

Nutrition: Eat for Pilot Performance

+ Nutrition Label Informational Sheet

Starting a foundation:

1. Core Nutrition Tips for Pilots

- **Start Small by Logging Your Food:** Keep track of what you eat to understand your calorie intake, avoid energy dips, and stay alert during flights. (See tutorial in quick tips on the next page)
- **Fuel Before & Refuel After Flights:** Proper nutrition ensures sustained energy and focus during long flights and promotes recovery after demanding schedules.
- **Stay Hydrated:** Start with at least 64 oz of water per day, adjusting for altitude and flight duration.
- **Learn Food Labels:** Knowing what's in your food helps you make informed choices for long lasting energy and optimal health.

2. Building a Caloric Plan for Pilots

- **Tailor Your Calorie Intake:** Work with digital tools, such as MyFitnessPal or NutritionIX, to set a daily intake that matches your workload and flying hours.
- **Set Balanced Macronutrient Goals:** Choose the right balance of protein, carbs, and fats for muscle maintenance, energy, and satiety. (More info on this in the MHHC nutrition e-books)

3. Making Smart Food Swaps

- **Trade Wisely:** Replace processed foods with nutrient-dense options that promote better focus and performance.

Visual Portion Guide for Pilots:

Portion Measurement	Imagery Description	Food Group
1 Palm (3 oz)	<i>Palm Size</i> 	Proteins (chicken, turkey, beef)
1 Cupped Hand (½ cup)	<i>Cupped Hand</i> 	Carbs (rice, grains)
1 Fist (1 cup)	<i>Closed Fist</i> 	Vegetables
1 Thumb (1 tbsp)	<i>Thumb Size</i> 	Fats (olive oil, mayo)



Example Food Portions for Pilots:

- **Protein (1 Palm):** Equivalent to a serving of grilled chicken or fish, ideal for muscle repair.
- **Carbs (1 Cupped Hand):** A serving of cooked rice or pasta for energy.
- **Vegetables (1 Fist):** Fresh greens or broccoli for fiber and vitamins.
- **Fats (1 Thumb):** A serving of avocado or nut butter for healthy fats.

Tip Building Balanced Meals: Pick one from each MACRO category

*These are examples, obviously there are a lot more food options than on this list but these are a few of the healthiest options.

Protein	Carbs	Fats
Turkey / Chicken	Potatoes	Chia Seeds
Whey Protein	Bread	Egg Yolks
Greek Yogurt (+fat)	Grains	Flaxseed
Eggs	Cereal	Avocado
Lean Beef	Fruit	Olives

Quick Tips for Pilots:

- **Hydration:** Essential for focus and energy, especially at altitude.
- **Preparation:** Meal prep ensures you have pilot-friendly snacks on hand during long hauls.
 - **Need flight snack ideas?** MHHC also has a FREE guide for that! Visit <https://milehighhealthclub.life> for the free e-book! (yes, you can click that link directly)
- **Balance:** Adapt macronutrient intake based on flying hours, physical exertion, and health goals.
- Here's the **link to my tutorial** on how to calculate your macros in the MyFitnessPal App



Nutrition Facts	<u>What does it all mean?</u>
<u>Serving Size:</u> Indicates the amount of food considered a single serving. All nutrition values on the label are based on this serving size. Adjust calculations if consuming more or less than the serving size.	<u>Servings Per Container:</u> Shows the total number of servings in the package. Important for understanding how many servings you may be eating if you consume the entire package.
Amount per Serving	
<u>Calories:</u> Displays the total number of calories in one serving. Essential for energy intake management. Pay attention to servings consumed to calculate the total calories eaten.	
	<u>% Daily Value of Calories.</u> Indicates how much a nutrient in one serving contributes to the daily diet. Based on a 2,000-calorie diet. Helps identify if a serving is high or low in a specific nutrient (5% or less is low, 20% or more is high).
<u>Total Fat (MACRO):</u> Lists the total fat content in grams. There are also subcategories of unsaturated fats (liquid at room temp): monounsaturated and polyunsaturated can help improve cholesterol levels, reduce inflammation, and stabilize heart rhythms.	% DV: [_____] % <u>Fat MACRO:</u> Important for vitamin breakdown & transport, energy, cell growth, brain health, hormone production, satiety, etc.
- <u>Saturated Fat:</u> Highly processed fat negatively impacts cholesterol levels and heart health.	% DV: [_____] %
- <u>Trans Fat:</u> Highly processed fat negatively impacts cholesterol levels and heart health.	
<u>Cholesterol:</u> Shows the amount of cholesterol in milligrams. High intake of cholesterol can affect cardiovascular health.	% DV: [_____] %
<u>Sodium:</u> Indicates the sodium content in milligrams. High sodium intake can lead to high blood pressure. Limit intake to recommended daily amounts.	% DV: [_____] %



Total Carbohydrate (MACRO): Includes all types of carbohydrates, such as sugars and dietary fiber. Broken down into Dietary Fiber (important for digestion) and Total Sugars , which may include added sugars.	% DV: [_____] % <u>Carb MACRO:</u> The body's go-to source of energy, needed for digestion, heart health, etc.
- Dietary Fiber: A non-digestible carbohydrate that provides health benefits for digestion, nutrient absorption, heart health, blood sugar control, etc.	% DV: [_____] %
- Total Sugars: The sum of all sugars in a food or drink, including naturally occurring sugars such as in breads and fruit.	
- Added Sugars: sugars that are added to foods during processing, cooking, or at the table.	% DV: [_____] %
Protein (MACRO): Lists the amount of protein per serving, important for body maintenance and muscle growth.	Protein MACRO: The body's building blocks once broken down into Amino Acids. Needed for building and maintaining muscle, weight loss, energy, bone health, immune system, tissue repair, etc.
<u>Vitamins and Minerals</u>	
- Vitamin D: [_____] mcg	% DV: [_____] %
- Calcium: [_____] mg	% DV: [_____] %
- Iron: [_____] mg	% DV: [_____] %
- Potassium: [_____] mg	% DV: [_____] %
<u>Ingredients List:</u> Shows all ingredients used, listed in descending order by weight. The first few ingredients indicate the main components of the product. Useful for identifying allergens or avoiding certain additives.	