

## *Webinar 2 Handout:* **GUIDE TO THE 4 KEYS**

I despise roasted tomatoes. Hate 'em. Can't even choke one down. As a kid, they were the food that I would push to the side of the plate hoping they would magically disappear. I love raw tomatoes, and I love tomato sauce, but to this day I still can't stomach cooked ones. Do you have a food like this? Food choices are personal. Our relationships with food are shaped by childhood experiences, finances, culinary skills, lifestyle, preferences, diet history and hundreds of other variables. Learning to honor these factors when working with clients is of utmost importance. These personal factors are why one diet doesn't fit all. Meal plans need to be individualized to each client to meet his/her goals and set 'em up for success. Within that individualization, though, it is essential to have a framework to anchor the process. The 4 keys that I use at Nutritious Life are food timing and hunger quotient (HQ) (these two go hand in hand), portions, proportions and nutrient density. They are all essential to structuring your clients' meal plans and evaluating their success. You'll need to understand these 4 keys as the foundation of the work you do both in creating a plan and guiding your follow up sessions. These philosophical keys are just as important as your clients' food choices in creating healthy behaviors that last for life.

### **Food Timing**

In a nutshell, food timing is how you space out your meals. Proper food timing will increase metabolism and maximize blood sugar control. It's essential to start every day with breakfast (this is a MUST) and eat consistently throughout the day. Meals and snacks should be eaten every few hours (approximately because everyone is different!). Long breaks without eating set us up to be starving and trigger overeating later. Consuming consistent meals and snacks is critical for keeping hunger levels under control and blood sugar stabilized.

*Example: If lunch is eaten at noon and dinner is planned for 6:30 an afternoon snack is critical. Six and a half hours is too long to go without putting a little fuel in the tank. Your client may find himself ravenous when he gets home, and wind up eating through the whole refrigerator while prepping dinner, then sitting down and eating a whole dinner! Planning and eating an afternoon snack can help cut the hunger and set someone up for success going into dinner.*

## Hunger Quotient (HQ)

Hunger Quotient is the number (related to a feeling) to describe how hungry you *truly* are. Hunger isn't the only reason we eat. Sometimes we eat because "I always have lunch at noon," boredom, stress or other factors. Tapping into *true* hunger is essential to your client's ability to meet his/her goals. HQ goes hand in hand with food timing. Teach your clients to listen to their bodies and understand when they are hungry and when they are satisfied. The scale is 1 to 10 (1 = stuffed & 10 = famished). You want to aim to be between a 6 and a 4 at the beginning and end of your meals and snacks. A 6 is "slightly hungry" and a 4 is "slightly satisfied." When meals and snacks are skipped during the day, HQ gets thrown off and it is easy to end up making poor food choices and overeating. Hello, bread basket!

*Example: Your client finishes breakfast at 9am and feels like she is at a 6 before her noon staff meeting which lasts 2 hours. At the end of the meeting, she is usually a 9 and goes for anything in sight. Teach her to have a small but satisfying snack before or during the meeting to keep her energy high and her HQ in check and also to prevent her from going for the sausage pizza. The 100 calories she may consume in almonds may save her 400 calories in pizza later on. HQ goes hand in hand with food timing!*

### What's Your Hunger Quotient?

Hunger Quotient (HQ)	Translation
1. Stuffed (to the point of not feeling well)	I'm <i>never</i> eating again
2. Extremely full	I couldn't eat another bite
3. Satisfied	I could have skipped those last few bites
4. Slightly satisfied	I feel satisfied with not one bit of fullness
5. Neutral	I'm not hungry or full
6. Slightly hungry	I'm ready to eat, or I could have a few more bites
7. Hungry	I'm <i>really</i> ready for another meal
8. Very hungry	I'm definitely ready for a <i>big</i> meal
9. Extremely hungry	I can't think until I eat
10. Famished (ready to pass out)	Don't talk to me until I eat -- I could eat my shirt

## Portions

Portions are the amount of food you should be eating. In other words, your serving size. Even healthy foods need to be portioned. We all know it's possible to gain weight from too much junk food, but it's also possible to gain weight from too much healthy food! First and foremost, teach clients to listen to their HQ. If they do this, they will never over consume *too* dramatically. Next, teach them to follow their meal plan and portion guide taking into account their HQ. (We will cover this more in depth in Lesson 10.) Explain which portions need to be paid the most attention to. This will be KEY to success! Rule of thumb: go for more veggies first if HQ is higher than a 6 at the end of a meal or snack and lean protein second if the veggies don't cut it. However, there should not be seconds on the portions of starches and fats -- sticking to portions outlined in the portion guide for these foods will help meet established goals. Use props and visual comparisons to demonstrate what portions should look like. The old fashioned idea of breaking out food scales and measuring spoons is impractical for most people. Telling your clients that an ounce of protein is the size of dice or a three ounce serving of protein is the size of an iPhone can be much more useful (in addition to listening to one's HQ). Keep in mind that the environment can play a huge role in how people perceive normal portions. Just because a food is sold in a small package doesn't mean it should be meant for one person! Same goes for giant apples and half pound chicken breasts. Dishware can also throw off perception (more on that in Lesson 3). Arm your clients with the tools they need for determining proper portions in the real food world.

*Example: Using fat or protein in snacks is a great tool because these nutrients take longer to digest and satisfy for longer than carbohydrate choices alone. A container of almonds in your client's desk is a great snacking choice, but 10 to 20 nuts should satisfy - too many almonds (as healthy as they are) can pack on the pounds.*

## Proportions

It's important to eat a balance of lean proteins, high fiber carbohydrates and healthy fats. This will help to keep HQ in check all day, help to stabilize blood sugar and ensure nutrient needs are met. There needs to be a little protein or fat with every meal and starches must be high fiber. Sometimes it gets tricky because some foods fall into more than one category: nuts are considered both a fat and a protein, beans are starches and protein, and on and on! There is no strict rule about how to use the foods that fall into more than one category. Your client may eat a bowl of oatmeal (starch) for breakfast with apple (carbohydrate) sliced on top. That meal would be really quickly digested if there wasn't a tablespoon of almonds (fat) mixed into it. Later in the day with a snack of carrots and celery, two teaspoons of almond butter (fat) may be used to make for a satisfying bridge between

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lunch and dinner. It takes practice to find the balance and this is not a perfect science. The scale and your client's HQ are your best tools to determine if a meal or snack needs to be tweaked over time.

*Example: A dinner of grilled salmon, spinach and brown rice can be a super meal. Salmon is a fatty fish, so a small drizzle of olive oil is enough added oil for the preparation. The spinach should take up most of your plate (at least half!) and there should be a palm-sized serving of salmon and a  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup serving of rice. Now that's a healthy plate! Want seconds? Go back for the greens and maybe even a little salmon, but not the rice (it won't satisfy like the other two).*

## Nutrient Density

Getting the most bang for your buck. Yes, that expression is overused but it is what nutrient density is all about. Empower your clients to choose the healthiest foods for their body and the most amount of nutrients per calorie. They should not waste their time eating food that doesn't fuel 'em up with vitamins, minerals, fiber, protein or other great nutrients. We often focus on what's *not* in our food--that's why companies label things as low in sodium or cholesterol--while we should be focusing on what's actually *in* our food! The goal is to get the most nutrients possible from a single food. To figure out if a food in question is dense with nutrients, have your clients ask themselves: 'Does this food come from nature?' Foods that look like how they are grown in nature are more healthful. If the food is processed and you cannot see a grain, seed, leaf or anything to identify it from where it came from, it is probably not nutrient dense. Use food labels to bring it to the next level when packages are involved. The example I often use with clients is white bread vs. whole wheat. Same calories? Yes. Same nutrients? No. The nutrients in the whole wheat will not only aid in health but also in weight loss.

*Example: Clients often come in thinking they are making great snacking choices by eating things like pretzels. They need to be taught that pretzels may have no fat, but they are also non-nutritive. On the flipside, a great nutrient dense snack is a small Granny Smith apple with 2 teaspoons nut butter. This snack is loaded with nutrients including fiber, healthy fat, vitamins, minerals and protein. It will help to keep you satisfied, provide nutrients for overall health and is also an easy on the go snack!*

Honor your client's food history and beliefs as you raise his or her nutrition practice. Empower clients with the behaviors to support their meal plans by focusing on the 4 keys at each and every session. Remind them that the 'what to eat' is only one piece of the Nutritious Life pie and the behaviors of timing meals and snacks, listening to hunger quotient, portioning appropriately, and eating proper proportions of nutrient dense foods are essential to actualizing their goals.