

SAMPLE SERVICE MEMBER MEAL PLAN

Below is a sample meal plan for a healthy, 25-year-old elite male service member, 5'10" in height, weighing 185 lbs. He parachutes out of a plane in the middle of the night to invade enemy territory, walks numerous miles carrying over 50 lbs. of ammo, radios, and protective equipment, constantly prepared for combat. The necessary physical and cognitive demands of this soldier require optimal nutrition to ensure he is ready at a moment's notice. Proper fueling strategies, tailored to individual goals and training intensity, are essential for maximizing performance and minimizing the risk of injury.³

Adequate intake of macronutrients such as carbohydrates, protein, and fats, along with micronutrients including vitamins and minerals, is crucial for sustaining energy levels, promoting muscle repair, and supporting immune function.⁴

Breakfast

- 3 whole eggs scrambled with spinach and bell peppers (236 kcal, 20g protein)
- 2 slices of whole grain toast (180 kcal, 8g protein)
- 1 medium banana (108 kcal, 1g protein)
- 8 oz. soy yogurt (160 kcal, 6g protein)
- 1 cup of orange juice (119 kcal, 2g protein)
- 1 cup of black coffee (5 kcal, 0g protein)

Mid-Morning Snack

- 1 serving of mixed nuts (almonds, walnuts, and soy nuts) (179 kcal, 8g protein)
- 1 medium apple (95 kcal, 1g protein)

Lunch

- Grilled chicken breast (6oz.) (281 kcal, 52g protein)
- Quinoa salad with mixed vegetables (edamame, carrots, cherry tomatoes) (295 kcal, 13g protein)
- 1 serving of mixed greens with olive oil and balsamic vinegar dressing (106 kcal, 2g protein)
- 1 small whole-grain roll (160 kcal, 6g protein)

Afternoon Snack

- 1 serving of low-fat cottage cheese (150 kcal, 25g protein)
- 1 cup of sliced strawberries (30 kcal, 1g protein)

Dinner

- Baked salmon fillet (6oz) (325 kcal, 34g protein)
- Rice pilaf with mixed vegetables (asparagus, bell peppers, onions) (173 kcal, 4g protein)
- Steamed broccoli (30 kcal, 2 g protein)
- Small sweet potato (150 kcal, 2 g protein)

Evening Snack

- 1 small handful of roasted soy nuts (190 kcal, 13g protein)



Pre-Workout

- 1 soy protein granola bar (190 kcal, 10g protein)
- 1 small banana (80 kcal, 1g protein)

Post-Workout

- Soy protein shake (mixed with water or low-fat soymilk) (120 kcal, 25g protein)
- 1 serving of whole-grain crackers with hummus (168 kcal, 5g protein)



Hydration

The service member must stay adequately hydrated. He or she should aim for at least 3-4 liters of water intake spread evenly throughout the day, adjusting based on individual sweat rates and environmental conditions.⁵

Considerations

- This meal plan balances macronutrients to support energy needs, muscle repair, and overall health (3,530 calories, 440 grams of carbohydrates, 241 grams of protein, 118 grams of fat).
- Emphasis is placed on whole, nutrient-dense foods such as lean proteins, whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and healthy fats to provide essential vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants.
- Portion sizes may need to be adjusted based on the service member's metabolic needs, specific energy expenditure, training periodization, and performance goals.
- Monitoring body composition, performance metrics, and overall well-being allows for fine-tuning of the meal plan as needed in consultation with a qualified nutrition professional.

References: 1. Montain SJ, Young AJ. Diet and physical performance. *Appetite*. 2003;40:255-67. 2. Gonzalez DE, McAllister MJ, Waldman HS, Ferrando AA, Joyce J, Barringer ND, Dawes JJ, Kieffer AJ, Harvey T, Kerksick CM, Stout JR. International Society of Sports Nutrition position stand: Tactical athlete nutrition. *Journal of the International Society of Sports Nutrition*. Dec 2022;19(1):267-315. 3. Burke LM, Hawley JA, Wong SH, Jeukendrup AE. Carbohydrates for training and competition. *Food, Nutrition and Sports Performance III*. Aug 2013:17-27. 4. Phillips SM, Van Loon LJ. Dietary protein for athletes: From requirements to optimum adaptation. *Food, Nutrition and Sports Performance III*. Aug 2013:29-38. 5. Sawka MN, Burke LM, Eichner ER, Maughan RJ, Montain SJ, Stachenfeld NS. American College of Sports Medicine Position Stand. Exercise and fluid replacement. *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*. 2009;39(2):377-390.