

Nutrivore90

A 90-Day Nutrition Challenge Focused on Building Lifelong Healthy Habits

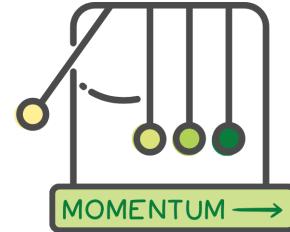


Nutrivore90 is a free 90-day nutrition challenge designed to help you turn nutrient-dense eating into second nature—not through restriction, but through habit-building.

Why Nutrivore90? Because most people don't struggle with *knowing* what to do—they struggle with *doing it consistently*. And consistency doesn't come from willpower or food rules—it comes from habits.

This is a **habit-centered challenge** because the science is clear: **small, sustainable steps practiced daily are far more powerful than short-term overhauls**. We're not here to tell you what to eliminate. We're here to help you build a pattern of eating that supports your health, feels good, and works for your real life.

Over the next 90 days, you'll build momentum with small, practical goals rooted in the Nutrivore philosophy. You'll reflect, experiment, celebrate progress, and connect with a community doing the same.



By the end of this challenge, you won't just understand what a healthy diet looks like—you'll be *living it*, with confidence and consistency.

This welcome guide will help you prepare for Nutrivore90, including:

1. science-backed ways to form healthy habits,
2. defining your goals and selecting your personalized metrics of success, and
3. logging your starting point (using the Nutrivore90 Temperature Check activity) so you can track your progress throughout this challenge.

Let's build habits that nourish you for life.

What Habits Will You Be Forming?

Small Changes That Add Up to Big Wins

In Nutrivore90, we're not chasing perfection—we're focusing on small, powerful habits that support your health in a sustainable, flexible way. Each week introduces a new focus to help you build consistency, confidence, and momentum.

Here's a sneak peek at the habits you'll be building during the challenge:

Get 5 Servings of Veggies + 2 Servings of Fruit Per Day

The foundation of nutrient density starts (but certainly doesn't end) here.

Use the Nutrivore Meal Map

Learn to build balanced meals that include proteins, starches, fruits and veggies, with just a glance at your plate.

Practice a Non-Restrictive Mindset

Learn to include quality-of-life foods without guilt, restriction, or "starting over."

These may seem like simple goals, but for those of us who have been steeped in diet culture for years or decades, these fundamental healthy eating patterns are actually really hard to stick to long-term. In fact, most diets work against our ability to develop these core habits that support lifelong health by creating a restrict-binge cycle (the dreaded yo-yo), setting us up to fail by magnifying feelings of deprivation. **With Nutrivore, we're looking to develop sustainable nutrition—an overall healthy diet that fits our diet values, food preferences, budget, time and energy levels and that leaves us feeling full, nourished and satisfied.** This way, Nutrivore becomes a way of life—we're learning how to eat, not how to diet.



By the end of these 90 days, you'll have a new *default setting*—a pattern of eating that supports your health and happiness, without requiring rigid rules or all-or-nothing thinking.

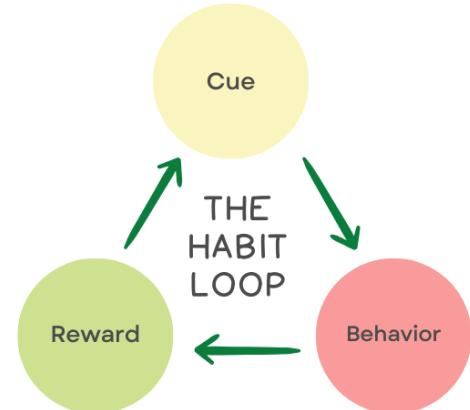
The Science of Habit Formation

If you'd like to better understand the science underpinning the Nutrivore90 challenge, then read on!

While most of us intuitively understand that we should strive for work-life balance and get some exercise, Nutrivore goes beyond making New Year's resolutions to join a gym and lose ten pounds, and instead integrates a focus on achievable healthy lifestyle choices into your daily life.

Most powerfully, Nutrivore is a sustainable and adaptable approach that you can apply to your current diet to accelerate achievement of your health goals.

As with tackling any positive change, it helps to frame it in terms of habit formation. **About 40% of our daily actions are habits—automatic responses to cues, not conscious decisions.** Habits start as goal-driven behaviors, reinforced by rewards, and repeated in the same context. Over time, the brain shifts control from the prefrontal cortex (decision-making) to the basal ganglia (automatic behavior), freeing up mental energy.



This is why you can hold a conversation while you drive or cook dinner. **The actions you're performing have become a habit so your prefrontal cortex can do other things at the same time.** This is also why the behavior becomes dissociated from the reward or even expected outcomes—the part of the brain that processes action and effect, and much of the sophisticated reward circuitry in the brain, is no longer involved!

The power of thinking of Nutrivore in terms of healthy habit formation is that your effort into diet changes now will pay off in terms of ease and automaticity in the future. So, while

eating this way may feel like it's taking a lot of mental energy now, as you continue, the effort required will gradually diminish until, poof, one day, eating Nutrivore is as natural to you as riding a bike, or tying your shoes.

How do you form a habit? The process of habit formation has 6 simple steps:

1. 🎯 Decide on a goal that you would like to achieve for your health. The goal should be a behavior (like eating 5 veggie servings per day) rather than a health destination (like losing 10 pounds or normalizing blood sugar levels), because we're looking to create lasting change (those vegetables will benefit your long-term health even after you've reached your short-term health goal).

2. 🥬 Choose a simple action that will move you towards your goal which you can do on a daily basis (like having a daily salad). It's okay to break your big goal into smaller steps, moving onto the next step once this one feels easier (for example, adding in daily steamed veggies after a daily salad feels routine).

3. 📝 Plan when and where you will do your chosen action. Be consistent: choose a time and place that you encounter every day of the week (like adding a side salad to your lunch everyday).

4. 🚚 Every time you encounter that time and place, do the action. You may wish to think about ways to make performing the action as easy as possible; for example, prepping a big batch of salad on the weekends to enjoy all week or buying your favorite salad kits to have on hand.

🌟 It will get easier with time, and eventually you should find you are doing it automatically without even having to think about it—yes, that daily salad could become so routine that you don't even need to add salad ingredients to your grocery list because you know what to purchase every week.

🎉 Congratulations, you've made a healthy habit!

How long does it take to form a habit? Forget the 21-day myth—research shows it takes an average of 66 days of dedication and commitment to repetitively perform a task before that task becomes automatic, but can range from 18 to 254 days, depending on the person and the habit. That's why the Nutrivore90 is a 90-day nutrition challenge, to give you the time necessary to solidify your healthy habits!

Habit Formation Tips

The following are science-backed tips to support habit formation and potentially speed up the time investment.

1.  **Start with a positive mindset.** Studies show that people who begin a new habit—like flossing—with a positive attitude are more likely to stick with it long term. **The more they understand the benefits, the more automatic the habit becomes.** So, the knowledge you've gained about nutrition (and what you will learn throughout this challenge) already gives you a head start!
2.  **Make it rewarding.** Habits form faster when they feel good. During the learning phase, **linking a behavior to a reward—whether it's immediate pleasure, intrinsic enjoyment, or knowing it leads to a positive outcome**—strengthens the habit loop (cue, action, reward). Gamification, like tracking your nutrition progress, can boost this effect. Even long-term rewards—like better energy, sleep, or lab markers—can help if you connect them to your daily habits.
3.  **Avoid negative associations.** Early negative experiences with a new habit can kill motivation. **If a task feels unpleasant, it lowers the perceived reward and makes habit formation harder.** Instead, make the experience enjoyable—like roasting veggies with olive oil and herbs instead of eating them raw if that's more enjoyable—so the process feels good, not like a chore.

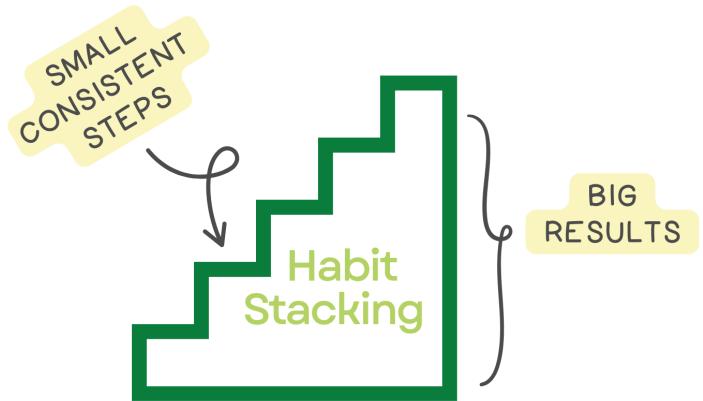
The most important take-home message here is that it's worth it to keep going, keep trying new foods and new recipes, keep working towards your serving goals, and keep troubleshooting ways to fit Nutrivore into your life.

What Is Habit Stacking?

If you've ever felt overwhelmed by making big lifestyle changes all at once, you're not alone.

One of the most powerful ways to build lasting habits is through a simple technique called *habit stacking*.

Habit stacking means attaching a new habit to an existing one—something you already do regularly without much thought. Instead of overhauling your entire routine, you're creating a small, manageable addition to something that's already working. Over time, these stacked habits become second nature.



Think of it like this: your current habits are the framework of your day. Nutrivore90 helps you gently add to that framework—no demolition required!

Why habit stacking works:

Consistency: You're more likely to remember and repeat a habit when it's paired with something automatic.

Simplicity: You don't need to reinvent your day—just add one thing at a time.

Momentum: Small wins build confidence and make it easier to keep going.

Every week of Nutrivore90 gives you one clear habit to focus on. That's intentional. This challenge is built on the science of habit formation and behavior change—so each new habit stacks onto the ones you've already built. It's not about being perfect every day. It's about creating simple, sustainable rhythms that support your health long after these 90 days are over.

Ask yourself: What's something I already do every day... and what's a simple, health-promoting action I can add to it?

As you progress through Nutrivore90, look for opportunities to stack each week's focus onto an already established habit.

For example:

-  Add a serving of vegetables *with lunch*, which you already eat daily.
-  Include a protein-rich food *when you prep breakfast* each morning.
-  Add a piece of fruit to *your afternoon snack* or morning coffee break.
-  Sprinkle seeds or chopped nuts *on top of your yogurt, oatmeal, or salad*.

That's habit stacking in action—and it's how we turn short-term goals into lifelong change.

Tracking Your Progress

There are so many ways to measure health—and they're not all numbers. Your energy, mood, mindset, sleep, symptoms, stress levels, and relationship with food all count.

That's why Nutrivore90 takes a flexible, personalized approach to tracking progress. You get to decide what success looks like for you—based on your values, goals, and needs.

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Some people find motivation in tracking numbers. That might mean weight, body fat percentage, or waist measurement. Or it might mean health-centered metrics like blood pressure, blood sugar, or cholesterol. These can be helpful if you're working toward specific health goals with your doctor.



Others feel more connected to progress through body awareness. Maybe you notice better energy throughout the day, fewer cravings, or more restful sleep. Maybe you're able to finish your workout strong or feel less bloated after meals. These shifts matter just as much as numbers—sometimes more.



And many people track success by noticing how their mindset is changing. Did you enjoy a treat without guilt? Did you eat a veggie-packed meal and feel proud, not punished? Are you beginning to see food as nourishment, not a moral test? These moments are meaningful victories, too.

There's no one-size-fits-all way to measure progress, and no "wrong" way to succeed. In fact, one of the most powerful things you can do is choose the metrics that genuinely support your wellbeing—and give yourself permission to skip the ones that don't. That's what Nutrivore90 is all about.



Choose What to Measure

It can be tough to notice your progress when the changes are gradual—but gradual change is often the *most* sustainable. That's why tracking matters.

Tracking helps you see what's shifting, even when it's subtle. It's not about being perfect or rigid—it's about noticing patterns, celebrating wins, and staying connected to your goals. And most importantly, **it's personal**.

If you're someone who's been working to heal your relationship with food or let go of weight-focused goals, you have full permission to skip the scale. Tracking doesn't have to mean numbers. You might find that reflecting on how you *feel*—your mood, energy, digestion, and mindset—is far more meaningful and empowering. You get to decide what success looks like.

Choose the biometrics and/or symptoms to track that feel relevant and motivating to you. You'll revisit them at the halfway point and again at the end of the challenge to celebrate your growth.

Select from one or both lists below, choosing *only* what's relevant and important to you:

Objective Measures (a.k.a. Biometrics)

- Blood Pressure** – Record weekly or as recommended by your provider
- Body Weight** – Weigh weekly (not daily!) to notice trends
- Waist Measurement** – Take once every 2–4 weeks
- Body Composition** – If you have access to body fat %, lean mass, etc.
- Cholesterol or Triglycerides** – Optional blood work, if available
- Blood Sugar (Fasting/Glucose Monitoring)** – If relevant to your health
- Resting Heart Rate** – A general marker of cardiovascular health
- Fitness Markers** – Such as how far you can walk or how long you can exercise without fatigue
- App-Based Metrics** – Data from wearables like Apple Health, Fitbit, Oura, etc., if you already track

Subjective Measures (a.k.a. Symptoms and Wellbeing)

- Energy Levels** – Do you feel steady throughout the day or experience dips?
- Mental Clarity** – Is brain fog lifting, or do you feel sharper and more focused?
- Bloating or Digestion** – Any shifts in how your gut feels after meals?
- Cravings** – Are cravings less intense or easier to manage?
- Sleep Quality** – Falling asleep, staying asleep, and waking rested
- Mood & Anxiety** – Changes in stress, irritability, or emotional resilience
- Joint or Muscle Pain** – Any discomfort or stiffness changes?
- Skin Condition** – Irritation, breakouts, or clarity improving?
- Headaches** – Frequency, severity, or patterns
- PMS or Menstrual Symptoms** – Mood, cramps, cycle regularity
- Immune Function** – Getting sick less often or recovering more quickly
- Overall Wellbeing** – How do you feel in your body and mind day to day?

Try This Accessible Fitness Marker

5-Minute Walk Test

Set a timer for 5 minutes and walk at a brisk but comfortable pace on a flat surface. You can do this indoors, outdoors, or even in place.

- **Record:** How far you walked (approximate distance or step count), how winded you felt (scale of 1–10), and your energy level after.
- **Retest at Day 45 and Day 90** to notice changes in stamina, ease, or recovery.

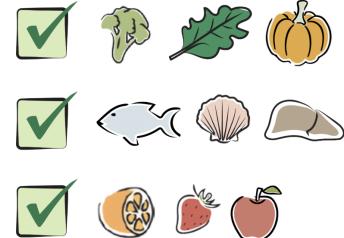
Optional alternatives:

 **Chair Sit-to-Stand Test:** How many times can you rise from a chair and sit back down (without using your hands) in 30 seconds?

 **Stair Step Count:** How many steps can you climb before needing a break or feeling winded?

Habit Tracking

One of the most important ways to succeed with Nutrivore 90 is by focusing on habit formation and mindful tracking. **Big changes happen through small, consistent actions—and the key is repeating them until they become second nature.**



You don't need to overhaul your entire lifestyle. In fact, the best habits are the ones that feel simple and doable in your daily routine. When repeated consistently, even the smallest habits—like adding one cup of vegetables to lunch or taking a daily walk—create a powerful ripple effect on your health.

Pairing habit-building with gentle tracking (like logging your energy levels, blood pressure, or how many veggie-rich plates you ate this week) helps you stay connected to your progress. It allows you to notice what's working, adjust when needed, and celebrate the wins along the way.

This isn't about control—it's about awareness. The more tuned-in you are to your habits and how they affect your body, the more empowered you'll feel to make nourishing choices with confidence.

Think of this as an ongoing reflection tool. Use a journal, tracker, or notes app to check in weekly.



Weekly Reflection Prompts

- What new habit is starting to feel automatic?*
- What habit do I still have to consciously think about?*
- Have I noticed any changes in how I feel—physically, emotionally, or mentally?*
- What meals or routines have helped me feel my best this week?*
- What's been my biggest challenge—and how did I respond to it?*
- What's something I'm proud of this week, big or small?*
- What's one small thing I can do next week to stay consistent or level up?*

Nutrivore90 Temperature Check

Your starting point—no judgment, just awareness.

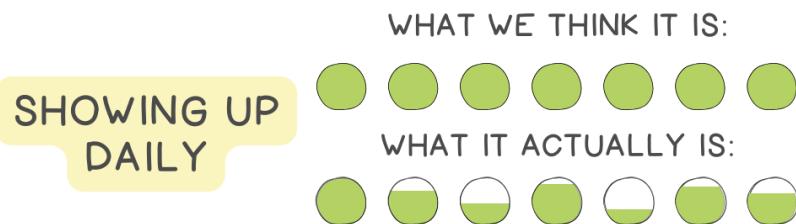
This activity is designed to help you observe your current eating patterns, how your meals make you feel, and how you relate to food. By building a clear, honest picture of where you're starting from, you'll be able to set more meaningful, realistic goals for your Nutrivore90 challenge—and track meaningful progress along the way.



For the next three days, write down everything you eat and drink. Don't worry about calories, portions, or Nutrivore Scores—just record what you consume in a way that feels sustainable to you (a notebook, app, or notes in your phone are all great options). Alternatively or additionally, take a photo of every meal and snack to create a visual food journal—you could even create an album on your phone just for the Nutrivore90.

Try not to change your choices just because you're logging them. The goal is not perfection—it's self-awareness. Be curious, not critical.

After the three days, use the questions below to reflect on what you noticed: what's working,



what feels hard, and where you might want to focus next.

 **Tip:** Need help figuring out what counts as a serving or which food counts in which group? Everything you need can be found in Chapters 9 and 11 in Nutrivore by Dr. Sarah Ballantyne. The Nutrivore Weekly Serving Matrix is also a great tool to simplify tracking of all your servings.



Nutrient Intake Awareness

- What does a typical meal look like for me?*
- On average, how many servings of vegetables did I eat each day over the past three days?*
- On average, how many servings of fruit did I eat each day over the past three days?*
- Did I include a source of protein with each meal? How often did I skip a protein food with a meal?*
- Did I include whole-food starches like sweet potatoes, beans, or whole grains with each meal? How often did I skip a starchy food with a meal?*
- How many different colors of fruits and vegetables did I eat over the last three days?*
- How many different whole foods did I eat over the last three days?*
- Were there any Nutrivore Foundational Food families that I completely missed or consistently avoided?*
- Do my meals keep me full and satisfied, or am I often snacking?*



Food Mindset and Meal Experience

- Do I enjoy planning and preparing meals—or find it stressful? Is there a way I could make meal preparation more enjoyable?*
- Do I prepare most of my meals at home, or do I rely on take-out or fast casual? Would embracing more healthy-option convenience and pre-packaged foods (e.g., rotisserie chicken, steam-in-the-bag mixed veggies, canned beans, bottled sauces) make it easier to make more homemade meals?*
- Do I prepare nutrient-dense foods in ways that I enjoy the flavor and texture? Is there anything I could add to my go-to dishes (e.g., salad dressing, grated cheese, hot sauce) to make them tastier to me? Can I change up the cooking method (e.g., roasting or air-frying instead of steaming veggies) to make them tastier to me?*
- Do I eat while distracted, rushed, or on-the-go? Would meal or ingredient preparation on the weekend help me to have more time to enjoy my meals and*

stay consistent? Are there any healthy-option grab-and-go foods that I can keep on hand to make it easier to stay on track?

- Do I label foods as “good” or “bad”? Do I feel afraid or guilty about certain foods? How can I let go of these moral judgments of foods?
- Do I intentionally include quality-of-life foods? Am I able to enjoy my favorite foods in moderation without guilt?

This is about **starting where you are**—with honesty and self-compassion—and making small changes that add up over time.

More Resources for Success on Nutrivore90

These resources are entirely optional, but are great tools to help you get the most out of your 90-day nutrition challenge.

 [Nutrivore](#) by Dr. Sarah Ballantyne (hardcover, paperback, kindle or audiobook, available wherever books are sold) for weekly reading to get the most out of this challenge. Especially helpful if you’re someone who needs to understand the why’s.

 [Nutrivore Weekly Serving Matrix](#) makes your nutrition tracking even easier! (Note, this is included in the in-print book, or can be purchased as a stand-alone digital product.)

 **Daily videos** when you sign up for a \$5-per-month subscription/membership on @drsarahballantyne ‘s [TikTok](#), [YouTube](#), [Instagram](#), or [Facebook](#). Each platform will have the same videos, so just subscribe to the one where you spend the most time online. (Alternatively, sign up for the Nutrivore90 Community on Patreon to get the same daily videos plus so much more!)

 [Nutrivore90 Community on Patreon](#) is a private group just for you and your fellow Nutrivore90ers, where you get daily videos, daily Nutrivore90 journal prompts, a dedicated space for your weekly homework, community chats, recipe swaps, and Q&A opportunities with Dr. Sarah and the Nutrivore90 team. It’s the best way to connect with a supportive community of likeminded individuals on this 90-day journey with you.