

## Build a Better Smoothie

July 13<sup>th</sup> 2016

Ashley Bailey, MS, RDN, LDN

Smoothies are a great way to pack a ton of nutrition into a refreshing, on-the-go glass. However, many “healthy” smoothies in reality are loaded with carbohydrates and sugar from tons of fruit as well as juice, honey, agave or possibly even sherbet or sorbet! Of course these smoothies *taste* fantastic BUT they aren’t so fantastic for us and don’t provide a balanced, anchored meal.

### Green Smoothies

To help lower the sugar content of traditional fruit smoothies (and get the added bonus of consuming 2-3 servings of vegetables BEFORE 8:00am!), give green smoothies a try. Green smoothies incorporate dark, leafy greens into the recipe but many also add extra fruit, juice and/or sweeteners to mask the flavor of the greens so you still have to be careful with the sugar content.

To lower the sugar content of smoothies:

- **Don't use juice as your liquid base.** Use coconut water, milk or water instead.
- **Limit added sweeteners** like honey, agave, or maple syrup. Try adding naturally sweet fruits to your smoothies instead to help cut the bitterness of the greens.
- **Avoid processed sugars and artificial sweeteners.** Try pure vanilla extract or a drop or two of pure Stevia extract instead (or again, opt for no added sweeteners and let the fruit talk for itself).
- **Use 60/40 Greens to Fruit Ratio.** Traditional green smoothie recipes are 40% greens and 60% fruit, but this may still be too high in sugar for some people. Instead, try a 40% fruit and 60% greens ratio as shown in the image on the next page. This usually works out to be around 3 cups of leafy greens and 2 cups of fruit which would make 2 large servings (or 4 servings if using it as a snack).

### Make Ahead Smoothie Packs- Freeze Your Greens!

Many people avoid making smoothies in the morning because they don't have the time or desire to pull out the blender, measure ingredients, and then wash the blender parts while also trying to get everyone out of the house for work or school.

Well, there's a solution to this problem- make **smoothie packs**.

- Wash, cut and dry your greens and fruits and freeze them in individual, pre-portioned freezer-safe containers. You can also purchase already frozen fruit to save a step.
- Use the 60/40 ratio above as a guide to portions (for example, one serving would have approximately 1.5 cups of greens and 1 cup of fruit).
- Leave out any “dry” ingredients like protein powder, flax seeds, coconut oil, Greek yogurt or nut butters and your liquid base. You can pre-measure these ingredients in advance if you'd like and store them in your pantry or fridge for easy access.

Now, we you're ready to make a fresh smoothie, pop the container out of the freezer, place it in the blender and just add your liquid base and "dry" ingredients (AKA- protein and/or healthy fat booster) of choice.

### Build YOUR Better Smoothie

Simple, right? Now it's time to get in the kitchen and start experimenting with green smoothies!

If you're a beginner, opt for milder greens like spinach or baby kale. If the greens are still a little too bitter for your taste buds, add a little extra fruit to start, working your way up to the 60/40 greens to fruit ratio.

Also, don't be afraid to add celery, carrots, beets, etc to your smoothie- the sky really is the limit with smoothie combinations!

## Build a Better Green Smoothie

CHOOSE YOUR Liquid Base	PICK YOUR Leafy Greens	SELECT YOUR Ripe Fruit
<b>1.5-2 CUPS</b> Coconut Water Coconut Milk Milk of Choice Water 	<b>3 CUPS</b> Spinach Kale Bok Choy Swiss Chard Collards Beet Greens Watercress 	<b>2 CUPS</b> Apple Berries Mango Banana Grapes Pears Peaches Pineapple  *add ice if using fresh fruit
<b>GIVE IT A Boost!</b> Avocado Nut Butter Coconut Oil	<b>Chia, Flax or Hemp Seeds</b> Protein Powder Plain Greek Yogurt	
<b>ADD A TOUCH OF Natural Sweetness OPTIONAL</b>	<b>Dates</b> Pure Maple Syrup Unfiltered Honey Pure Stevia Extract	
<b>TIME TO Blend!</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Blend liquid base and leafy greens first.</li><li>2. Add fruit and blend again.</li><li>3. Add boost(s) of choice and, if desired, a touch of natural sweetener.</li></ol>	

Copyright © 2016, SAS Institute Inc., Cary, NC, USA. All Rights Reserved.