

## Determining Your Maintenance Calories - The Analog Method

Our weight fluctuates daily and so does our calorie intake. So, the best way to figure out the correlation between how much we eat and how much we weigh is to track both every day for one to two weeks, then take the averages of each. Our bodies are dynamic and always changing, so there's never a sure bet. This analog method is pretty common in the world of bodybuilding and has been adopted by several coaches in the industry. Below are the action steps to take if you want to follow the analog method:

### **Step 1: The "Intake Period"**

For one to two weeks, track every single thing in your body using a calorie tracking app while also taking daily body weight measurements using a standard scale. You can keep track of all this data in a spreadsheet, a piece of paper, or using this document.

### **Step 2: Analyze the Data**

Once you've collected the data, you'll want to figure out the amount of weight you've gained, lost, or maintained by determining seven-day averages for each week. Then observe the correlation with your calorie intake.

### **Step 3: Apply a Formula Comparing the Relationship between the Two Weeks**

Note that 3,500 calories roughly equates to 1 lb. or 0.5 kg of body weight (lost or gained). We can use this knowledge as a rough estimation to determine the following:

- 500-calorie surplus/deficit per day is roughly 1 lb. or 0.5 kg gained/lost per week
- 1,000-calorie surplus/deficit per day is roughly 2 lbs. or 1 kg gained/lost per week

Look at the change in your average body weight in week 1 compared to week 2, and then you can see the relationship with your caloric intake and how it is affecting your body weight.

### **Example**

#### **Step 1: The "Intake Period"**

When I conducted this experiment, I used MyFitnessPal to track my caloric intake and a standard scale for my body weight. I added the total amount of calories I ate in a given day into a spreadsheet along with my weight. I weighed myself as soon as I woke up to provide some consistency. Say on Monday I ate 2,200 calories and weighed 140 lbs., I'd log my table as so:

Day	Calories	Weight
Monday	2,200	140

However, I think it's better if you input the calories you ate the day before and the current day's weight, so that the data better represents the impact the calories consumed the previous day had on today's weight. Instead of using today's calories, I would use Sunday's calories (2,500 calories) and Monday's weight on the same line:

Day	Calories	Weight
Monday	2,500	140

Now that we've got that detail out of the way, here's a step-by-step guide on how to calculate your maintenance calories:

1. Track calories and weight daily for two weeks.
2. Total up week 1 calories and weight and divide by seven.
3. Total up week 2 calories and weight and divide by seven.

You can use the table below:

**Week 1**

Date	Calories	Weight (lbs.)

**Week 2**

Date	Calories	Weight (lbs.)

**Step 2: Analyze Results**

Tally up the total calories and weight and divide each by 7 for week 1 and week 2:

Week 1: \_\_\_\_\_ lbs., average \_\_\_\_\_ calories/day

Week 2: \_\_\_\_\_ lbs., average \_\_\_\_\_ calories/day

*\*Take Week 1 weight - Week 2 weight to see the average weight gained or lost on the varying calorie intakes*

### **Step 3: Apply a Formula to Figure Out Your Maintenance Calories**

Use the following formula to determine my maintenance calories.

**a) First, you calculate your caloric deficit or surplus:**

1,000 kcal (per day) × the amount of weight gained or lost (Week 1 weight minus week 2 weight in kilograms) = caloric surplus/deficit

**b) Take the 1,000 kcal and multiply it by the (amount of weight lost):**

1,000 kcal (per day) × (the amount of weight lost/gained in kg) = caloric deficit/surplus

**c) Take the caloric deficit/surplus and add it to the number of calories (how much lost/gained) to get maintenance calories:**

Maintenance = number of calories + caloric surplus/deficit = # of calories/day to maintain weight

\*A note for women: Ladies, try to do this after your period, because hormones mess everything up.