual targets are set by your healthcare provider or dietitian, not by this handout.