

Stronger than Sarcopenia



Addressing Sarcopenia with Nutrition

Sarcopenia (saar-ko-pee-ni-uh) is the loss of muscle and strength that can happen when someone gets older and does less physical activity. This may cause trouble with daily activities like standing from a chair, walking, twisting the lid off a jar, or carrying groceries. Over time, loss of strength can lead to falls or other injuries. As we age, we naturally lose muscle, and it can become harder to get the same level of exercise that we used to.

Doing exercise that moves and uses your muscles, like lifting weights or doing push-ups, and eating a healthy diet can help you stay strong and reduce your risk of developing sarcopenia.

Our bodies need protein to stay strong, and repair and maintain our muscles. As we age, we need to eat more **protein** to keep our muscles healthy. To find out how much protein you need per day to treat or manage sarcopenia, divide your weight in pounds by half, then multiply by 1.2.

TIP: To calculate your minimum daily protein requirement:

$$\text{YOUR WEIGHT IN POUNDS} \div 2 \times 1.2$$

If you weigh 150 pounds, you need at least 90 grams of protein a day.

Tips for Getting Enough Protein

Eating more protein as we grow older means staying stronger, longer. Some foods high in protein are:

- **Lean cuts of meat, poultry, and eggs:** skinless chicken and turkey, beef, lamb, goat, pork loin, quail, and duck
- **Fish and seafood:** like salmon, tuna, cod, shrimp, mackerel, lobster, catfish, and crab
- **Low-fat or fat-free dairy foods:** yogurt, milk, cheese, and cottage cheese
- **Legumes:** peanuts, beans, split peas, lentils, and soy
- **Nuts and seeds:** walnuts, almonds, chia seeds, pumpkin seeds, pistachios, and cashews

Adding **30 grams of protein** to each meal is a good way to meet the daily requirement. Eating 20 almonds adds 6 grams of protein, and one chicken breast adds about 40 grams of protein to your daily diet.

Eating a balanced diet that includes food that is high in protein is important to treat and manage sarcopenia. A diet high in protein provides essential key nutrients required for muscle growth, maintenance, and repair. If you struggle to eat enough protein, adding protein shakes or drinks can help you reach your goal.

To learn more about protein intake and guidelines for healthy eating, visit the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) and [MyPlate](#) resources.

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To learn more, please visit [womenshealth.gov/sarcopenia](https://www.womenshealth.gov/sarcopenia).

