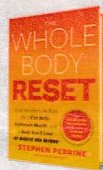


# Eat for a Powerful Heart

A NUTRITION PLAN FROM AARP HELPS KEEP YOU LEANER, STRONGER AND HEALTHIER By **STEPHEN PERRINE** with Heidi Skolnik



**YOUR HEART** doctor may ask if you're avoiding saturated fat or what you're doing to control your weight. But doctors seldom ask, "Are you taking care of your muscles?"

We lose about 5 percent of our total muscle mass every decade after age 30. But science shows that those who retain muscle as they age lower their risk of metabolic syndrome, obesity, diabetes and inflammation—all risk factors for heart disease.

That's why AARP developed **The Whole Body Reset**, a program designed to stop, and reverse, age-related muscle loss and weight gain.

The primary cause of age-related muscle loss is "anabolic resistance"—essentially, we can't turn the protein we eat into muscle as efficiently as we did when we were younger. In order to overcome this resistance, we need higher doses of protein at each meal—25 grams at a time for women or 30 grams for men. Anything less than that, and your body remains in muscle-loss mode. Fat starts to win out, and heart health suffers.

In addition to protein, we need a mix of high-fiber grains, high-nutrient fruits and vegetables, and healthy fats to keep heart-harming, fat-promoting inflammation under control. Here's your plan.



## **Eat 25 to 30 grams of protein at each meal: breakfast, lunch and dinner.**

Make sure every snack you eat has at least some protein as well (cheese on that cracker, peanut butter with that apple). Women should aim for at least 75 to 100 grams of total protein every day, while men should shoot for at least 90 to 120 grams.



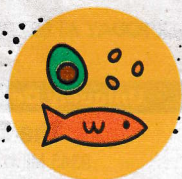
## **Up your intake of high-fiber grains, cereals and beans.**

In one study following 2,735 people, women who ate the least amount of fiber were 2.9 times as likely to die from inflammatory diseases such as heart disease. And research has found that for every additional 10 grams of fiber you eat per day, you reduce your risk of stroke by 12 percent.



## **Eat more colorful fruits and vegetables.**

Aim for eight to 10 small servings a day. Fruits and vegetables provide fiber, as well as vitamins, minerals and thousands of micronutrients called phytochemicals. As we age, our ability to extract these nutrients from food diminishes—and that's another reason why inflammation increases.



## **Enjoy healthy fats and oils from seafood, nuts, seeds, olives and avocados.**

Two servings a day will help keep you lean and sharp, whether you're enjoying a serving of salmon, a spoonful of peanut butter, some chips and guacamole, or toasty bread dipped in extra-virgin olive oil.



## **Focus on fortified dairy.**

Worry more about getting enough calcium-rich dairy than about whether it's low-fat or not. One study found that those who ate three servings of whole-fat dairy had lower risks of heart disease and stroke than those who ate one serving. Dairy also delivers muscle-building protein.



## **Don't drink your calories (or chemicals).**

In particular, don't think you're doing yourself a favor by drinking diet sodas: They've been linked to an increased risk of heart disease, dementia and stroke. Keep it simple with filtered water, sparkling water, tea and/or coffee (it's fine to add a little milk).