



## Raising the Protein Bar

June 25, 2014

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**Protein** seems to be everywhere these days from television ads to magazines to grocery store shelves. With all the publicity surrounding protein, you'd think Americans weren't getting enough of it while in reality, most of us consume more than enough protein.

Protein is an essential part of every cell, tissue, and organ in our bodies. It helps stabilize blood sugar levels and keeps us feeling fuller longer so it's very important to include plenty of protein in our diets throughout the day.

Protein comes in many forms (meats, legumes, eggs, nuts/seeds, dairy, etc) and while whole-food protein sources are among the best choices for meeting your protein needs, protein bars have become a mainstay for many Americans. They're quick, convenient and can be eaten on-the-go and many of us eat them because we believe they'll help "melt away the pounds" or "eliminate hunger."

But before you grab your next protein bar, be careful! Many bars today contain as much fat and sugar as a candy bar and are loaded with highly processed ingredients so be sure to always **READ THE LABEL** and **CHECK THE INGREDIENT LIST**.

### All Protein is Not Created Equal

When choosing a protein bar, be sure to read the entire ingredient list to see what **type** of protein the bar contains.

**Soy protein isolate** is the most common source of protein in bars because it's cheap and easily accessible. However, this form of soy is potentially associated with negative health effects so it's best to limit your intake.

Instead, look for **whey protein isolate** which is:

- made from milk
- easily digestible
- very low in lactose or lactose free
- utilized most efficiently by the body.

If you are unable to consume dairy, opt for **100% pea protein** which is:

- made from yellow split peas
- easily digestible
- utilized efficiently by the body.

## Isolate versus Concentrate

When looking at protein sources or deciding which whey protein powder to purchase, it's important to also consider if it is in the isolate or concentrate form.

- **Isolate** is ideal because it contains 90-95% pure protein with minimal carbohydrates and fat.
- **Concentrate**, on the other hand, is only 70-85% protein.

By choosing isolate, you'll get a higher quality and quantity of protein.

## Making Your Own Protein Bars

Now that you know what to look for and what to avoid in store bought protein bars, let's explore an even better option...making your own! By making protein bars at home, you control the **quality** and **quantity** of ingredients and can save money.

Check out the difference between our homemade protein bar (recipe below) and a leading store bought bar. The nutrition profiles are basically identical, but why choose a bar with 5x more ingredients when you could have a clean, tasty alternative? Plus, you're cutting costs by more than half...sounds like a win-win situation to me!

	<u>Homemade Protein Bar</u>	<u>Leading Store Bought Protein Bar</u>
<u>Calories</u>	280	280
<u>Total Fat</u>	13 grams	10 grams
<u>Carbohydrates</u>	25 grams	30 grams
<u>Protein</u>	20 grams	20 grams
<u>Ingredients</u>	Rolled oats, whey protein isolate, natural peanut butter, milk	Soy protein isolate, beet juice concentrate, organic brown rice syrup, organic dried cane syrup, palm kernel oil, organic peanut butter, organic peanuts, natural flavors, organic rolled oats, vegetable glycerin, organic soy flour, inulin (chicory extract), soy lecithin, peanut flour, rice starch, organic vanilla, salt, organic oat fiber, organic sunflower oil, organic palm kernel oil, organic peanut flour
<u>Price</u>	\$1 each	\$2-3 each