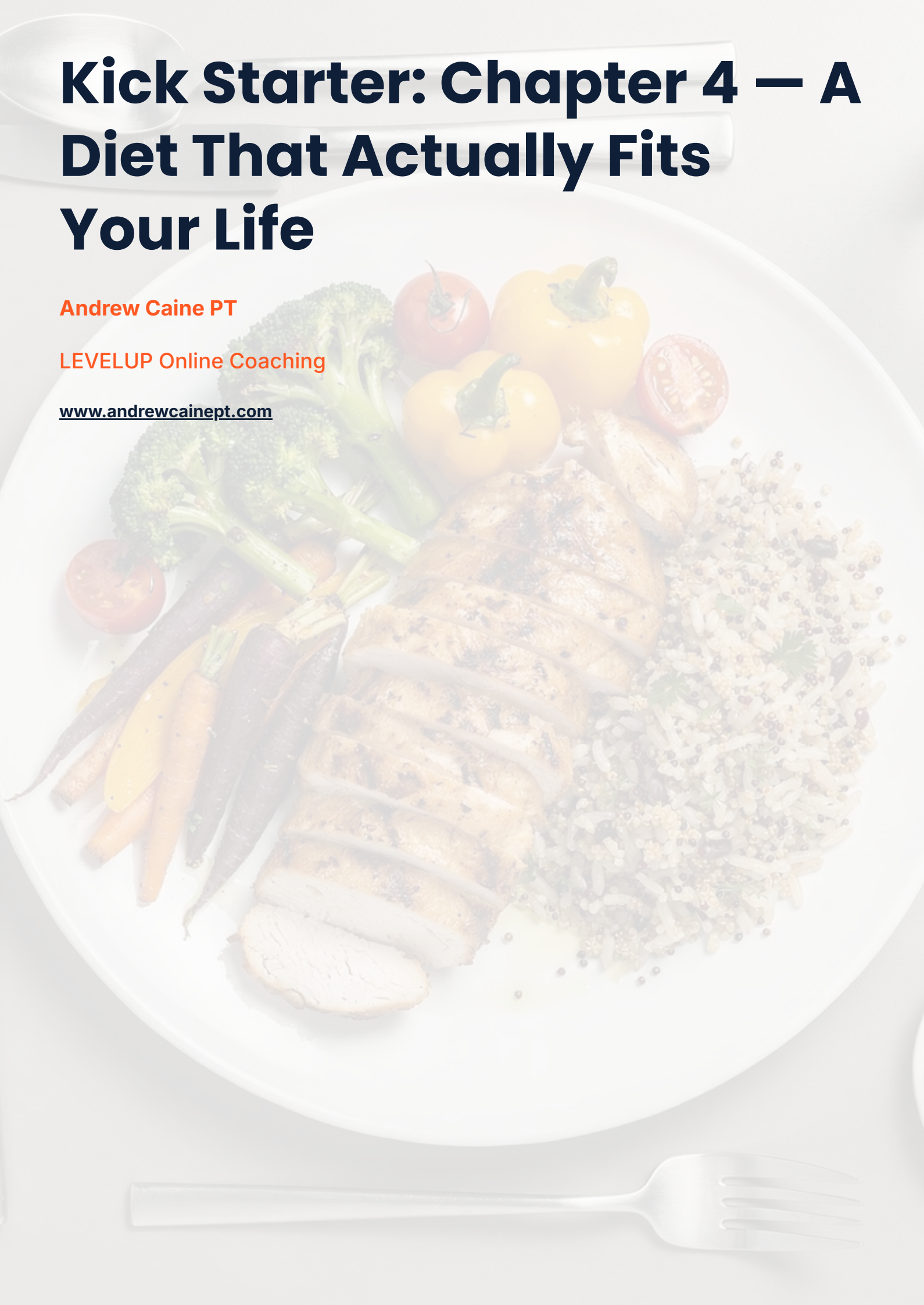
Kick Starter: Chapter 4 — A Diet That Actually Fits Your Life

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Welcome

Hi There!

Welcome to the LEVELUP Online Coaching Kick Starter.

Whether you are picking up a barbell for the first time or you have been training for years and are finally ready to do it properly — this is where we build the foundation.

I have put together 7 chapters, each covering a key topic that will set you up to get the most from your coaching. Training, nutrition, mindset, progress tracking, sleep — everything you need to understand what you are doing and why.

Work through these chapters at your own pace. The more you understand the principles behind your programme, the better your results will be.

Let's get to work.

Andrew

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Healthy vs Unhealthy — The Real Story

The fitness industry loves putting food into two camps — clean and dirty, good and bad, healthy and unhealthy. It makes for simple content but it does not reflect how nutrition actually works, and it is one of the main reasons people develop an unhealthy relationship with food.

The truth is there are no bad foods. There are just foods with different nutritional profiles. A chocolate bar is not going to derail your progress. A consistent pattern of eating well over the course of a week is what produces results — or does not. Context is everything.

That said, not all foods are equal when it comes to how well they support your goals. Nutrient-dense foods — lean proteins, whole grains, vegetables, fruits, healthy fats — give you more of what your body needs per calorie. They keep you fuller for longer, support recovery, provide vitamins and minerals, and make it easier to hit your targets. They should make up the majority of your diet.

Foods that are high in added sugars, refined carbohydrates, and calories while being low in protein and micronutrients — ultra-processed snacks, sugary drinks, most fast food — are not off limits. But they are calorie-dense and not particularly filling, which makes hitting your targets while including a lot of them more difficult.

> The approach is straightforward. Build the foundation of your diet around nutrient-dense foods. Fit the things you enjoy around that foundation. Do not eliminate anything. Do not label food as the enemy. Just be aware of what is in what you are eating and manage it accordingly.

That is the 80/20 approach covered in Chapter 2. This chapter is about making it practical.

Foods to Include

These are the building blocks of a well-structured diet. This is not an exhaustive list — it is a reference point for the kinds of foods that should be making up the majority of your intake.

Proteins

Chicken breast, turkey breast, lean beef, pork loin, salmon, tuna, mackerel, cod, prawns, eggs, Greek yoghurt, cottage cheese, milk, whey protein, tofu, tempeh, lentils, black beans, kidney beans, chickpeas.

Carbohydrates

Oats, brown rice, white rice, wholegrain bread, wholegrain pasta, sweet potatoes, regular potatoes, quinoa, barley, fruit (all varieties), vegetables (all varieties).

Healthy Fats

Avocado, olive oil, eggs, salmon and oily fish, nuts (almonds, walnuts, cashews, pistachios), nut butters (peanut butter, almond butter), seeds (chia, flax, pumpkin, sunflower), ghee and grass-fed butter in moderation, dark chocolate in moderation.

Vegetables

Spinach, broccoli, kale, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, bell peppers, carrots, tomatoes, courgette, sweet potatoes, cucumber, asparagus, green beans, onions, mushrooms. Eat a wide variety — the more colour the better.

Snacks

Greek yoghurt with berries, cottage cheese, hard boiled eggs, rice cakes with nut butter or avocado, hummus with vegetable sticks, mixed nuts, protein bars (check the protein to sugar ratio), low-calorie jellies, fruit.

Beverages

Water, sparkling water, herbal teas, black coffee or coffee with milk, coconut water (unsweetened). Limit sugary drinks and fruit juices — they are calorie-dense and do not contribute much satiety.

Building Meals That Work

A good meal is not complicated. It has a protein source, a carbohydrate source, some vegetables, and a small amount of fat. Build every meal around that template and you will naturally end up with a well-structured diet without overthinking it.

Here is the practical approach.

1 Start with protein

Decide the protein source first. Chicken, beef, fish, eggs, Greek yoghurt, tofu. Get this right and the meal is already doing most of the nutritional heavy lifting.

2 Add your carbohydrate

Rice, potatoes, oats, pasta, bread. The type matters less than the quantity. White rice is not worse than brown rice in any meaningful way once you are hitting your fibre targets. Pick what you actually enjoy eating.

3 Fill the plate with vegetables

They are low in calories, high in fibre, and packed with micronutrients. They also add volume to meals which makes eating in a calorie deficit significantly easier. Load up.

4 Add fat through cooking or toppings

Olive oil, avocado, a small amount of butter, nuts. Fat makes food taste good and keeps you satisfied between meals. Just be aware that it is calorie-dense — a tablespoon of olive oil is around 120 calories, which catches a lot of people out.

5 Keep it varied

Eating the same meals every day gets boring fast and boring diets do not last. Rotate your protein sources, try different vegetables, experiment with sauces and seasonings. The food lists in this chapter give you plenty to work with.

Eating Out, Takeaways and Social Life

This is where most people assume coaching is going to be restrictive. It is not.

One of the core principles of the approach we take together is that your diet has to fit your life — not the other way around. If you enjoy meals out, weekends away, and social occasions, those things stay. The goal is to get results while keeping them, not to white-knuckle your way through months of saying no to everything.

Here is how to approach the situations that come up most often.

Eating out at restaurants

Most restaurant meals can be made to work without ordering the dullest thing on the menu. Protein-based mains — steak, chicken, fish, burger without the bun if you are being precise — are easy to fit in. Sides of vegetables and potatoes are straightforward. Sauces and dressings are where calories hide — if you are tracking carefully, be mindful of these. If you are having a normal meal and enjoying it, that is absolutely fine. One meal out does not undo a week of consistent effort.

Takeaways

The same principle applies. Some takeaway options are easy to work with — grilled chicken, sushi, Thai-style rice dishes, a pizza where you control the portion. The key is to be aware rather than either obsessing or ignoring. If you are having a takeaway, log it honestly in Trainerize, account for it in your day, and move on.

Alcohol

Alcohol contains 7 calories per gram and provides no protein, no fibre, and minimal nutritional value. A big night out can represent a substantial calorie intake that is easy to underestimate. This does not mean you cannot drink. It means being aware of it. A few drinks at the weekend is manageable. Untracked heavy drinking most weekends will consistently push you above your targets without you realising it. Be honest about what is actually happening and we can account for it together.

The weekend pattern

The most common reason people do not progress despite consistent effort Monday to Friday is an untracked weekend that significantly exceeds the weekly average. You do not need to eat in a strict deficit all weekend. You just need the week overall to land in the right place. Plan accordingly — if you know Saturday is a big day, be a little tighter on Friday and Sunday. Flexibility is built in to the approach.

> You should be able to look back on six months of coaching and feel like you lived your life, not like you spent it avoiding things. The clients who get the best results are not the ones who said no to everything — they are the ones who were consistent enough, honest enough with their tracking, and smart enough about managing the occasions that mattered.

Food and Calorie Tracking with Trainerize

Your coaching is delivered through Trainerize. As well as your training programme, Trainerize has a built-in food diary and I want you to use it — particularly in the early weeks.

Here is why it matters.

Most people significantly underestimate how much they eat and overestimate their protein intake. This is not a character flaw — it is just the reality of trying to estimate nutrition without any reference points. Tracking removes the guesswork and gives us accurate data to work with. If progress stalls, we can look at the numbers and identify exactly why. Without tracking, we are just guessing.

You do not need to be perfect. An 80% accurate food diary is still enormously useful. The goal is awareness — understanding what is actually in the food you eat, whether you are hitting your protein target, and where your calories are coming from. Most clients find that after four to six weeks of tracking they have built a solid working knowledge of portion sizes and nutritional content. At that point the obsessive daily logging becomes less necessary. But you need to build that knowledge first.

How to log food in Trainerize

Open the app, navigate to the nutrition section, and log your meals as you eat them rather than trying to remember everything at the end of the day. Search for the food, select the portion size, and the app calculates your calories and macros automatically. If you scan a barcode on a packaged product it will often pull the nutritional information directly.

Weigh your food

Where you can, use kitchen scales rather than estimating by eye — especially for protein sources and calorie-dense foods like nuts, oils, and nut butters. Most people consistently underestimate portion sizes visually. You do not need to weigh everything forever, but doing it in the early weeks builds accurate reference points that stay with you.

Track honestly

Log what you actually eat, not what you planned to eat. The diary is data, not a confession. A day where you went over your target and logged it honestly is far more useful than a day you did not log because you did not want to see the number. The data is only useful if it is accurate.

If you are unsure how to use the food diary, message me in the app and I will walk you through it.

Meal Ideas and Recipe Packs

Inside your Academy you have access to three recipe packs — High Protein, Low Carb, and Vegan — each covering breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks, and smoothie options, complete with ingredients, instructions, and nutritional values.

High Protein

Breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks, and smoothie options with ingredients, instructions, and nutritional values.

Low Carb

Breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks, and smoothie options with ingredients, instructions, and nutritional values.

Vegan

Breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks, and smoothie options with ingredients, instructions, and nutritional values.

These are not rigid meal plans you have to follow. They are a reference point — somewhere to go when you are stuck for ideas, need inspiration, or want to see what a meal that hits your targets actually looks like in practice.

Use them as a starting point and build from there based on the foods you actually enjoy eating.

Conclusion

Building a diet that works is not about following strict rules or eating foods you do not enjoy. It is about understanding what is in what you eat, building meals that hit your protein and calorie targets consistently, and being honest enough with yourself and with me when things are not going to plan.

The food is not the enemy. The social life is not the enemy. The problem is never a single meal or a single weekend — it is the pattern across the week and across the month.

> Get the basics right most of the time, track honestly, and communicate with me when something needs adjusting. That is the whole approach. Everything else follows from that.

Tools and Resources

Andrew Caine PT Academy

You get exclusive access to the Academy to view training guides, nutritional resources, and educational content.
www.andrewcainept.com

Andrew Huberman Podcast

Evidence-based content covering health, fitness, performance, and neuroscience.

Examine

Research-backed resource covering nutrition and supplements. Cuts through the noise with scientific evidence.

YouTube

Useful for exercise tutorials, form guidance, and further education on training and nutrition.

Andrew Caine PT on Instagram

Follow for regular evidence-based content on training, nutrition, and the balanced lifestyle you are working towards.
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