

## Determining Your Carb Tolerance Using John Fawkes's Experiment

Fawkes's experiment is as follows: Under controlled conditions, you'll eat meals with varying carb/fat splits and then measure how you're feeling after the meal, your satiety level, and impact on your mood by giving each meal a ranking between one and five. This is a controlled experiment, meaning that you'll want to keep variables like the time of day and the number of calories relatively consistent over the duration of the experiment.

### Step 1: Choose the Meal and Time of Day

Before starting the experiment, you're going to want to decide the time of day and the meal you're going to use in your test. If you eat three meals a day—breakfast, lunch, and dinner—then choose one. If you're doing the intermittent fasting protocol, perhaps it's the first meal after you break your fast. If you're only eating one meal a day (OMAD), well, you don't have much choice there. Fawkes recommends choosing breakfast for the experiment, as it "tends to take place under the same conditions every day." Regardless, just choose one meal and approximate the time of day to maintain some consistency with your results.

### Step 2: Determine the Macro Splits for Each Test Meal and Plan Your Meals

This takes a bit more legwork, but you're going to want to calculate different splits per meals. Don't get too hung up on the details here. To help you, Fawkes and I have provided some example meals under each category. You'll want to split each of your test meals by low-carb/high-fat, low-fat/high-carb, and moderate-carb/moderate-fat, and then test each of the splits for a minimum of three times.

Instead of including grams, I've included percentages so you can calculate each split based on your own caloric needs and not your weight. During the experiment, try to choose foods that have nutrition labels, and use a food scale so you can properly measure out portions. MyFitnessPal and similar apps allow you to log the foods and portions in each meal, and then the app automatically calculates the macro split for you.

#### **Moderate-fat/moderate-carb**

*~15–20% calories from fat, ~45–55% of calories from carbs, and the rest from protein*

Meal example: 4 oz. grilled chicken breast, 100 g baked sweet potato, 2 cups roasted Brussels sprouts (seasoned with 1 tbsp. olive oil and 2 tbsp. balsamic vinegar)

40 g carbohydrates, 17 g fat, 32 g protein

45% carbs, 20% fat, 35% protein

#### **Low-fat/high-carb**

*~10–15% from fat, ~55–70% calories from carbs, and the rest from protein*

Meal example: 1 whole bagel, 1 tbsp. peanut butter, with 1 scoop vegan protein mixed with 1 cup almond milk

57 g carbohydrates, 13 g fat, 35 g protein

54% carbs, 12% fat, 35% protein

#### **Low-carb/high-fat**

*~40–45% calories from fat, 22–25% from carbs, and the rest from protein*

Meal examples: 2 scrambled eggs, 1/2 avocado, 2 slices turkey bacon, and 1 rice cake

16 g carbohydrates, 28 g fat, 18 g protein

26% carbs, 45% fat, 29% protein

Note that the protein intake should remain consistent with each meal, since we want to focus on just the fat and carb splits.

### **Step 3: Run the Experiment!**

As Fawkes suggests, you should record each meal split three times, which comes out to a nine-day experiment. If you want to go longer, that's even better! You'll want to record the following variables: date and time, food, number of calories per meal, and grams of carbs, fats, and protein. Then you'll want to record some qualitative data and rank each of the following on a scale of 1 to 5, which includes your energy levels, energy stability, satiety level, and mood.

*Energy levels:* How much energy do you have one to two hours after the meal (a 1 being tired/sluggish and a 5 being ready to go do a workout)?

*Energy stability:* How stable is your energy for up to six hours following the meal? If you feel a spike in energy followed by a sharp decline, you may want to record a score lower on the spectrum of energy stability, like a 1 or a 2. If you feel pretty much the same energy-wise up until your next meal, you would then want to record a score higher up on the scale, like a 4 or a 5. If you record a 3, that would indicate that you do notice some changes in energy, but not enough to make a difference.

*Satiety level:* Satiety is how full you feel after eating and how many hours before you start feeling hungry. If you're hungry again within two hours, you should record a 1. However, if hunger reappears after four hours, that would be a 3, and after six hours or more you should record a 5. Just keep calories in mind here, and Fawkes recommends a meal size of at least 500–700 calories. If you're eating a light snack of 200 calories, that just ain't gonna cut it for six hours.

*Mood:* Do you feel calm and happy or down and apathetic? Your mood often correlates with your energy levels, so you should see some similarities here. Fawkes classified a 1 as feeling nonclinical depression. A 3 is feeling good but not great. A 4 or a 5 means that you feel awesome and, in Fawkes's words "bordering hypomanic."



