



BROOKLYN\_BORN

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## Why, other than weight gain, would I go back to tracking my food?

Saturday, September 13, 2014

I must admit that I don't track my food anymore UNLESS there is an upward trend in my weight.

Weighing myself every day is especially important for me personally since avoiding the scale is how I gained the weight in the first place. Now I want to stay exactly where I am right now. So if there is an upward trend, I want to catch it early.

(Note: I understand "fluctuation" which means up AND down. If there's only UP, then I've got to figure out why and the sooner the better)

After tracking carefully to get rid of a few vacation pounds in June, my weight has been very stable for the last few months so I stopped tracking my food. Yet yesterday morning I began tracking again and it had nothing to do with my weight. It's fine.

I read a Spark article "5 Diet Mistakes That Derail Your Workouts"

[www.sparkpeople.com/resource/nutrition\\_articles.asp?id=2003&page=2](http://www.sparkpeople.com/resource/nutrition_articles.asp?id=2003&page=2)

I don't consider my Spark experience to be "dieting" (the verb). I'm just adopting a healthy lifestyle. I like "diet" as a noun as in eating a healthy diet. But I was attracted by "derail your workouts."

I LIKE exercise, always did, but I want to do it efficiently. So I clicked on the link.

There was interesting information about balance of nutrients, a lot I actually knew but had stashed somewhere in the back of my mind (and it's cluttered back there)

The food tracker isn't just about calories, although we tend to focus on that part. The food tracker gives us valuable information about the nutrients we're consuming. By not tracking I've been missing that.

Of course, it's not perfect. We have a suggested RANGE for each nutrient, just as I have a goal RANGE for my weight. Still, taken all together, it gives me a snapshot of my calorie/nutrient intake.

When I'm out running, I want to know where I am at any time, so I know which direction or path to take next. I can apply that idea to the food tracker too.

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## Member Comments About This Blog Post



**ADRIENALINE**

I love the food tracker and I also weigh myself several times a week. The catch for some people when they weigh themselves frequently is they let the number they see get them miserable all day. If you only use it as more data like we do, it can be really helpful.

2461 days ago



**LEWILL1982**

I still track and I still weigh about 3 mornings per week. It helps me stay focused. Without, I tend to get carried away....I like watching my macros too, I have a habit of getting carb heavy. When the carbs go up, so does my scale!

when people ask me about losing weight, I always start with tracking - it tends to turn them off, but for me and my success -it's what works.

2461 days ago



**WALLAHALLA**

I track everything. I have to keep track of my fiber, due to surgery. I need to keep an eye on calcium, just cause I'm that age. I have to watch protein, cause I really couldn't care less whether I eat meat or not. Our nutrition tracker really helps me keep an eye on a lot of different checks and balances.

2462 days ago



**SPARKNB**

Yep I find the tracker actually more important for nutrients rather than just calories (lifelong calorie tracker in my head cuz lifelong dieter and former math teacher). But as a former veg, I always assumed I made perfectly healthy food choices. As a flexitarian, I'm finding that I am low on most micronutrients! and needing to wrap my head around the concept of more protein, and adding back meat (and as mostly low-fat eater, rarely ate nuts). Was showing the nutrient results

to my mother, and she was like "and all that's free?" Sparkpeople has major value for me!

2462 days ago



**DONNELDA22**

Congratulations on finding what works for you.

2462 days ago



**DDOORN**

I find it interesting to see trends when tracking. For instance when I'm on target with either weight loss or maintenance I find my carbohydrate intake pretty consistently runs around half of what SP recommends for me.

Don

2463 days ago



**EGRAMMY**

Good article. They should honor it on SP.

2463 days ago



**DOVESEYES**

Love the trackers on SP

2463 days ago



**WATERMELLEN**

I do track -- and not just for calories, a whole range of nutrients. Otherwise with my quasi-vegetarian approach I tend to be light on protein if I don't watch for that, and then there are problems with satiety.

2463 days ago



**PHOENIX1949**

Another angle to nutrients is to use the tracker to check those received through supplements (which usually are not absorbed/utilized as well as those from food).

At the outset on SP, I entered every one of my daily supplements into the tracker -- eye vitamins from eye doc, daily multi-vitamin recommended by primary care doc, supplements recommended by naturapathic doc, few recommended by chiropractor, some picked up after reading articles, listening to friends, . . . you get the idea that I was taking a LOT of supplements (some because I have many food allergies and sensitivities I was trying to make up for).

Then, I printed out each of these results in a size easy to read & compare, running the grand total for each nutrient. Discussed these with a Registered Nutritionist and we kicked around ways to discontinue most of these and get my nutrients through food working around my allergies. I was



way overboard on some amounts. What an eye opener.

Emotional eating and physical ability issues have unfortunately kept my weight ticker 'Tomas Tortuga' aka Tommy Turtle, going back and forth on the same 25#'s. Perhaps it is time to trade him in on something that moves faster, ha-ha.

2463 days ago



**DR1939**

Even when I am at my goal weight I track my food. I have diabetes and heart problems and keeping myself aware of what goes in my mouth and how and how often my body moves keeps these disorders under better control. I have tracked for over 15 years. It's just part of my routine.

2463 days ago

v



**TRAVELGRRL**

Great article! I do look at the nutrient content of my daily diet, but just as information rather than as something to strive for. I generally eat a healthy diet although if I'm short on anything? It's CALORIES, which is probably just as unhealthy as shorting myself on protein or carbs or healthy fat...

2463 days ago

v



**MARYJEANSL**

I had never thought of tracking specifically for nutrients, but it's a great idea.

2463 days ago

v



**4A-HEALTHY-BMI**

I definitely track for nutrient content, even when I'm in my goal range. By trial and error I've discovered that I do best with 1/3 fats, 1/3 protein, and 1/3 carbs (minimizing starches and sugars)

Here's a breakdown of what makes me feel most energetic and strong:

<http://www.fatsecret.com/diets/member-diet/Default.aspx?dietid=4355344>

50g of fat minimum  
40g of fiber minimum  
150g of protein minimum  
100g of sugar MAXIMUM  
(this includes sugar IN my foods, like fruit)

Of course you probably have a different metabolism and different needs but I think it's been extremely valuable to be able to track and watch what happens - without the tracking I would never have been able to get this information for what my individual body likes as fuel and building materials.


2463 days ago




Comment edited on: 9/13/2014 12:28:42 PM

v



**SUNSET09**

Oh,  continue to track as it keeps me on track, as well as makes me accountable! Do

you as you know what's best!   

2463 days ago

v



**LINDAKAY228**

Excellent blog!  
2463 days ago

v



**CD14915039**

That's the only reason why I track is to track the nutrients and the minerals .

2463 days ago

v



**HOLLYM48**

I do like that aspect at the end of the day when I click to see the full report. It really does help me. Have a great day!

2463 days ago

v



**BOOKAPHILE**

I'll have to go read that article... Thanks for calling attention to it.

2463 days ago

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**KRISZTA11**

I feel similarly about the tracker - tracking everything in the learning phase was key to my

v



success. Now I think of it as a lifebelt I can go to if my weight takes an upward trend.  
Have a great day!



2463 days ago



#### PMRUNNER

Like you, I don't use the food tracker that closely unless my fluctuations start getting out of hand.



When school is in session, I tend to get in a groove (ok, a rut) of eating the same thing for breakfast and lunch and have a small rotation of dinners. With the consistent diet, I have a good idea what I am eating calorie and nutrient wise, so I don't tend to get too far out of whack.

2463 days ago



#### SWEDE\_SU

a good reminder!



2463 days ago



#### GINIEMIE

When I track, I've been remiss or spotty of late, I watch my sodium intake. It is important that I keep it below the suggested amount on our food tracker. I need to watch my weight-preferably going down-but if I eat too much salty foods that's not what it does, I also need to make sure I don't end up in the high range for my blood presser -that is where too much salt puts me EVERY TIME. So I've learned over the last four years to check my food tracker for at least that along with the calories.

Thanks for the reminder. I need to get back on track-long term.



2463 days ago



#### KELLIEBEAN

I do not track food much anymore unless I feel myself going off the rails.  
I do like to watch the nutrients more than calories. I like that the tracker helps me see my habits so I can decide where to make changes.



Excellent blog! Thanks for the link to the article!

2463 days ago



#### WILSONWR

I love the food tracker - it provides a lot of good information. The more we can do to improve our diet, the better we will feel!



2463 days ago



#### POINDEXTRA

Great post! joined Sparkpeople after several years of maintaining on Weight Watchers precisely because I wanted to see how I was doing nutritionally. To my surprise, I learned that I wasn't eating enough fat! I've added fiber, Calcium, and Vitamin D to my tracker. I especially like the pie chart which shows major nutrient breakdown at a glance. Now, I strive for a 50/25/25 split between carbs, protein, and fat, which I get very close to most days.

2463 days ago



#### MISCHAKEO

I like your humor. The range of nutrients I eat is something I need to look at. I have to smile at fluctuation being up and down..and not only up. That definitely is the time to get tracking and cracking!



Nice informative blog.

2463 days ago



#### ONEKIDSMOM

Yes, I use the tracker for the ranges of nutrients, too. It makes a difference... I want to be sure I have enough protein to support my training.



2463 days ago



#### CD4114015

Sounds like a great plan to me. I actually track everything that goes into my mouth (not days I have binged which don't happen often anymore, thankfully) and will probably do it the rest of my life. I actually like it!



Have a wonderful weekend!

2463 days ago

#### CD14815535

Hm, hm--you are so right. I tend to look only at the calories and the protein, but because of my





age I need to look at a few more things, too. And like you said, SP is not perfect but it does give a good range. Off to add a few nutrients to my list.  
2464 days ago

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Disclaimer: Weight loss results will vary from person to person. No individual result should be seen as a typical result of following the SparkPeople program.