

4 Rules That Define Our Nutritional Philosophy

When it comes to food for general health and fitness, there are four words that sum up everything that The Quad believes is relevant and required.

Real. Sustainable. Practical. Local.

#1 Eat real food

Real food is naturally occurring. It is food that is prepared from ingredients that are as close to their natural form. Think fruits and not fruit juices, vegetables and not breakfast cereal, rice and not pasta. If your food comes in a box that has been sitting in a grocery store for a few months, chances are it is not real.

This is important because the closer a food is to its natural form, the more nutrition it retains. Processing foods usually involves some application of heat, addition of preservatives and/or colors and most importantly,

Eating processed foods is like eating from a black box – no one knows what's taken the raw food to its boxed form. It probably involves addition of oils, preservations and colors but the key point, we will never know for sure.

Bottom line – Let your meals be composed of real foods like vegetables, fruits, starches like rice, eggs, dairy and meat. Eating anything else should be on a need basis.

#2 Eat what you can sustain

A diet is a short term attempt at a fix. Eating well is the long term solution.

Anyone who is eating towards a goal like fat loss is already making changes. It's not going to help if the changes are so drastic that it throws normal life out of balance. For example, if a person is trying to consume only liquid foods to achieve a goal, what's going to happen when he or she has to travel? Or if there is a social event?

Let's take a traditional south Indian meal. The meal will have starch (usually in the form of rice), vegetables, fat (from ghee or oil) and a little protein. This is the way it has been for years and this is what is sustainable in south India. Let's say your goal is fat loss – your best bet at success is to take the south Indian plate and modify it a little. Reduce the starch, add more protein, keep the veggies, stay away from dessert and fried food. This way, you still get the good stuff from your traditional meal but also get to progress towards your goal.

Bottom line – Make bite sized changes to your traditional meals based on your goals. Change the way you eat for life and not for the next lunch or dinner.

#3 Be practical - Eat around your lifestyle and schedule

We all lead busy and stressful lives. Food should not be an added stressor to everything else that is going on. The two common challenges to eating well are

1. Food preparation – Cleaning, cutting, cooking, packing
2. Meal timing – Eating X number of meals a day at a predetermined time

The solution to both these challenges - There is no one size fits all approach to nutrition.

Like everything else, eating good food also requires some hard work. This means planning in advance, grocery shopping, cooking either daily or enough to provide for a few days and waking up just a little early to pack your lunch.

Meal timing on the other hand is a lot simpler to address. Eat any number of meals your schedule allows you to and at any time that works. This could be 2 meals for some and 4 meals for others. As long as you eat the right foods at the right quantities, you will be fine.

Bottom line – Make your food fit your schedule instead of trying to force things the other way around.

#4 Eat what's available locally i.e. around you

There is a myth that the more exotic or rare a food is, the better it is. While there are tasty foods you can source from all around the world, it is much simpler to eat foods that are all around you. This includes foods that are grown in your region and reach you with minimum transportation, preservation and processing.

Why? Nature has already done a fine job of selecting only those foods that are meant to be consumed by someone like you living under specific climatic/seasonal conditions. You don't need to do anything different to eat right.

Bottom line

Eat like an adult!