

*How to Create
a Non-Time-Consuming
Food Journal:*

A Guide to Help You Track
Your Nutrition AND Stick to It

by

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| <i>BRIEF NOTE</i> | 3 |
| <i>INTRODUCTION - Video #1</i> | 4 |
| <i>NAMING YOUR FILE - Video #2</i> | 7 |
| <i>SAVING YOUR FILE - Video #3</i> | 8 |
| <i>EXPLAINING THE BLANK CHART - Video #4</i> | 10 |
| <i>EXPLAINING THE FOOD COUNT CHART - Video #5</i> | 15 |
| <i>Why I Count ONLY Calories - Video #6</i> | 17 |
| <i>How I Split Up the Month - Video #7</i> | 20 |
| <i>ENTERING DATA INTO THE CHART - Video #8</i> | 21 |
| <i>EXPLAINING THE BLUE DAYS - Video #9</i> | 23 |
| <i>CONCLUSION - Video #10</i> | 25 |

BRIEF NOTE

Since this guide follows a video series on the Geek Wing Chun YouTube channel, each section will include the video series number in its name. For example, the first section is called INTRODUCTION - Video #1. Also, these titles are all hyperlinks, so they will take you to the corresponding YouTube video.

With the explanation of the naming convention out of the way, I would now like to insert all my links in this section that isn't a section. Is it shameless self-promotion? Absolutely!

If you are interested in any further tips of mine (in relation to Wing Chun, exercise, nutrition, and mental health), you can find Geek Wing Chun on the web and social media via these links:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/GeekWingChunInc>

<http://www.geekwingchuninc.com/>

<http://www.facebook.com/geekwingchuninc>

<https://twitter.com/geekwingchuninc>

<https://www.instagram.com/geekwingchun>

<https://www.pinterest.com/geekwingchun>

<https://www.reddit.com/user/GeekWingChun>

<https://www.tumblr.com/blog/geekwingchun>

<https://mix.com/geekwingchun>

<https://geekwingchun.blogspot.com/>

<https://geekwingchuninc.wordpress.com/>

If you have any questions about this guide or anything else, you can reach me here: geekwingchun@gmail.com

DISCLAIMER: *This guide contains affiliate links, which means I get a commission if you buy it. However, I want to assure you of one thing: I don't recommend a product/app unless I believe in them; it's not just because I get a small monetary reward.*

With that out of the way, let's dive in!

~~~Steve Grogan

## INTRODUCTION - Video #1

Welcome to this step-by-step PDF guide, which helps you through the accompanying 10-part video series, which can be found here:

### [How to Create a Non-Time-Consuming Food Journal Video Series](#)

It is my belief that, when it comes to tracking nutrition, many people give up for the same reason they give up on many things: *it gets to be too difficult.*

Think of all the things you are told to track:

- Calories
- Protein
- Carbs
- Net carbs (for the Atkins fans)
- Fat
- Sodium

And that's just for starters. Then there are diet plans out there that tell you, "You should get a macronutrient count that is 40% protein, 20% carbs, and 40% fat." (Those percentages are just an example of the advice a plan might give.)

Have you ever *tried* to make sure you are getting that exact distribution of macronutrients? It can drive you mad!

I'm here to tell you: it doesn't have to be so complicated.

This guide and video series walk you through an example of how I set up my own food journal/nutrition tracking system. I have tweaked it over time, and I will most likely continue to do so. However, I feel the current version is good enough to share with you.

(SIDE NOTE: If I do change things, then I will revise and replace this guide and the sample food journal.)

Some people out there might wonder, "Why are you creating this complicated guide? I mean, there are apps out there like MyFitnessPal that can do all this stuff for me."

My answer comes in multiple parts. One of them is that I am old school, and I still believe in recording things myself. Granted, I am not so old school that I believe in using just paper and pen, but it is still an old notion to record things in this manner.

Believe me, I am aware of that. However, I still believe in using a journal like this because it makes it easier to compare how your nutrition is doing over time. No need to scroll through multiple entries on an app that you can't even compare side-by-side.

Second: I HATE those apps. I tried using MyFitnessPal once. It lasted about three days. It was annoying to me how many entries there were. If I have chicken for lunch, and I search for that on the app, why do I need to get a billion results?

This way, my counts are in my control, instead of being at the mercy of some other user who might not have entered them correctly.

Before you begin with your journal, you will need a few tools. One of them is a food scale. Here is a model I recommend:

<https://amzn.to/3iVypy0>

Next you will need a way to notate your food counts, especially while you are out of the house. Tracking is *essential*. Trust me: you *cannot* rely on your memory for this!

Personally, I prefer the old-fashioned way of tracking things: writing them down! To do that, you want to get a pen and then a little item that my fiancé calls "a detective notebook."

<https://amzn.to/3pvqpX7>

If you prefer fancy pens, here are some options:

<https://amzn.to/3iWvtRG>

<https://amzn.to/39twZb9>

<https://amzn.to/39rZEgp>

Having offered those, I realize this method won't appeal to most people in the modern day. There is no point in resisting that, so I must also make you aware of apps that can be used for this endeavor.

As I mentioned earlier, I cannot stand MyFitnessPal. It is like the Wikipedia of food apps, in that anyone can add anything to the food entries. You have no idea what kind of maniac is on the other end of that app, adding all sorts of wonky counts!

However, while I was trying to find counts for the foods I eat, I stumbled upon another site that I absolutely love, called Fat Secret. This site lets you really dial in your numbers by letting you search for calorie counts *by the ounce*. I love that!

Fat Secret has a website and apps for iPhone and Android. I use the site myself (again, because I prefer recording my counts by hand), but I have listed all three links for you to check out:

WEBSITE: <https://www.fatsecret.com/>

IPHONE: <https://apple.co/2MyaqZR>

ANDROID: <https://bit.ly/36kKdVG>

Just because this is my website/app of choice doesn't mean I am going to impose it on you. Therefore, here are links to a few more options, even my nemesis MyFitnessPal.

| <b>LOSE IT!</b>                                                 | <b>CRONOMETER</b>                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="https://loseit.com/">https://loseit.com/</a>           | <a href="https://bit.ly/2YDw95r">https://bit.ly/2YDw95r</a>     |
| <a href="https://apple.co/39vPX0N">https://apple.co/39vPX0N</a> | <a href="https://apple.co/3cn5Poc">https://apple.co/3cn5Poc</a> |
| <a href="https://bit.ly/3t9lnSc">https://bit.ly/3t9lnSc</a>     | <a href="https://bit.ly/2YpCVeP">https://bit.ly/2YpCVeP</a>     |

| <b>SPARKPEOPLE</b>                                                      | <b>MYFITNESSPAL</b>                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="https://www.sparkpeople.com/">https://www.sparkpeople.com/</a> | <a href="https://www.myfitnesspal.com/">https://www.myfitnesspal.com/</a> |
| <a href="https://apple.co/3cn5H7S">https://apple.co/3cn5H7S</a>         | <a href="https://apple.co/3t51GuR">https://apple.co/3t51GuR</a>           |
| <a href="https://bit.ly/2YtkeGU">https://bit.ly/2YtkeGU</a>             | <a href="https://bit.ly/2YnQivR">https://bit.ly/2YnQivR</a>               |

The last thing you need is a spreadsheet program like Excel. If you don't have that and can't afford it, there is a wonderful, free alternative called Open Office.

This all-inclusive download has programs that simulate what you would get in Microsoft Office (word processor, spreadsheet, slideshow presentation, etc.). You can grab it here:

<https://www.openoffice.org/download/>

Got all that? Good! Now we can begin!

## NAMING YOUR FILE - Video #2

Obviously, you can name your file any way you see fit. However, I wanted to show you how I do it and explain why.

Here is a screenshot of how I name my journals:



Why do I name it the way I do? Well, let's address each part.

I am going to start at the end, because that is the easiest part to explain: "Food Journal." That is self-explanatory.

Next up: "Grogan." I put my last name in the title because I send my journal to my personal trainer (Jay Vincent at [BioFitNY](#)) on a weekly basis. He has a lot of clients, so it would be easy for him to lose track of which journal belongs to which client. Therefore, I make it easy for him by saving my name in the file.

Last "2021\_01." First we have the year, followed by the month.

Why do I put the year and then the month? Personal preference. At the time, I saved all my journals in one folder, and I realized if the month was first, the computer would rearrange them like so:

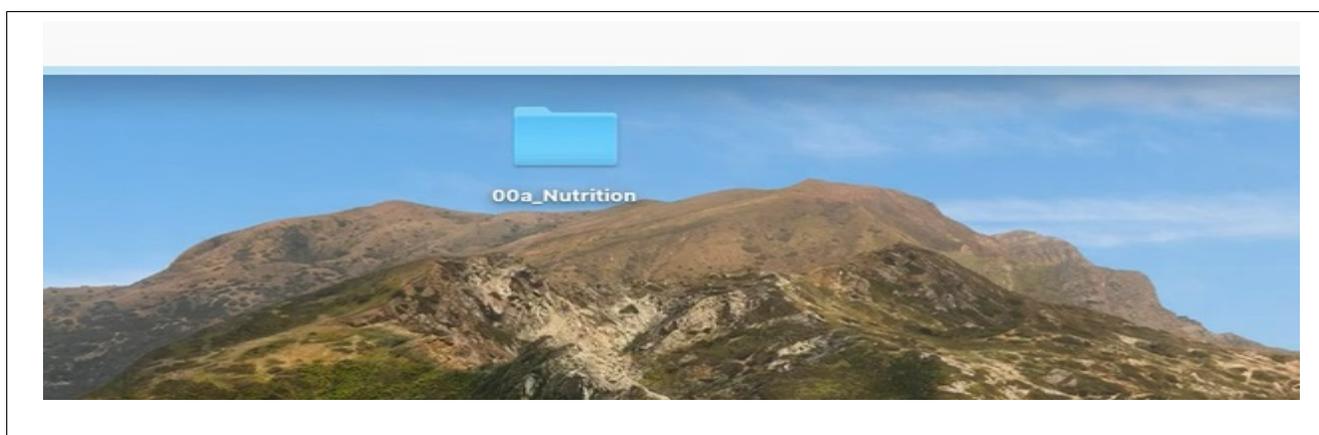
```
01_2020
01_2021
02_2020
02_2021
03_2020
03_2021
```

The ideal way to arrange each year would be from start to finish, so I put the month first. (As time went on, I came up with a different saving method that negated the importance of this, but I kept the naming convention anyway.)

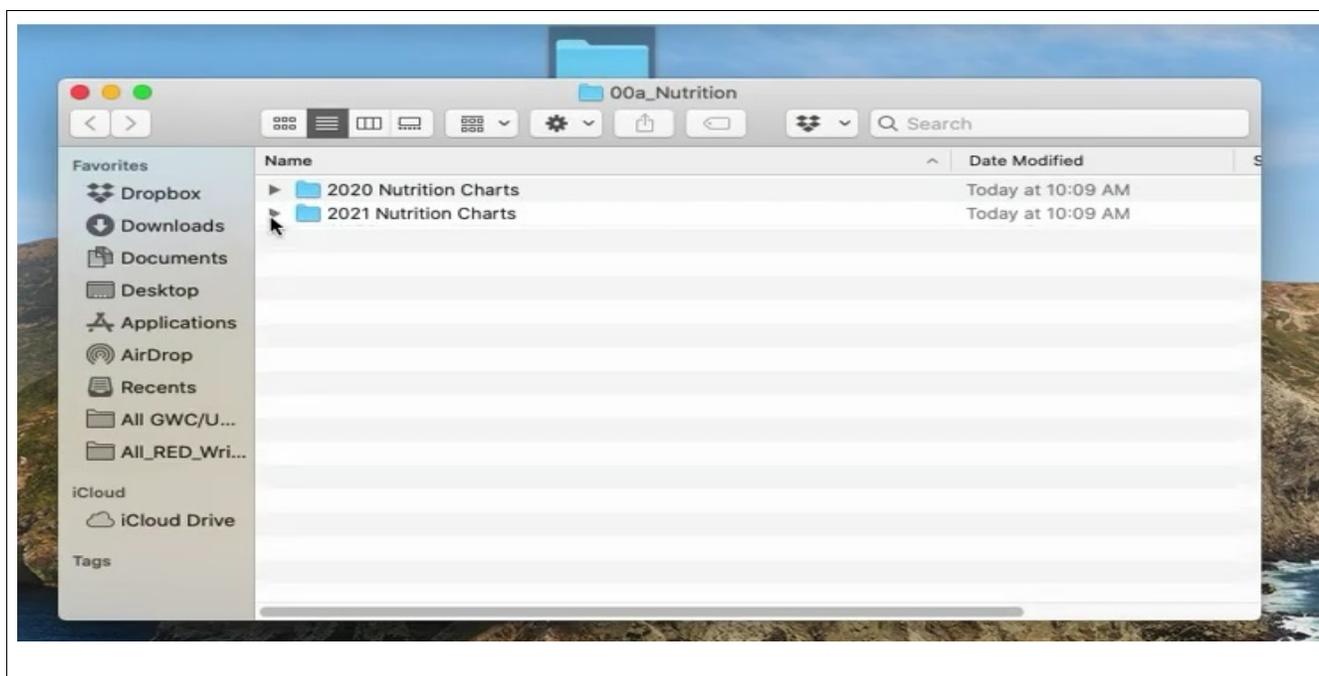
## SAVING YOUR FILE - Video #3

As with naming your file (and pretty much every other step in this series), where you save it is up to you. However, since this is my guide, I'm going to show you how *I* do it.

First, I created a folder called "Nutrition." You'll see it is called "00a\_Nutrition." That is because, in reality, this is a subfolder of a subfolder of a subfolder. However, I didn't want to confuse things, so I moved it to the desktop while I made this video.



Next, let's look inside the Nutrition folder:

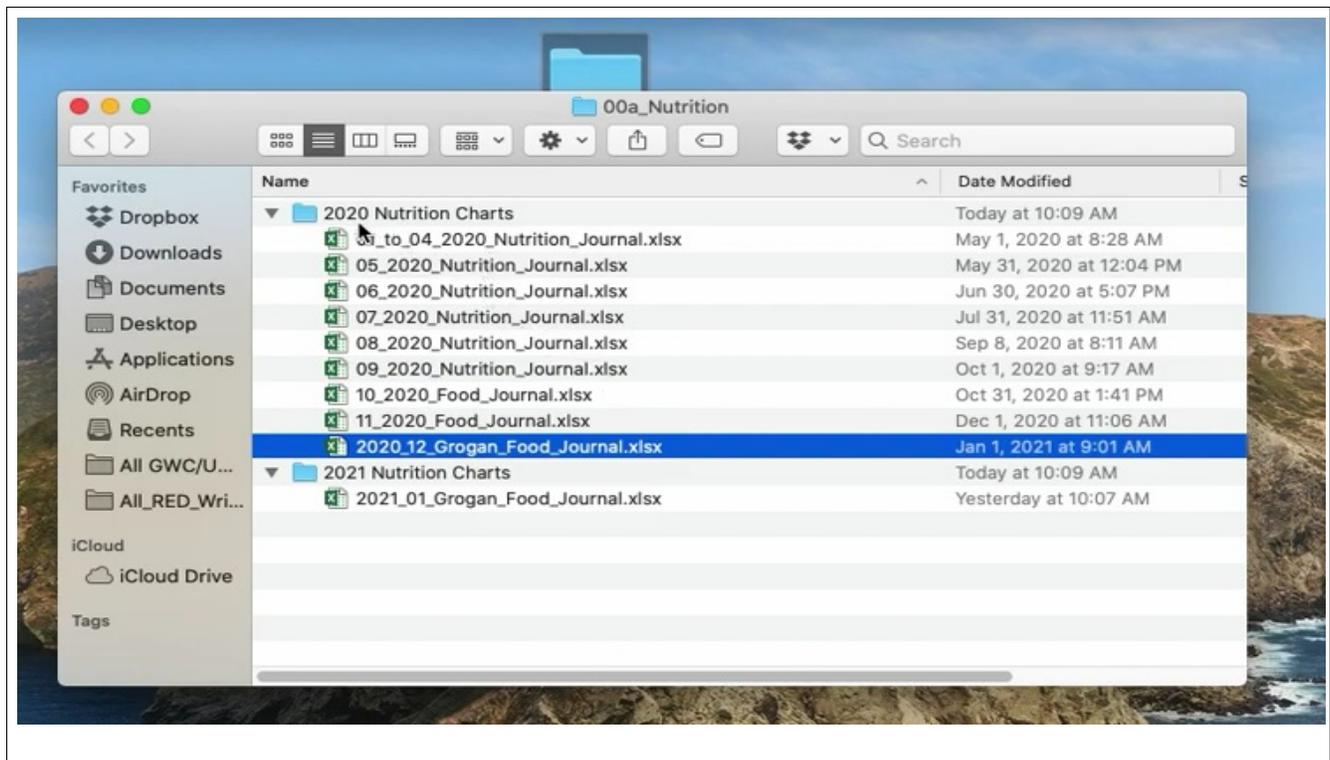


As you can see, I created two folders so far. Each one contains the journals for that entire year.

In the last section, I explained that I put the year first and then the month because I was originally saving all the journals in one folder. However, I prefer this method.

Yes, this means you have more folders, but (in my opinion) this approach makes it easier to organize the journals by year.

Now let's look at both years and see how things have changed:



As you can see, things are quite different.

For example, that first file in 2020 actually contained food journals for January to April.

At the time, I thought it would be better to save fewer files by putting more data into one journal. However, over time I realized this made the journals too difficult to read.

In the corresponding video, I explain all these differences line by line, so I am not going to go over it again here.

## EXPLAINING THE BLANK CHART - Video #4

Here is the blank daily chart in its entirety:

|    |           |       |     |
|----|-----------|-------|-----|
| 1  | DATE:     | Food  | Cal |
| 2  | Breakfast |       |     |
| 3  |           |       |     |
| 4  |           |       |     |
| 5  |           |       |     |
| 6  |           |       |     |
| 7  | SUBTOTAL  |       |     |
| 8  | Lunch     |       |     |
| 9  |           |       |     |
| 10 |           |       |     |
| 11 | SUBTOTAL  |       |     |
| 12 | Dinner    |       |     |
| 13 |           |       |     |
| 14 |           |       |     |
| 15 |           |       |     |
| 16 |           |       |     |
| 17 | SUBTOTAL  |       |     |
| 18 | Snack     |       |     |
| 19 |           |       |     |
| 20 |           |       |     |
| 21 | SUBTOTAL  |       |     |
| 22 | DAILY     | TOTAL |     |
| 23 |           |       |     |

I made it a little "squattier" than it really is, just so it doesn't take up too much of the page.

Now let's go through each field from left to right, top to bottom, so we can understand what we are putting where.

|   |       |      |     |
|---|-------|------|-----|
| 1 | DATE: | Food | Cal |
|---|-------|------|-----|

Here are the headings at the top of the columns.

**DATE:** This one is obvious. Put whatever date for which you are recording your food intake.

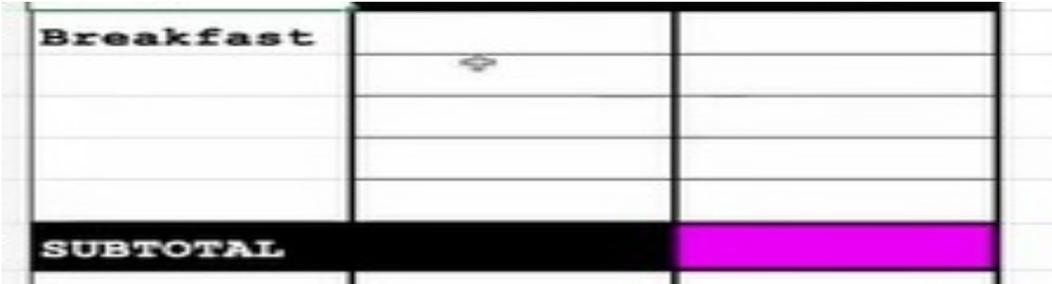
**FOOD:** On its own, this seems like an obvious one - it's the spot where you put the food you ate.

However, there is a twist I put on how I enter food here. I will explain that when we get to the next section of the chart.

**CAL:** Short for "calories." Put your numbers here.

If there are any Atkins or Keto diet fans reading this right now, you are probably wondering why I don't have columns for protein, carb, and fat counts. That is explained in Video #6.

For now, let's go to the next section of the chart.



|                  |  |  |
|------------------|--|--|
| <b>Breakfast</b> |  |  |
|                  |  |  |
|                  |  |  |
|                  |  |  |
|                  |  |  |
| <b>SUBTOTAL</b>  |  |  |

**COLUMN 1/ROW 1:** Notate the meal whose counts you are entering.

**COLUMN 2/ROWS 1 and beyond:** Enter the name of the food you ate.

As I said in the last section, there is a trick I use for entering food names here. Let's run through that now.

For example, let's say I ate a chicken salad for breakfast. If I were to type it out, the cell would expand like this:



|   | A                | B             | C          |
|---|------------------|---------------|------------|
| 1 | <b>DATE:</b>     | <b>Food</b>   | <b>Cal</b> |
| 2 | <b>Breakfast</b> | Chicken Salad |            |
| 3 |                  |               |            |

I don't like that. It takes up too much space for me.

When the column gets too wide for one day, it pushes the information for all the dates that follow to the right. Eventually it pushes that data off the screen, which means you have to keep scrolling back and forth to see everything.

I'm not a fan of that. My preference is to keep it so I can see all entries on one screen *without* having to scroll or zoom out. With that in mind, I will abbreviate food, like so:

| 1 | DATE:     | Food     | Cal |
|---|-----------|----------|-----|
| 2 | Breakfast | C. Salad |     |
| 3 |           |          |     |

This just looks simpler to me. Naturally, it is your choice, but I thought I'd share how I do things.

**COLUMN 3/ROWS 1 and beyond:** Enter your calorie counts here

One last thing about this section before we move on: you will notice there are 5 rows in Columns 1 and 2. This is not because I always eat 5 food items for breakfast.

However, when it comes to breakfast, I tend to eat "solo" items instead of meals where the ingredients are already blended.

For example, let's say I had a Denver omelet on Monday. Then I would simply put "Denver omelet" on one line.

On Tuesday, I had (1) two hard-boiled eggs, (2) a cup of coffee with Silk (a creamer substitute) in it, (3) a piece of toast with some (4) almond butter, and (5) an apple.

In this case, I would use all 5 lines on Tuesday. If I had something else, then I'd need to add a row.

Closing out this section, we have:

|  |          |  |  |
|--|----------|--|--|
|  | SUBTOTAL |  |  |
|--|----------|--|--|

**SUBTOTAL:** Add up the calorie counts for *that meal only*.

Of course, I say "that meal only" for *this* section. However, I play around with that rule in later sections, as you will see.

Also, the reason I filled in the cell backgrounds (one black, the other some shade of purple whose exact name I don't know) was to make them stand out. Otherwise the data tends to blur, and I can't make heads or tails of what I'm viewing.

The next three sections are similar to the Breakfast section, although there are a few variations.

|   |                 |  |  |
|---|-----------------|--|--|
| 8 | Lunch           |  |  |
| 9 |                 |  |  |
| 0 |                 |  |  |
| 1 | <b>SUBTOTAL</b> |  |  |
| 2 | Dinner          |  |  |
| 3 |                 |  |  |
| 4 |                 |  |  |
| 5 |                 |  |  |
| 6 |                 |  |  |
| 7 | <b>SUBTOTAL</b> |  |  |
| 8 | Snack           |  |  |
| 9 |                 |  |  |
| 0 |                 |  |  |
| 1 | <b>SUBTOTAL</b> |  |  |

Here we have the rest of the meals we might have for the day: Lunch, Dinner, and Snack. We also have our Subtotal lines, and that is where I want to get into how I change things up.

The approach I use depends on how I feel that day. There really is no rhyme or reason to it, but stick with me and I swear to you that both approaches will make sense.

**APPROACH #1:** As with the Breakfast section, I can add up the calorie counts just for Lunch, Dinner, or Snack.

However, sometimes I like to follow...

**APPROACH #2:** I will take the value from the Breakfast subtotal, then add the Lunch calories to it, and put *that* value in the next subtotal field. It gives you something that looks like this:

| DATE:            | Food     | Cal |
|------------------|----------|-----|
| <b>Breakfast</b> | Eggs (2) | 140 |
|                  | Silk (2) | 40  |
|                  |          |     |
|                  |          |     |
| <b>SUBTOTAL</b>  |          | 180 |
| <b>Lunch</b>     | K/S/T    | 287 |
|                  |          |     |
| <b>SUBTOTAL</b>  |          | 467 |

As you can see, I just added the calories for my lunch meal to the Breakfast subtotal. I use this method if I know my day will be jam-packed because then, instead of having to worry about totaling everything at the end of the day, it will already be done for me.

(SIDE NOTE: If you are wondering what "K/S/T" means, it is an abbreviation for a premade meal that I often have for lunch. I will get more into that type of annotation later.)

If you add Lunch, Dinner, and Snack as you go along, you will notice a curious phenomenon happens: the last Subtotal is also your total count for the day. Observe the following:

|                 |              |     |
|-----------------|--------------|-----|
| <b>Snack</b>    | Protein Bar  | 90  |
|                 |              |     |
|                 |              |     |
| <b>SUBTOTAL</b> |              | 907 |
| <b>DAILY</b>    | <b>TOTAL</b> | 907 |

Even though I just mentioned the last section of the chart, I still want to split it out here for the sake of uniformity.

|              |              |  |
|--------------|--------------|--|
| <b>DAILY</b> | <b>TOTAL</b> |  |
|--------------|--------------|--|

Naturally, this is where you add up your calories for the day.

Why do I put "daily" in one column and "total" in the next? Because if I put them both in the same cell, it would make that column become ridiculously wide.

Also, the cells are colored green and yellow to help them stand out to me, just like the procedure for the Subtotal field.

**A NOTE ABOUT DRINKS:** You will notice I entered no counts for anything I drink during the day, other than coffee (and that count comes Silk, not the coffee itself).

That is because I usually don't drink anything with calories. My usual beverage is water or Diet Arizona Green Tea. However, if I did drink something with calories, it would be on the chart.

## EXPLAINING THE FOOD COUNT CHART - Video #5

The Food Count tab is a list of foods that I have most often. Because of their frequency, I decided to plug them into this chart for easy reference. It's a cinch to grab the calorie count from here and then go plug it into my daily chart.

I suggest you do the same because this is really where the time-saving aspect of my approach enters. Yes, this means the amount of time you invest will be heavier *at the start*, but as the days pass, you will see it gets shorter and shorter.

The foods have been separated into several categories:

| PROTEIN FOODS           |  | CALORIES |
|-------------------------|--|----------|
| Beef (93%)              |  | 60       |
| Beef Jerky (1 bag)      |  | 140      |
| Chicken                 |  | 42       |
| Chicken Sausage         |  | 150      |
| Combat (Protein Powder) |  | 130      |
| Egg                     |  | 70       |
| Ground Turkey           |  | 65       |
| Hanaford Canned Chicken |  | 70       |
| Salmon                  |  | 60       |
| Sausage                 |  | 96       |
| Steak                   |  | 77       |
| Turkey Breast           |  | 54       |
| Turkey Meatballs        |  | 42       |

| VEGETABLES            |  | CALORIES |
|-----------------------|--|----------|
| 16 Asparagus          |  | 5        |
| 17 Baby Cut Carrots   |  | 10       |
| 18 Broccoli           |  | 10       |
| 19 Brussell Sprouts   |  | 12       |
| 20 Cauliflower        |  | 7        |
| 21 Celery             |  | 4        |
| 22 Cherry Tomatoes    |  | 5        |
| 23 Cucumber           |  | 4        |
| 24 Green Beans        |  | 9        |
| 25 Kale               |  | 14       |
| 26 Mushrooms          |  | 6        |
| 27 Pepper (one whole) |  | 10       |
| 28 Spaghetti Squash   |  | 9        |
| 29 Spinach            |  | 23       |
| 30 Sweet Peppers      |  | 11       |
| 31 Tomato             |  | 22       |
| 32 Zucchini           |  | 5        |

| FRUIT           |  | CALORIES |
|-----------------|--|----------|
| 14 Blackberries |  | 12       |
| 15 Raspberries  |  | 15       |
| 16 Strawberries |  | 9        |

| MISCELLANEOUS        |  | CALORIES |
|----------------------|--|----------|
| 18 Almond Milk       |  | 30       |
| 19 Alm. Milk Creamer |  | 15       |
| 10 Parmesan Cheese   |  | 20       |
| 11 Power Crunch Bar  |  | 220      |

| FULL MEALS             |  | CALORIES |
|------------------------|--|----------|
| 13 Kale/Spinach/Turkey |  | 287      |
| 14 2 protein waffles   |  | 240      |
| 15 Stuffed peppers     |  | 325      |

For the most part, the numbers in the Calorie column represent how many calories are in *one ounce* of each item.

How did I get them? Simple: Google. I typed in "calories per one ounce of chicken," and I added the number to the chart.

Why did I pick one ounce? Because it is so easy to multiply! If I have 2.7 ounces of chicken, then I can multiple that by the calorie count of 42 and get my number.

Having said that, not every calorie count is what you get from one ounce of that item. View the following list for a breakdown.

## **PROTEIN FOODS**

1. Beef jerky: The calorie count is indicative of one bag. I buy a brand that says each serving is 70 calories, and there are 2 servings per bag. I'm not one who will open a bag of jerky and eat only one serving, so 140 is what goes on the chart.
2. Chicken sausage: This is the count for one whole link.
3. Combat (protein powder): This is calories per serving. Each tub of protein powder comes with a scoop. The nutrition label tells you a serving size is 2 scoops.
4. Egg: One egg.
5. Hannaford Canned Chicken: The label on the can tells you each serving is 70 calories. I don't remember what the serving size is, but I do know it is not one ounce.
6. Salmon: One fillet
7. Sausage: These are the frozen links you can buy in your local grocery store. This count equals one serving size, or 3 links.
8. Turkey meatballs: These came in a bag from the frozen section of the grocery store. The label on the back tells the serving size and calorie count. I seem to remember the label counted a serving size by the number of meatballs, not ounces.

## **VEGETABLES**

1. Pepper: Like the chart says, this goes by one whole pepper.
2. Sweet peppers: The label on the bags I buy say a serving size is 3 peppers; it doesn't measure a serving in ounces.
3. Tomato: One medium-sized tomato.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

1. Almond milk - almond milk creamer - Parmesan cheese: These all come in containers with nutrition labels that tell their serving sizes. None of them equal one ounce.
2. Power Crunch bar: One bar

## **FULL MEALS**

1. Kale/spinach/turkey - 2 protein waffles - stuffed peppers: These are meals that I eat on a semi-regular basis. I know the ingredients in each recipe, so I know the calorie counts for each item as a whole, rather than the individual parts.

**BRIEF NOTE:** If you look at the first item under "full meals," you will see where I get the "K/S/T" abbreviation for my lunches.

You will notice I listed nothing from the "Fruits" category. That is because all counts are indicative of one ounce.

You will also notice I don't count things like protein, carbs, and fat. If you wonder why, then please read on.

## Why I Count ONLY Calories - Video #6

Atkins and Keto fans out there are probably dismissing my approach outright because I don't count protein, carbs, or fat.

However, there is a reason for this.

The way I eat is how my fitness coach Jay Vincent at BioFitNY taught me to eat. If you look at Jay, and also if you look at before and after pictures of me, I think you'd agree that *something* about what he teaches works. Otherwise the results wouldn't be there.

What is it Jay taught me?

In the end, calories are the only thing that matters.

This flies in the face of a lot of what passes for nutritional wisdom, but if there wasn't at least some truth to it, I would not have these results...and yet I do.

Jay did have me track of carbs when I first started. He advised me to not exceed 100 grams per day, so I kept an eye on them.

Over time, I stopped tracking them because I reviewed my food journals, noted the carbohydrate counts of the foods I ate the most, and realized I didn't even come close to 100 grams per day.

If I add in something new (like if I decide I want some toast with my breakfast), then I will look at the nutrition label to see the carbohydrate count. However, I still don't write it down because I am familiar enough with the other foods I eat to know whether that sends me over 100 grams or not.

That explains why I don't count carbs, but what about protein and fat? What's my reasoning there?

For protein, it is a matter of finances. Let me explain.

Jay told me, "Ideally, you want to eat 1 gram of protein for every pound of your desired body mass." Many others in the nutrition field say the same thing.

What they don't say is how that translates to how much you eat per meal, and what that means to your wallet.

Let's walk through a handy, dandy hypothetical situation, so we can see what the "experts" don't tell you.

Let's say your ideal body weight is 150 pounds. I picked that number because it is easily divisible by 3, and we are going to assume you are eating 3 meals per day. (I know my food chart has "Snack" on there, but let's forget that for now.)

150 divided by 3 meals = **50 grams of protein per meal**

Let's say you want to use chicken as your source of protein. There are 8 grams of protein per one ounce of chicken. Of course, 8 does not divide evenly into 50, but let's see what number we get.

50 grams of protein per meal divided by 8 grams of protein per ounce of chicken = **6.25 ounces of chicken**

You'd have to eat that much chicken per meal to hit your protein count. Obviously, the more you eat per meal, the more you tear through the food in your freezer, which means the more times you have to go to the store and restock.

Now imagine if you are a tall person whose ideal weight is 210.

That means you are looking at **70 grams per meal**.

In my opinion, it's just not worth pursuing, and the reason I am able to give up that goal so easily is because protein doesn't do what people think it does.

Many are under the impression (thanks to Atkins) that protein helps build muscle. It doesn't. I'm not going to get into the full description of what it does; that is beyond the scope of this guide.

Finally, we come to fat. Why don't I count fat? Well, the simple answer is because I don't go by the Keto diet.

I guess the better question to ask is why I don't do that.

It's because there are more calories in a gram of fat than there are in the other two macronutrients.

Protein and carbs have 4 calories per gram.

Fat has NINE!!!

This means that if you eat a high-fat diet, you will hit your daily caloric intake sooner.

If you are eating with a caloric deficit in mind, you are more likely to keep exceeding your goal with a high-fat diet.

Since the whole basis of my approach is watching the calories, it's easy to see why a high-fat diet would do me no good.

While we are on this subject of conventional nutrition wisdom that I ignore, I wanted to address one piece of "advice" that has always driven me nuts, and that is:

"You don't want to eat after a certain time of night because when you go to sleep, your metabolism slows down, and that weight will wind up being harder to shake."

Not true.

Want proof?

I have had snacks as late as 8:30pm or 9:00pm, and yet I have gone from 241 pounds to 171.

I'm not sure how this myth got started. (Can anyone ever know the origin of such things?) However, I will explain why it is bogus via another hypothetical situation. It should come as no surprise when I tell you it all goes back to your caloric intake.

Let's say your caloric deficit goal is 1500 calories per day. You work a double-shift at your job, and you don't get home for dinner until an inhuman 8:00pm.

By this point, you have consumed 1000 calories.

Your dinner is 300 calories.

Well, that is only 1300 calories total for the day.

Therefore, even though you committed the mortal sin of eating after X:XXpm, you are *fine*.

## How I Split Up the Month - Video #7

If you look at the bottom of my spreadsheet, you will see several tabs. One is for the food count chart, the other is for the blank chart, and the other three are for this:



Once again, it is a bit blurry, but I think you can make out those are the dates of the month, split up like so:

- January 1-11
- January 12-21
- January 22-31

The reason I split up the dates like this is an oldie but a goody: when I look at that tab for January 1-11, I can see the charts for all eleven days without having to scroll back and forth to see all the data, nor do I have to zoom out.

Also, the reason I split it into three tabs is twofold: not only am I a trilogy-obsessed nut, but it seems to me like two tabs would not be enough, but four or more would be too many. Like Goldilocks learned when she tested out the beds, number three was just right.

Plus, most months are 30 days long. Therefore, it is easy to divide the dates across three tabs.

For months with 31 days, I put the extra day on the *first* tab, which is what you see me do with January.

For February, I would do the following:

- REGULAR YEARS: February 1-10, 11-19, 20-28
- LEAP YEAR: February 1-10, 11-19, 20-29

And like Forest Gump, that's all I've got to say about that.

## ENTERING DATA INTO THE CHART - Video #8

Now that we understand all the fields and tabs, it is time to walk through entering data for a day.

For any steps that are obvious, I will simply paste a screenshot into the document. However, there may be times when I interject some text. Also, if you are wondering how I arrive at the calorie counts, it is a combination of grabbing the amounts on the Food Count tab and looking at nutrition labels.

So let's start from the top.

|                      |             |            |
|----------------------|-------------|------------|
| <b>DATE: 1/28/21</b> | <b>Food</b> | <b>Cal</b> |
|----------------------|-------------|------------|

|                  |          |            |
|------------------|----------|------------|
| <b>Breakfast</b> | Eggs (3) | 210        |
|                  | Silk (2) | 40         |
|                  | Apple    | 80         |
|                  |          |            |
|                  |          |            |
| <b>SUBTOTAL</b>  |          | <b>330</b> |

|                 |       |            |
|-----------------|-------|------------|
| <b>Lunch</b>    | K/S/T | 287        |
|                 |       |            |
|                 |       |            |
|                 |       |            |
| <b>SUBTOTAL</b> |       | <b>617</b> |

**NOTE:** On this day, I added the lunch count to the Breakfast Subtotal instead of putting the sum of Lunch's counts in separately.

|                 |         |            |
|-----------------|---------|------------|
| <b>Dinner</b>   | Chicken | 160        |
|                 | Carrots | 40         |
|                 |         |            |
|                 |         |            |
| <b>SUBTOTAL</b> |         | <b>817</b> |

Again, I added the Dinner ingredients to the prior Subtotal.

As you can see, I was at 817 calories by this point. That makes me realize there was something I didn't mention earlier that I should have, and that is figuring out your daily caloric goal.

You will want to ask your doctor what your baseline goal should be. I think the general rule of thumb is 2000 calories. Actually, I believe that is for men, and for women it's 1800 calories.

To lose weight, you want to have a *caloric deficit*. That means just what it says: you eat a certain amount less than your baseline.

When I started training, Jay told me to aim for 1800 calories per day. That means a caloric deficit of 200. As the weeks passed, my weight loss stalled out, so he had me drop to 1500 calories per day, or a caloric deficit of 500.

Half of 1500 is 750. I mention that number so you can realize I just barely reached the halfway mark by the time I'd eaten dinner.

Aha! I just remembered another nutrition myth. I bet alarms are going off in your mind, and you are thinking, "Steve! Your calorie intake was only about half of what you should get? Watch out! You are in danger of entering *starvation mode!!!*"

Let me quote Jay on this topic: "The only time you enter starvation mode is when you're starving."

"Starvation mode" is a myth created by people who can't stop stuffing their faces. I've had days where I hit under 1200 calories. Hell, I've had days where I barely hit 1000, and guess what?

I'm still losing weight. I mean *fat*, not muscle. In other words, I'm still losing in a *healthy* way.

Well, enough about starvation mode. Let's get to the last field.

|          |             |     |
|----------|-------------|-----|
| Snack    | Protein Bar | 90  |
|          |             |     |
|          |             |     |
| SUBTOTAL |             | 907 |
| DAILY    | TOTAL       | 907 |

And that's all there is to it! As you can see, since we tallied up the day as we went, the final Daily Total calorie count is the same as the Subtotal in the "Snack" section.

## EXPLAINING THE BLUE DAYS - Video #9

There is just one last part of my food journal to explain, and that would be the "blue days."

| I             | J    | K   | L             | M    | N   | O             | P    | Q   | R | S |
|---------------|------|-----|---------------|------|-----|---------------|------|-----|---|---|
| DATE: 1/24/21 | Food | Cal | DATE: 1/25/21 | Food | Cal | DATE: 1/26/21 | Food | Cal |   |   |
| Breakfast     |      |     | Breakfast     |      |     | Breakfast     |      |     |   |   |
|               |      |     |               |      |     |               |      |     |   |   |
|               |      |     |               |      |     |               |      |     |   |   |
| SUBTOTAL      |      |     | SUBTOTAL      |      |     | SUBTOTAL      |      |     |   |   |
| Lunch         |      |     | Lunch         |      |     | Lunch         |      |     |   |   |
|               |      |     |               |      |     |               |      |     |   |   |
|               |      |     |               |      |     |               |      |     |   |   |
| SUBTOTAL      |      |     | SUBTOTAL      |      |     | SUBTOTAL      |      |     |   |   |
| Dinner        |      |     | Dinner        |      |     | Dinner        |      |     |   |   |
|               |      |     |               |      |     |               |      |     |   |   |
|               |      |     |               |      |     |               |      |     |   |   |
| SUBTOTAL      |      |     | SUBTOTAL      |      |     | SUBTOTAL      |      |     |   |   |
| Snack         |      |     | Snack         |      |     | Snack         |      |     |   |   |
|               |      |     |               |      |     |               |      |     |   |   |
|               |      |     |               |      |     |               |      |     |   |   |
| SUBTOTAL      |      |     | SUBTOTAL      |      |     | SUBTOTAL      |      |     |   |   |
| DAILY TOTAL   |      |     | DAILY TOTAL   |      |     | DAILY TOTAL   |      |     |   |   |

What do these mean?

Well, they mean I am human.

More often than not, a day where the cells are all highlighted blue indicates a day when I got sick of being a nutritional goody-two-shoes and indulged in the old past time known as "the cheat day."

I know, I know, I know. A guy preaching about nutrition should have a cheat *meal*, not an entire cheat *day*! If anyone said that to me, I would say, "You are right in more ways than you know."

What do I mean by that?

Well, do you see how I said "more often than not, blue cells mean a cheat day?"

That means there are exceptions. Let me explain.

In the above image, the only actual "cheat day" was January 24, 2021, yet the next two days are also in blue.

What happened there?

I'll tell you in two words: DIGESTIVE REVOLT.

That's right. My body was so used to me eating healthy that, when I allowed myself an entire cheat day, it wasn't happy. For the next two days, I felt like I was always on the verge of vomiting, I was dizzy, I had diarrhea, and so on.

All I had to eat were 2-3 pieces of toast, which I covered with honey (I tried one bite of a piece with butter, and my stomach said, "Nope, try again!"), some crackers, and Italian ice.

Even though all of those items are carb-heavy, I didn't eat a lot of them, so I didn't bother tracking them.

Also, I was so out of it that (believe it or not) I didn't have the ambition or energy to write down all I ate!

So let this be a lesson to you:

*Cheat **meals**, NOT cheat **days**!!!*

One last note: going forward, if I don't track my food because I was sick, I will be highlighting the cells in *red* instead of blue.

## CONCLUSION - Video #10

Well, there you have it: my lovely guide through the 10-video series on how to maintain a not-quite-so-cumbersome food journal. I hope you have found *some* value in it.

As I have said throughout the document, you are welcome to do or *not* do the things I have suggested.

In fact, I recommend that you purposely deviate from what I have done here. You are more likely to stick with it if your food journal is personalized, and you take ownership of it.

The modern world moves fast. It's hard to keep up even with the mandatory tasks of day-to-day living. Taking time out to do this optional assignment of recording your caloric intake seems like a lot to ask, and it *is* time-consuming at first. However, once you have those counts for foods you eat most often, and once you know how to "eyeball" a serving size, it will get easier.

When it comes to the pursuit of physical fitness, there is one thing that a lot of gurus say that is actually true: weight loss really begins in the kitchen.

They're right.

How do I know? Because there were many years when I toiled away at workout programs where I exercised for 6 days a week, 60-75 minutes at a time, yet I couldn't seem to get below 200 pounds.

Why? Because I wasn't eating right, and I wasn't eating right because I wasn't tracking it, and I wasn't tracking it because it was such a labor-intensive, convoluted task.

Well, it's not anymore, and I hope I have streamlined the process for you as well. In fact, I would like to hear about your success. If you deviated from my plan, I'd like to know that too!

You can let me know here: [geekwingchun@gmail.com](mailto:geekwingchun@gmail.com)

Good luck, and happy eating!

~~~Steve Grogan