

TOA

TENNESSEE ORTHOPAEDIC ALLIANCE

BUILDING A BALANCED PLATE

Building a balanced plate is a helpful approach to ensure you're consuming a variety of nutrients and promoting overall health. Here's a simple guide to creating a balanced plate.

DIVIDE YOUR PLATE

Mentally divide your plate into sections to visualize the different components of a balanced meal. Aim to fill each section with the following:

Half of the plate with vegetables Fill half of your plate with a variety of non-starchy vegetables such as leafy greens, broccoli, peppers, carrots, or cauliflower. These are rich in vitamins, minerals, and fiber.

One-quarter of the plate with lean protein Allocate one-quarter of the plate to include a source of lean protein. This can be skinless poultry, fish, lean cuts of meat, tofu, legumes (e.g., beans, lentils), or plant-based protein options.

One-quarter of the plate with whole grains or starchy vegetables Use the remaining quarter of the plate to incorporate whole grains or starchy vegetables. This can include options like brown rice, quinoa, whole wheat pasta, sweet potatoes, or whole grain bread.

ADD FAT FOR FLAVOR

Add fats to your meal by cooking in oils or butters. You could also try topping your food with fat for flavor like avocado, olive oil, nuts, seeds, cheese, butter, sour cream, or nut butter. Healthy fats are important for nutrient absorption and promoting meal satisfaction and satiety.

VARIETY AND COLOR

Aim for variety within each food group to ensure you're getting a wide range of nutrients. The more color you can add to your plate, the more micronutrients you will be consuming. Think "eat the rainbow." If your plate appears beige and bland, try adding something green, red, orange, or purple! Don't forget about herbs and spices to boost flavor and nutrient density!

SAMPLE MEAL

¼ Protein 4-ounce salmon filet

¼ Starch Small baked potato

½ Fruits and Vegetables Strawberry salad on a bed of mixed greens with feta, almonds

Flavorful Fats Olive oil salad dressing with feta; butter on baked potato

