

www.FireRescueFitness.com



Standard Operating Procedures to Eating Healthy in the

FIREHOUSE

Version 3.0

By Aaron Zamzow, BS, CPT, CSCS, PN1

www.FireRescueFitness.com

Copyright Notice

No part of this report may be reproduced or transmitted in any form whatsoever, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any informational storage or retrieval system without expressed written, dated and signed permission from the author. All copyrights are reserved.

Disclaimer and/or Legal Notices

This information provided in this guide is for educational purposes only. I am not a doctor and this is not meant to be taken as medical advice. The information provided in this guide is based upon my experiences as well as my interpretations of the current research and resources available. You should consult your physician to insure tips given in this course are appropriate for your individual circumstances. If you have any health issues or pre-existing conditions, please consult with your physician before implementing any of the information provided below.

This product is for informational purposes only and the author does not accept any responsibilities for any liabilities or damages, real or perceived, resulting from the use of this information.

By

Aaron Zamzow

Firefighter/ EMT, B.S Health and Wellness, NSCA- CSCS, N.A.S.M.-CPT, PN1

Copyright ©ZamzowFitness, LLC. 2017

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Thanks so much for downloading this eBook!

www.FireRescueFitness.com

If you're reading this download then you obviously have an interest in being the best Fire Rescue Athlete you can be. Let's face the facts; eating healthy in the firehouse or out of it isn't the easiest thing to do. It takes discipline and an avoidance of the kitchen (or whatever place in the firehouse where all the goodies are). Obviously, it is impossible to avoid the kitchen entirely ***but it is possible to lean out the firehouse.***

Cooking for a group of hungry firefighters is also not easy-- if you don't cook something tasty you will hear about it from your crew...for a long time. The goal of this e-Book is to provide some guidelines (and some recipes) on how to cook and eat healthy in the firehouse (and at your own house) to keep you lean and "fit for duty."

Let's start off with some basic rules. It's important to note that there are other SOP's of healthy, but for now, start with these and be sure to continue to utilize www.FireRescueFitness.com for more information on working out and eating like a Fire Rescue Athlete.

Before we begin I think it's important to address the "elephant in the room." One of the biggest fears of every firehouse chef is not preparing enough food for the crew. This fear usually leads to an excess of available food and **larger** portions around the table. So, before we address what to eat, let's get an idea of "how much."

Counting Calories

If you've heard it once, you've heard it a thousand times: The best — maybe even the only — way to lose weight is to count calories. After all, in theory, it's a pretty simple equation: Calories in vs. calories out. Eat more calories than you burn, and you gain weight. Eat fewer calories than you burn and you lose weight. Simple, right?

The problems with calorie counting

First of all — on the “calories in” side — you do need to figure out how many calories are in the foods you want to eat. This requires apps, handbooks, websites, databases and math. Then, you have to assume that the handbooks, apps, websites, and databases’ calorie estimates are correct. Which, I hate to tell you they’re often not. In fact, research has shown that calorie estimates for food can be off by about 25% because of incorrect labeling, laboratory measurement error, and food quality.

Then, of course, there’s the “calories out” side. Estimating your calorie expenditure each day comes with another 25% measurement error because of the equipment you’re using, laboratory measurement errors, and individual differences and exaggerating activity. So, by counting calories and determining your calories burned you could possibly have a 25% error on the “calories in” side, and another 25% error on the “calories out” side. This means all of this counting that you do throughout the day is probably way inaccurate...

Is it even worth:

- pulling out measuring cups to a chorus of boos from family members;
- dusting off the food scale while trying to ignore the taunts of friends;
- wheeling in the abacus from the den to keep up the calorie tally;
- subscribing to apps and web services to track these less-than-accurate numbers?

I do agree that we, as fire rescue athletes should have an idea of how much food we’re eating each day, so we can adjust based on our goals. But, counting calories itself is a drag and in most cases inaccurate. Over time counting calories often leads to a lack of progress and frustration.

A Note on Portion Sizes

Portion control is an important concept when you're trying to stay fit for duty. So, if counting calories isn't going to work, what will? There is a better and easy way to monitor your intake portions. All you need is the ability to count to two, and your own hand.

Here are some great guidelines to teach you portion control:

- Your palm determines your protein portions.
- Your fist determines your veggie portions.
- Your cupped hand determines your carb portions.
- Your thumb determines your fat portions.

The guidelines above assume that you will be eating about 4 times a day. Keep reading the six SOPs to discover how many portions per meal.

A note on body size (with portion control)

If you're a bigger person, you probably have a bigger hand. And if you're a smaller person... well, you get the idea. Your own hand is a personalized (and portable) measuring device for your food intake. Some people do have larger or smaller hands for their body size but "normally" our own hand size correlates closely with general body size, including muscle, and bone size.

Now that we have a guideline for "how much" we should be eating, let's now look at "what" we should be eating. A special thanks to [Precision Nutrition](#) for help providing these guidelines.

The SIX SOPs of eating lean in the firehouse

(Always fall back to these Standard Operating Procedures when in doubt)

1. Limit or eliminate all liquid calories - fruit juices, soda pop, Gatorade, and

alcohol. Alcohol, of course in this day and age is something you won't be drinking in the firehouse but it is something to minimize when off the job. Alcohol provides nothing but empty calories and provokes bad choices (about food and other things). If you're going to drink beer, wine, or liquor, just keep in mind it will add calories and could keep you further away from getting fit for duty. BUT, we've got to have a little fun now and then right? Moderation in everything is the key. Gatorade and other sports drinks should only be consumed during a fire and after to help rehydrate. Fruit juices, soda pops, and even zero calorie soft drinks should be avoided. They provide nothing but empty calories and a ton of extra acids and other chemicals that will hinder the digestive, nervous, and muscular system. There is even new research that correlates diet, zero calorie drinks to overeating. A study published in *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers and Prevention* found that chugging two or more sodas a week could raise risk of most cancers. An easy choice is to AVOID them at all cost.

The second part of this SOP is to stay hydrated. All of your body's chemical reactions, including your metabolism, depend on water. If you are dehydrated you may be burning up to 2% fewer calories and with as little as a 2% body water shortage, the ability to perform a high intensity activity (like that on the fireground) can be greatly impaired. Here are some great acceptable liquids; bottled water, teas (unsweetened, natural), coffee (hold the sweeteners, except stevia, cream and sugar), coconut milk (plain), and/ or regular almond milk. You should aim at drinking

almost ½ your bodyweight in ounces of water a day. So, if you weigh 150 pounds you should try to drink 150 ounces of water each day. That sounds like a lot but consider the amount of fluid lost during fire operations. You can get a great chart and more information on the importance of hydration by [clicking here- Stay hydrated, Stay Alive.](#)



****A little note on energy drinks--They are NO GOOD. Calories or not, these things have tons of chemicals that shouldn't be in your body. If a drink doesn't have calories that once did, it means they

stripped them out by replacing it with some man-made chemical. No good to you or your body! Just avoid them! Try green or black teas, eat better and get more sleep to increase your energy.

2. Eat Your Fruits and Veggies. Mom was right, fruits and veggies should be included in every meal and in as many snacks as possible. They provide the body with muscle and energy promoting nutrients that a firefighter needs to get through the day. By loading your body with the maximum



amount of nutrients for the least number of calories, they are a dietary bargain. This does not include vegetable chips or veggie sticks or drinking fruit juice. If the fruit or vegetable in question won't rot after a few days of hanging out on the countertop, then it's a processed food. You should choose green, leafy, lower starch veggies over starchier types. Some examples of these include broccoli, kale, cauliflower, and spinach, and cabbage. Starchier types include potatoes, yams, and sweet potatoes.

Recommendations for vegetable intake:

For veggies like broccoli, spinach, salad, carrots, etc. use a fist-sized serving. For men, we recommend 2 fist-sized portions of vegetables with each meal. And for women we recommend 1 fist-sized portion of vegetables with each meal (based on eating 4 meals per day). A fist-sized portion is the same thickness *and* diameter as your fist.

On my crew, we like to put some fruits and veggies out on the table (celery, grapes, carrot sticks) and hide the sweets.



3. Add in a LEAN protein to each meal and snack. This is a must! Adding protein to your meal will help slow down the digestion of food and force the body to burn more calories. You'll also be supplying your body with essential muscle building qualities when you eat more proteins and the more muscle...the better. You should aim at consuming good sources of protein which can include meats, beans, eggs, cheese and/or milk. You need to try to ingest between .8 and 1.0 gram per pound of body weight in order to preserve your calorie-burning muscle mass.

Recommendations for protein intake:

For protein-dense foods like meat, fish, eggs, dairy, or beans, use a palm sized serving. For men we recommend two palm-sized portions with each meal. And for women we recommend one palm-sized portion with each meal. A palm-sized portion is the same thickness and diameter as your palm.

4. Minimize ALL sugars and processed foods. Cakes, candies, breads, crackers, pastas, etc. all have high amounts of processed starches and sugars (and yes, I know

they are usually around the firehouse). Here's why sugary foods are bad for you. First of all, if you eat a little sugar, you crave a bunch more. Sugar also triggers the body to store more fat. There has been lots of



research coming out lately that has linked most of the illnesses we see today (including cancer, disease, etc.) to excessive sugar intake. Choose foods with the least amount of sugar, if a product has more than 10 grams per serving and no fiber, put it back. [Click Here for a great post on “How to Reduce Sugar in \(and out\) of the Firehouse.”](#)

5. Get to know Your Carbohydrates. Seek out foods containing complex carbohydrates and fiber, like those found in fruits, vegetables and whole grains. There are two kinds of carbohydrates: starchy ones found in potatoes and whole grains, and non-starchy ones found in fruits and vegetables. The basic rule is to focus on fruits and vegetables as your main source of carbohydrates and limit the starchy ones. Fruits and vegetables are high in fiber, low in fat, and contain plenty of water. So, they are choked full or nutrients and can make you feel full. Starchy, whole-grain carbohydrates are also rich in fiber, so they make you feel full and help you reduce total food intake. Refined grains, like those found in white bread, won't give you the same benefits, and try to avoid these.

Avoid processed carbohydrates. These include grains whose high-fiber shells have been stripped away. Think of white flour or white rice. The calories are the same, but without the fiber, you lose the metabolic satisfaction of eating a grain. Also stay away from carbs that are combined with white sugar (sucrose) and/or fat.

White bread, doughnuts, cake, and pasta contain white flour (and a lot of fats) and should be avoided.

Also try to avoid low-carb pasta and breads. These products are made with soy flour (protein flour), have a chewy consistency and don't taste anything like their whole grain counterparts. You're better consuming smaller amounts of a fiber-rich product, like whole wheat pasta or whole wheat bread. Also many breads and cakes made with protein flour have a lot of added fat — and more calories.

Recommendations for carbohydrate intake:

For carbohydrate-dense foods – like grains, starches, or fruits – use a cupped hand to determine your serving size. For men we recommend 2 cupped-hand sized portions of carbohydrates with most meals. And for women we recommend 1 cupped-hand sized portion of carbohydrates with most meals.

6. Eat your healthy fats. Here is a nutritional statement worth remembering: Eating fat won't make you fat any more than eating money will make you rich. Actually eating the right kind of fats can make you leaner. The healthy fats that you want to focus on are monosaturated fats,

nuts, seeds, healthy oils found in olives, avocados, omega-3 fatty acids (found in cold water fish), grass-fed meats, some fruits and even chocolate. These fats can lower risks of heart disease, protect the cells from damage, encourage muscle growth and increase the amount of valuable nutrients available for other foods.



Recommendations for fat intake:

For fat-dense foods – like oils, butters, nut butters, nuts/seeds – use your entire thumb to determine your serving size. For men we recommend 2 thumb-sized portions of fats with most meals. And for women we recommend 1 thumb-sized portion of fats with most meals.

All of the recommendations for protein, vegetable, carbohydrate and fat are based on the assumption you'll be eating about 4 times a day. Please note that these recommendations serve as a starting point. There is no way to know exactly how your body will respond. So stay flexible and adjust your portions based on your hunger, fullness, and other important goals.

For example: if you're trying to gain weight, and you're having trouble gaining, you might add another cupped palm of carbohydrates or another thumb of fats. Likewise, if you're trying to lose weight, you might eliminate a cupped palm of carbohydrates or a thumb of fats at particular meals. Adjust your portions at any time based on your goals.

You must remember that these are guidelines. I encourage you to follow them, and if you do, I guarantee you will lean out, feel better, and ultimately be more "fit for duty."

Please read through (and use) the following notes on supplements, pre- and post-workout eating guidelines, on-the-go eating guide, the shopping list suggestion, recipes, and sample daily eating guide to help you gain an understanding how to apply these SOP's.

A note on Supplements

I get a lot of questions about for supplements via the blog and our [FRF Facebook Page](#), so I wanted to briefly address what are some good possible supplement options. For more information please look at the additional resources section (at the end of the eBook). My supplement approach is really pretty simple. I do believe that you can get the required nutrients with diet alone, but it is difficult, especially when you're working long shifts and busy. For most of us (especially in the fire service) supplements may be a useful way to help get the valuable nutrients we need. With that in mind, there are 3 basic supplements that I use and would recommend to help fill any nutritional gaps in your diet.

- The first is a [multi-vitamin](#) or a "green" food supplement.
- The second is a [protein supplement](#).
- The third is a [fish oil supplement](#).
- (Bonus)- [Sleep aid supplement](#)

Please consult your physician or other qualified health care professional on any matter regarding your health or wellbeing, especially before taking any nutritional supplements. Remember, the reader is responsible for consulting with his or her own health care professional on any matter raised within this eBook.

[Multi-vitamin](#) or a "[green](#)" [food](#) supplement

The recommended fruit and vegetable intake is at least five servings per day; however, only 3 percent of men and 7 percent of women meet even these minimums. And that's where the multi-vitamin or "greens" supplement can help. Multi-vitamin supplements have been endorsed by the most respected medical organizations in the world for their ability to help reduce the risk of nutrient deficiency. Ideally, the majority of your nutrients should come from a healthy diet rich in fruits and vegetables. A multi or "greens" supplement ensures that you get all the essential vitamins and minerals



recommended for each day, keeping your engine running smooth and adding protection against chronic illnesses. These vitamin packed options will insure that you get the vitamins needed to protect against chronic illnesses and stay "fit for duty."

[Fish oil supplement](#)

You may have heard a lot about Omega-3's. And fish oil is the key source. There's a ton of very positive research on fish oil supplementation, it's been shown to be great for fat loss, and it's even been shown to improve mood and motivation. Fish oil is rich in DHA and EPA, two powerful fats responsible for things like: increased metabolic rate, improved fat burning, and reducing our risk for a host of diseases (cardiovascular disease, cancer, and diabetes). In addition, the minimum recommended EPA and DHA intake is 900mg per day, but the average North American gets only 300mg per day, 1/3 of what's necessary for good health. And that's where fish oil supplements come in.



[Protein supplement](#)

Proteins have an overall benefit on physical activity and overall health. Protein supplementation is not entirely necessary if you get enough protein from the foods you eat, like lean meats, chicken and fish. But, since most people are crunched for time, they find themselves eating too little protein. That's why adding some quick high-quality protein can be really, really helpful, especially after a fire call or workout.

Is it possible to get all 3 nutrients from food? Absolutely. But very few fire rescue athletes come close to getting the nutrients needed. So, while the goal of this eBook is to help you get your nutrition up to par, we all have "bad" nutritional day or a long shift, these 3 supplements can be a a huge help in supporting and keeping your body "fit for duty."

What you should know about workout nutrition

A proper pre- and post- workout eating routine can greatly enhance both the intensity and stamina during your workout and the recovery after. You never want your body to be in a fasted state, especially when you work out. Yet, many people exercise on an empty stomach or with inadequate nutrition in their “tank.” Recent research has shown that you can accelerate your recovery process and increase the intensity of your workout by ingesting the proper pre-workout meal or snack.

Pre-Workout Eating

Consuming the right type and amount of food at the right time can help maximize your workouts and results. It is recommended that you consume 200-300 calories approximately 45-min prior to your scheduled workout—this gives your muscles a head start on the recovery process. These calories should be a combination of complete proteins and lower Glycemic Index carbohydrates. Lower Glycemic Index carbs contribute sustained energy throughout your workout (both strength and cardio training) while complete proteins provide the building blocks to help you gain lean muscle. The carbohydrate will give you the energy to finish the workout, the protein will ensure that your body will be able to start repairing its broken down muscles as soon as possible following a routine, especially a strength training one. If weight control is a concern, focus on the protein and minimize carbs in the pre-workout snack.

Here are some great examples of pre-workout snacks: (250-400 calories, 30-60-min prior)

- Half a ham and cheese sandwich on whole wheat or rye (the fat in the cheese lowers the GI of the bread)
- Turkey and avocado on a whole-wheat wrap (protein, carbs, and good fats)

- Nutrition Bar (40% carbs, 30% protein, 30% fat)
- Apple with organic/natural peanut butter
- Yogurt with granola
- Organic/natural peanut butter and jelly sandwich (on high fiber, whole wheat bread)
- Fruit/ vegetable smoothie with water and [whey protein](#) (maybe peanut or almond butter for taste)

It probably goes without saying, but with pre-training nutrition, choose foods that don't bother your stomach. Because... you know what happens if you don't.

Post-Workout Eating

Post-workout nutrition may be the most important component for aiding recovery and optimal fitness gains. Often times it doesn't happen soon enough, or at all, so much of your workout progress is lost! When you strength train, you are not getting stronger when you are lifting, you are breaking the muscles down. It is after the workout where the body recovers to become stronger and leaner. This is also where the body is most metabolically active...i.e. the furnace is hot! Therefore, the calories that you consume post workout are quickly burned as they are used for recovery. During this window, your muscles are primed to accept nutrients that can stimulate muscle repair, muscle growth, and muscle strength. This window opens immediately after your workout and starts to close pretty quickly. Research suggests that while protein synthesis persists for at least 48 hours after exercise, it's most important to get post-workout nutrition immediately, and within 2 hours afterwards. If you feed your body properly while this window is open, you'll get the benefits.

If you don't provide adequate post exercise nutrition fast enough — even if you delay by only a couple of hours — you decrease muscle glycogen storage and protein synthesis. It is ideal to consume a combination of carbohydrates and proteins within 40-90 min of completing your workout. If you wait longer, as

mentioned above, catabolic effects (muscle breakdown) occurs. A post-workout meal should consist of a 2-to-1 ratio of higher Glycemic Index carbohydrates and complete proteins. The combinations of these macro nutrients promote natural anabolic effects (muscle building and fat burning) in the body.

Ideally, you should have a shake or snack right after the workout. At that point, your cells are wide open and screaming for nutrients. For many people, a protein shake or high protein meal replacement bar might be an easy option. A piece of fruit is a good choice as well, since it's full of antioxidants and jump starts the regeneration process.

Here are some great examples of post-workout snacks and shakes: (300-400 calories, within 40-min after).

- [Protein powder](#) with juice or watered down sports drink (all high GI).
- Chicken and rice (complete protein with high GI)
- [Whey protein powder blended](#) with milk and a banana (higher GI fruit)
- Cottage cheese w/ orange slices or other fruit
- Tuna or chicken salad with pasta
- Protein or meal replacement nutrition bar (40-50 grams carbs, 20-30 grams protein)
- Half a bagel with 2 organic eggs (or ham) and cheese
- Organic chocolate milk

Which Type of Exercise Qualifies for a Workout?

Save your post-workout meals and shakes for weight training, interval, and endurance training lasting 45 minutes or longer. This can and does include high-intensity fire calls also! Casual exercise like walking the dog, cleaning around the yard or house, or riding your bike to work doesn't require a recovery drink or post-workout meal.

The main idea in pre- and post- workout nutrition is to get something that contains complete proteins and quality carbohydrates to maximize results. Eating and hydrating consistently throughout the day lets the body repair and prepare for exercise. Bars, shakes and other specialized products may be a good option for those trying to recover from a longer fire call (or those not having enough time to prepare whole foods). . But whole foods are the best (and least expensive) way to fuel. In the end, there's no one perfect pre-and-post-training feeding regimen for everyone. What to eat is always based on personal preference, time and resources available and budget.

Eating On the Go

I hope these SOG's and information on supplements and workout nutrition have helped to clarify and simplify your nutrition. One of the major challenges we have not addressed is how to eat on-the-go. Sometimes life or in the case of fire rescue athletes, calls, make it difficult to prepare and eat healthy food. We all "get busy." Eating well becomes inconvenient. Maybe no one else on your crew or family supports your decision to eat healthy (this needs to change eventually though). When these inevitable circumstances come up, I want you to have options, not feel like you have to bail on your health.

Let's look at the three most frequently reported reasons for eating unhealthy fast-food:

- It's quick It's easy to get
- It tastes good
- What does this tell us? When the going gets tough, people get going to Fat burger....

We often gravitate toward "fast food" because we feel there are not any healthy options. A major battle in the fight to get and stay FRF (Fire Rescue Fit) is

having nutritious food ready and available. Even if you know what's healthy, if you aren't prepared when it's time to eat, you're doomed.

With that being said, what can you do? You can plan for the unplanned. How can you “plan for the unplanned?” Well, for one you can have healthy food ready to eat or you can learn how to make healthy choices when eating out. Each depends on your willingness, time management, money management, and overall goals.

Healthy Food Prep (Pre-planning)

Having food already prepped and ready is a great way to insure you make healthy choices. In the firehouse, I always try to have healthy options available. When you're really hungry and tired you have a tendency to eat whatever is in front of you and convenient. In the firehouse typically that is sugary, unhealthy, baked goods. So, I try to put that sugary stuff in the cupboards and leave out some healthy options. If you're at home, one way to “be prepared” is to try to prepare food for the week. Imagine this, every time you are hungry and ready to eat, you flip open a cooler or the fridge and take out a container of a tasty, nutritious food.

Try to pick one night each week and start a little food prep ritual. Set aside a few hours, plan your food intake, buy the foods, and prepare the foods. This will take time, but remember, you get out what you put in. Things that are worthwhile (in nutrition and in life) take time and effort.

I like to prepare a bunch of food on Sundays but any day will do. At first though, your friends, family and crew may dismiss this new habit as “extremist.” They might insist that you've lost your mind and joined a food preparation cult. While certain situations do call for a more relaxed approach to eating (lugging your lunch pail into a restaurant with colleagues for a job interview isn't very cool), having nutritious eats for the week is generally what fit people do.



Maybe the food prep for a week is not your thing or does not work with your schedule. How about a daily food prep ritual? In less than 30 minutes, you can get all your food organized for the day (or the following day). This can be as easy as heading to your local market before/after your day begins and loading up a big container (or 2) at the salad bar with the food you need. This may be a great option at the firehouse also, in the morning find or bring some “emergency food” in case you get too busy to cook. This emergency meal may just be enough to get you by until you are able to cook some healthy options.

Still not too sure about the meal prep options. Then, how about setting the alarm 30-minutes earlier each day and doing a breakfast ritual. It’s a mini-version of the weekly ritual. Just gather up the food you have on hand and prep your meals for the day. Steam some veggies, cut some fruit, mix some beans, pack some water, etc. Just do this while you’re making your first meal of the day. The key is to prepare, plan, and you will succeed.



Eating Out Guide

Maybe it’s for business, maybe it’s for school, maybe it’s a date, maybe it’s a special occasion or maybe you and the crew don’t have time to prepare food. It doesn’t matter. The last-minute restaurant meal will likely occur at some point. Instead of sabotaging your health, here are some good guidelines that will help you keep your meal selection on the right track. Let me note that it is alright to indulge (I try to do it 2x per week) but if you need a good, healthy meal while eating out, here are some tips.

When menu-scanning, you can use several strategies. Select any one of these options for your meal (not all of them):

1. Order a good protein--Is there: grilled chicken breast, lean beef, shrimp, tuna, beans, etc.? Start with the protein, then add veggies (such as a side salad instead of fries).

2. Or, look for veggies--Is there a salad? Veggies and dip? Start with that and figure out how to add protein to it — you can often get chicken breast or steak added to a salad.
3. If the first or second option doesn't look good, then look at side dishes. Often you can assemble a pretty good meal from a few side orders, such as a single egg or a cup of fruit or cottage cheese.
4. Finally, if you cannot find anything, then, look at the appetizer menu. If you're at a restaurant, it's a safe bet to assume portions will be big. Try ordering a small item or a half plate of the entre instead of the whole thing. Soup and salad are filling, and most restaurants offer some variation on this theme. And, always remember to avoid the chips and/or bread sticks (they add up).

Build a list of good restaurant options that you know offer healthy choices. Keep that list of options in your back pocket (or on your phone) as a ready response to “Oh I don't know, where would you like to go?”

In summary, here is what you need to remember when eating out.... Focus on veggies, then mix in some lean protein and whole grains if desired. Add a bit of healthy fat. Order items steamed and dry with sauce and dressing on the side. Don't eat until you're stuffed (stop before that). And, drink at least 3 glasses of water at the table. There you have it.... easy right?

Eating healthy can be difficult. But it can also be quite easy. If having healthy food on hand is holding you back, try incorporating a food preparation ritual. See how it works for you. If once a week is overwhelming, try a daily ritual. If you aren't willing to invest the time and energy into your own food prep, try outsourcing. Your body will thank you. Remember, a pre-plan can really help...

Based on the guidelines above, use this shopping list next time you hit the store...

Items to put on your Firehouse shopping list

Lean meats and fish

Chicken
Ground beef (preferably 15% fat or less)
Sirloin steak
Top round pork
Turkey
Turkey sausage
Tuna
Salmon
Sea bass
Tilapia
Trout
Cod
Flounder
Halibut
Grouper
Mahi mahi
Orange roughy
Shrimp
Scallops
Lobster
Crab

[Whey protein powder](#)

Legumes

Black beans
Pinto beans
Black-eyed peas
Kidney beans
Red lentils
Edamame

Nuts and Seeds (GOOD FATS)

Almonds
Brazil nuts
Cashews
Hazelnuts (filberts)
Macadamia nuts
Pecans
Pine nuts



Pistachios (unsalted)
Pumpkin seeds
Sesame seeds
Sunflower seeds
Walnuts

Fiber rich grains

Fresh or whole wheat pasta
Whole-grain breads (make sure the label reads WHOLE GRAIN)
Long grain brown rice
Quinoa

Vegetables (Green, Leafy Veggies)

Artichoke
Asparagus
Beets
Bell peppers
Broccoli
Brussels sprouts
Cabbage
Carrots
Cauliflower
Celery
Cucumber
Eggplant
Garlic
Green onions
Green beans
Kale
Lettuce
Mushrooms
Onions
Peas
Parsley
Parsnip
Peppers (all kinds)
Pumpkin
Radish
Romaine lettuce
Rutabaga
Spinach
Squash (all kinds)
Tomato (actually a fruit, but most people think of it as a vegetable)
Turnips



Eggs and dairy foods

Eggs or Omega-3 eggs

Cheese

Frozen yogurt (preferably Greek)

Ice cream

Ice milk

Whole, 1% or 2% milk and or Chocolate milk

Cheddar cheese

Mozzarella cheese, feta cheese, goat cheese string cheese sticks, cottage cheese

**Try to go for Organic when possible

Fruit

Apple

Apricots

Avocado (More of a Fat)

Banana

Blackberries

Blueberries (also can use frozen)

Cantaloupe

Cherries

Cranberries

Figs

Grapes

Honeydew melon

Kiwi

Lemon

Lime

Mango

Orange

Pineapple

Pomegranate

Prunes

Raisins

Raspberries (also can use frozen)

Rhubarb

Strawberries (also can use frozen)

**Spreads**

Almond butter, cashew butter, peanut butter (organic), black currant jam, black bean dip, hummus

Seasonings

Basil, parsley, cilantro, cayenne, watercress, cumin, curry powder, chili powder, cinnamon, red-pepper flakes, reduced sodium soy sauce, red-wine vinegar, cider vinegar

Using the SIX SOPs of eating lean in the firehouse

Here is a sample daily menu and eating plan using the six SOP's as a guide

Food Breakdown	Actual Application
<p style="text-align: center;">Breakfast:</p> Quick Option - Protein Shake OR Lean Protein Source (Eggs) Non Starchy Veggies Source (spinach) Starchy Carb Choice (oatmeal best choice) Fruit Source (berries, apple, banana)	Sausage and Cheese Muffins Oatmeal Blueberries Multi-vitamin Fish Oil
<p style="text-align: center;">Mid Morning Snack:</p> Lean Protein Source (slices of turkey, low sodium beef jerky or Greek yogurt) Fruit Source (Apple, Berries)	Greek Yogurt Apple OR Kind bar
<p style="text-align: center;">Lunch:</p> Lean Protein Source (turkey, chicken, salmon) Non Starchy Carb (Bowl of Lettuce, Spinach, etc.) Grain Source (Whole grain bread, rye, or Ezekiel Bread)	Healthy Sloppy Joes Whole Grain Bun Broccoli (steamed with a little butter) Whole grain pretzels Glass of 1% Milk
<p style="text-align: center;">Mid Afternoon Snack:</p> Lean protein Source (Protein Shake) OR Healthy Fat Source (Nuts, seeds)	Turkey Avocado Wraps or Protein shake
<p style="text-align: center;">Dinner:</p> Lean Protein Source (Lean Meat Choice) Starchy Carb Choice	Healthy Turkey Loaf Greens and Spinach Salad
<p style="text-align: center;">Evening Snack:</p> Lean Protein Source	½ cup 1% cottage cheese Fish Oil

*** The Fire Rescue Athlete should aim to drink half of their body weight in ounces of water each day. So, if you weigh 180 pounds, try to get 90 ounces of water.



10 Healthy Firehouse Recipes

Here are 10 great options for cooking at the firehouse (or your own house). Please note the serving sizes; you may have to adjust the ingredient amounts to fit the size of your crew. ENJOY! For more “healthy” options make sure you utilize the Healthy Firehouse Recipes eBook bonus. For a great printed book option, I recommend this [30-minute meals option](#). It has great recipes that are easy and quick.

Breakfast/ Brunch Recipes

Broccoli Spears Omelet

Ingredients (makes 2 servings)

- 5 eggs
- ½ fistful of parsley
- Splash of soy sauce
- 2 tsp of olive oil
- 2 Tbsp broccoli florets
- 5 asparagus spears (chopped)
- ¼ string beans, halved
- ½ cup spinach
- 1 glove of garlic, chopped
- Dash of black pepper

Directions

1. Mix the eggs, parsley and soy sauce in a bowl.
2. Coat a skillet with the olive oil and sauté the broccoli, asparagus, beans, spinach, garlic, and black pepper for 5 minutes.
3. Pour the egg mixture over the vegetables. Stir it for about 30 seconds and then let it sit for a minute. Stir it again until the eggs firm up and then let it sit for another minute. Then fold it and remove from pan. Enjoy.

Sausage & Cheese “Muffins”

Ingredients (makes 4-5 servings)

- 4 ounces turkey sausage or crumbled turkey bacon
- 5 large eggs
- ½ cup (2---oz.) shredded reduced---fat cheddar cheese
- ½ green bell pepper, chopped
- ¼ onion, chopped
- 1 can (12---oz.) sliced mushrooms, drained

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Coat a 6---cup nonstick muffin pan with cooking spray, or line with paper baking cups.
3. In a medium nonstick skillet over medium---high heat, cook the sausage, pepper, and onion for 5 minutes or until the sausage is no longer pink.
4. Spoon the mixture into a bowl and cool slightly. Stir in the eggs and mushrooms.
5. Evenly divide the mixture among the prepared muffin cups. Sprinkle with the cheese.
6. Bake for 20 minutes or until the egg is set.

Healthy Snack Recipes

Holy Granoly

(Here is a great option for a healthy snack. It takes a little time to cook so I recommend cooking a bunch, storing and using for a snack all week long.)

Ingredients (4-6 servings)

- 3 cups oats
- ½ cup unsalted almonds, roasted
- 3 Tbsp whole flaxseeds
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 cup toasted wheat germ
- 4 scoops vanilla whey protein powder
- 2 Tbsp brown sugar
- 3 Tbsp honey
- 3 Tbsp dried cranberries
- 3 Tbsp dates, chopped
- 2 Tbsp raisins
- 1 cup water

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350
2. In a large bowl, mix together the oats, almonds, flaxseeds, cinnamon, wheat germ, protein powder, brown sugar, honey and water.
3. Coat a large baking pan with cooking spray. Add the mixture and spread it from edge to edge to create an even layer.
4. Bake for 90 minutes, stirring every 15 minutes, until all the granola is browned and crunchy. If it's not crunchy after 90 minutes, bake for 15 minutes longer while watching to make sure that it doesn't get too dark
5. Remove from the oven and allow it to cool completely.
6. Add the cranberries, dates, and raisins. Stir to mix.

Avocado Wraps

(This is an easy, healthy snack.)

Ingredients (serves 4-6 per avocado)

Avocado, sliced lengthwise (make sure to peel skin and de-pit)

8 deli turkey slices

Toothpicks

Directions

1. Take slice of avocado and wrap with a slice of turkey.
2. Use toothpicks to keep wrap sealed.

Lunch Recipes

Sunrise Casserole

Ingredients (serves 4)

1 large onion, chopped

1 green or red bell pepper, chopped

6 ounces low-fat turkey sausage, cut into bite-size pieces

¼ teaspoon ground sage

2 ½ cups 1% milk

¾ cup liquid egg substitute

½ cup (2 ounces) cubed low-fat cheddar cheese

¼ teaspoon salt

4 cups bread cubes, crusts removed

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Coat an 8" x 8" baking dish with nonstick spray.
2. Coat a large nonstick skillet with nonstick spray. Set over medium-high heat. Add the onion and bell pepper. Cook for 3 to 4 minutes, or until almost soft. Add the sausage and sage. Cook, stirring often, for 5 minutes, or until the sausage is no longer pink.
3. Meanwhile, in a large bowl, combine the milk, egg substitute, Cheddar, and salt. Add the bread cubes and the sausage mixture. Stir to mix, making sure that the bread cubes are moistened. Pour into the prepared baking dish. Press with the back of a spoon to pack the mixture.
4. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes, or until browned and slightly puffed.

Heart Healthy Chicken Sandwich

Ingredients (serves 4)

2 tablespoons nonfat plain yogurt

2 tablespoons light mayonnaise

1/3 cup chopped celery

2 tablespoons finely chopped onions
1 (9.75 ounce) can Swanson® Premium Chunk Chicken Breast in Water, drained
8 slices Pepperidge Farm® Whole Grain 100% Whole Wheat Bread
8 slices tomatoes
4 lettuce leaves

Directions

1. Stir the yogurt, mayonnaise, celery, onion and chicken in a medium bowl.
2. Divide the chicken mixture among 4 bread slices.
3. Top with the tomato, lettuce and remaining bread slices

Healthy Sloppy Joes

Ingredients (serves 4)

Pound of meat (turkey or beef)
2 cloves of garlic
1 medium onion shredded
1 cup of Ketchup (organic)
1 tablespoon YELLOW mustard
1 tablespoon brown sugar
Couple dashes of hot sauce
1 diced green pepper

Directions

1. Brown meet in a large skillet, add onions and peppers, continue to stir on medium heat.
2. Add sugar and garlic and mustard...stir well. Enjoy.

Dinner Recipes

Healthy Turkey Loaf

Ingredients (serves 4)

½ pound ground turkey
1 egg
¼ cup salsa
1/8 cup chopped red bell pepper
1/8 cup chopped yellow bell pepper
¼ cup chopped onion
¼ cup dry bread crumbs
Lemon pepper to taste

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).

2. In a large bowl combine the turkey, egg, salsa, red bell pepper, yellow bell pepper, onion, bread crumbs and lemon pepper. Mix well with hands until blended. Press mixture into a loaf pan.
3. Bake in the preheated oven for 25 minutes.

Grilled Fish with Asparagus

Ingredients (serves 4)

5 medium lemons, divided

½ cup Sun---Dried Tomato Dressing

4 firm---textured fish fillets (1 lb.), such as cod, tilapia or salmon

1 lb. asparagus, trimmed

Directions:

1. Squeeze juice from 1 of the lemons; mix with the dressing. Pour half of the dressing mixture into large re-sealable plastic bag. Add fish fillets; seal bag. Marinate in refrigerator at least 15 min. Cover and refrigerate remaining dressing mixture for later use.
2. Meanwhile, preheat grill to medium heat. Cut each of the remaining lemons into 4 slices. Remove fish from marinade; discard bag and marinade. Place 8 of the lemon slices on grill grate; top with the fish. Brush with some of the reserved dressing mixture. Cover grill with lid. Grill fish 5 min.; turn over. Add remaining 8 lemon slices and the asparagus to grill.
3. Grill an additional 5 min. or until fish flakes easily with fork and asparagus is crisp---tender, brushing with the reserved dressing mixture.
4. Remove fish, lemon slices and asparagus from grill. Discard lemon slices under fish. Serve remaining lemon slices with fish and asparagus.

Additional Resources

Here are some great additional resources to learn more about nutrition and supplementation for the Fire Rescue Athlete:

Paragon Nutrition

- [Healthy Sleep](#)

Precision Nutrition (I am Precision Nutrition Certified, I highly recommend their programs):

- [3 Supplements I recommend](#)
- [How to Fix Your Diet](#)
- [Calorie Control Guide](#)

Prevention.com

- [Your Guide to Calories and Portion Control](#)

MayoClinic.org

- [Portion Control](#)

Health.com

- [8 Tips for Controlling Portion Sizes](#)

Other Great blog posts from FireRescueFitness.com about nutrition:

- [Nutritional Myths around the Firehouse...](#)
- [Healthy Nutrition in the Firehouse \(or any house\)](#)
- [10 Simple Rules for Firefighter Fat Loss...](#)
- [Trick or Treat....Why Sugar is Bad](#)
- [Saving Firefighters Lives...](#)
- [3 Healthy Eating Tips for the Firehouse \(or any house\)...](#)
- [4 foods that help firefighters combat heart disease...](#)