The Basics of Sports Nutrition:

Turbo Charge your Body from the Inside

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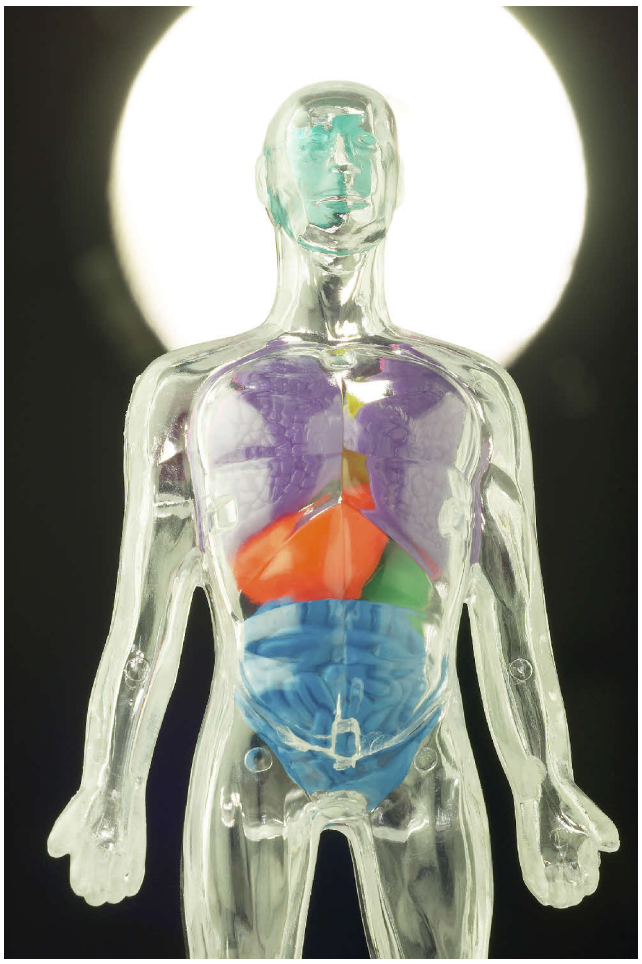
Contents

NOTE: In this e-book, we will refer to your "game", your "race", your "sport",your "competition", etc We have tried to keep the information in this e-book as broad as possible, so that the same principles will apply, whether you have a "game" or not, i.e. If your "game" is gym workouts, you can still use the principles herein.



Introduction

Sports nutrition is nothing short of essential. All the athletes you see on the television, competing in the Olympics and breaking world records have a nutrition plan in place that allows them to succeed.

If you are to succeed at your sport, you too need to ensure that your nutrition is the top of the line.

Ask yourself these questions:

- Do you know when to eat before your game?
- Do you know what foods are going to help to ultimately win the game if eaten before you compete?
- Do you truly know how much hydration your body needs to power its way through?
- Did you know that with proper nutrition, the right plan and consistency, your body can do better, perform harder and be more likely to be successful?

Dedication & Consistency Count

When it comes to sports nutrition, your attitude should be not one of "already knowing it all", but one of willingness to learn. In fact, you should be hungry for knowledge. Learn about what is out there to help enhance your body's performance. Learn about what you should be doing now so that your time on the floor is perfectly optimised. And, learn how to properly take care of yourself to avoid the risk of injury.

When it comes to these things, dedication and consistency essential. You will learn in this book that it takes a lot of hard work and dedication to be successful at sports nutrition, and that there are no short cuts worth taking.

Knowledge is the first key to success. You will learn how sports nutrition affects virtually every aspect of your game and also how you can better enhance your game by the fuel you put in your body.

You should dedicate time to work through these steps and suggestions to enhance your overall performance. As we mentioned, it takes dedication and consistency - don't expect to eat the right meal and get results right away!

You need to provide your body with the fuel it needs to perform. Yet, most sports players do not pay enough attention to their goals in sports nutrition. Many make the mistake of believing that if they just work out harder that they can still do what needs to be done, but it's actually easier to give yourself that extra edge through proper nutrition

Work Smart by Learning First

As an athlete, you need to look at all aspects of your game - it's is up to you to ensure that your body has all the fuel and power behind it to allow you to succeed quickly and effectively.

To get yourself started, read through this ebook and learn what you are missing. Then, move to using these elements in your everyday life, by adding them in as you go. You should expect it to be hard work, but when you implement these changes you will see results.

It is recommended that you spend some time talking with your doctor to ensure that your health is at an optimal level before playing any sport or changing your diet drastically. Additionally, if you are facing any physical

challenges or taking medications, ensure that it is safe for you to follow these recommendations.

Success can and does happen when you look at all areas of your game including sports nutrition.

Chapter 1: What Is Sports Nutrition?

Today is the day that you begin to enhance your game. As an athlete, you already know that you need to work hard at ensuring that your skills on the court, field or track are the best they can be; to ensure you're doing everything to the best of your abilities.

You may spend hours perfecting your game; you may work to build your muscle; to enhance how well you can throw that ball; to get that ball in the net.

Or, you may spend countless hours pushing your body to just get past that race line by a fraction of a second better.

All of these things are essential parts to being a successful athlete, but that's only part of the puzzle.

Off The Court Work Outs

Besides planning your next routine, your next set of reps and your next game, let's focus on your nutrition.

Think about it: What your body eats is what makes it move; what you put into your body is the fuel it will use to do the things that you want it to do.

As an athlete, you need to focus your time on sports nutrition as much as you focus it on your workout - the two go hand in hand, and one enhances the other.

You should take the time to learn about what your body needs, how it reacts to the foods you put into it and how well it will perform based on the fuels you provide it.

Aspects of Sports Nutrition

There are several aspects that you need to consider when it comes to sports nutrition. This is the overview of what we will cover here.

- ***Hydration***: Your body needs fluids first and foremost, and it needs the right type of fluids at the right time. This may be tricky at first, but ultimately, without fluids, your body is completely limited in what it can and will do for you. We cover this in Chapter 2.

- ***Carbohydrates***: No, we are not talking about any type of diet. Carbohydrates are an essential building block for your body's work-out, and you need to know when to eat them, what they will do for you, and how much to consume. You will find that information in Chapter 4.

- ***Proteins***: Protein is the building block of our body's muscle. Without the right types of proteins in your body, your body can not successfully build the muscle groups you would like to build. You need to learn what you need, when you need to consume it, and the foods which will provide it - see Chapter 5.

- ***Fats***: Are they good or bad? Your body does need fat, no matter what those diets tell you, but you need to know what fat is good and what is bad, and your body needs to have it delivered at the right time for it to be useful.

Doesn't One Diet Work?

Why isn't there just one diet out there that is the answer to everyone's sports nutrition?

If you need certain amounts of foods, specific foods and at the same time, wouldn't everyone be able to follow the same plan along the way?

The answer to this is no. Each and every one of us has a very different body make up. In that, we need various amounts and specific planning in our food consumption.

Another contributing factor to this is our age. Let's face it, our needs change as we age and our bodies need us to provide them with foods to compensate for those needs.

When you are young and fit your body needs different nutrition than it does as you age.

Additionally, your race matters too. Different cultures require different types of foods, minerals and vitamins - remember, our bodies developed over time in various ways.

Therefore what you need is not the same as what someone around the globe (or right next door!) would need.

Your body's size is another factor - the larger you are, the more calories your body needs to feed your body's cells.

Furthermore, what you plan to do with your body will affect your nutrition needs. Will you physically exert your entire body or will you simply exert just your arms? Is your goal weight loss or weight gain? These areas will all have an impact on your nutrition plan.

It All Sounds Confusing

There is no doubt that sports nutrition is a complex area, but we will try to break it down and determine what it is that your body truly needs.

When you take the time necessary to balance out all of these factors through a solid sports nutrition plan, you will ultimately be able to succeed and reach your fitness goals.

Your Goals:

Your goals will follow these needs specifically:

1. Learn when you need to feed your body to succeed.

2. Learn what amounts your body will need to be successful.

3. Develop a plan to help you to succeed at sticking with your goals.

4. Work the plan and find success.

Makes it sound easier, right? Throughout the next chapters, things will get easier, we promise! Soon, you will be well on your way to a successful sports nutrition plan that will provide you body with excellent fuel to give you that winning edge.

Chapter 2: Hydration Is Key

It may sound obvious, but it's often forgotten:- keeping your body hydrated is an essential part of sports nutrition. Your body needs fuel in the form of fluids - this is an essential part of your well being and life in general.

If you do not have enough water in your body at any given time, your body will ultimately suffer, and your game will suffer.

Why Water Matters

OK, without taking you back to science class, here's the serious job that water has in your life and in your body.

- It moves the vitamins, minerals and other nutrients through your body, keeps blood moving which in turn carries the fuel that your cells need for energy.

- Water helps to move out the waste products from your cells, which allows them to keep performing at an optimal level.

- Your body uses fluids to regulate temperature, thereby protecting your overall health and well-being.

You can't live without it, so when it comes to sports nutrition, it is nothing short of essential. Here's some more of how it helps:

When your body burns energy, it produces heat, which in turn races through your body.

Think of your body as a car:- if the engine gets too hot, it cannot perform as it should. As a way to keep your "engine" cool, water is a necessity.

Additionally, your body needs to have these fluids to allow you to carry all the nutrients throughout your body. Since you are working on developing muscles, enhancing your physical characteristics, your body needs water to transport those nutrients where they need to go.

Water helps your body to grow, but also helps you to repair cells as you work hard at achieving your fitness goals.

The Importance:

If you lose 2% of your body's fluid, your overall performance will considerably drop.

If you lose 5% of your body's fluid, you can find yourself facing heat exhaustion, which is not good. Now, you are barely moving.

If you lose 10% of your body's fluid, you are at risk of heat stroke and even death through dehydration. In other words, game over!

How Much Is Enough?

Thirst is the first sign of dehydration.

If you get to the point of being thirsty, you have already lost at least one percent of your body's fluids and are already putting your body at risk.

You need to drink more than enough to quench your thirst (don't stop when you are no longer thirsty either)

It is essential that you are always keeping those fluids moving in your body, pumping energy to your cells so that you can perform.

How much water is enough? Let your body tell you, but don't restrict it - keep up the water intake, especially throughout any workouts.

If you are a conditioned athlete, well on your way to success, your body will need more water than someone less experienced. This is because:

- Your body is burning fuel faster and more heat is produced quicker.
- Your energy is depleting faster, so fluid needs to get there faster.
- Your body will be sweating more, resulting in more fluid loss, and consequently more of a need for replenishment.

Tips for Fluids

Here are some basic things that you need to keep in mind when it comes to water.

- Drink water in smaller amounts, more often, helping to provide a constant level of fluid. If you attempt to drink water too quickly, you get that heavy feeling in your stomach, which you want to avoid.

  Remember, small, more often.

- Six to eight ounces every 15 to 20 minutes during your game or during your workout is ideal. If you feel you need more, then increase this amount slightly until you feel comfortable about it.
- Don't go for ice water. You need water that is at the right temperature, i.e. cool water, about 40 to 50 degrees.

  This will help to get rid of the heat in your body but will not sit heavily in your stomach.
- Cool water is absorbed quickly by the body, putting it right to work for you.
- Weigh yourself before and after your workout or competition. Drink eight ounces of water for every pound you have lost for optimum results in your workout. Make it a habit!
- Don't dehydrate yourself for weight loss benefits. While you will drop a few pounds by restricting what you drink, your overall performance will significantly be reduced if you do this.

- ***Skip the caffeine***. Caffeine is a diuretic and will increase the amount that you have to urinate. Therefore, you are not hydrating yourself, but having the opposite effect. Drinks like this include any type of sports drink that has caffeine as well as things like fizzy drinks, teas, coffee and also some foods have high amounts of caf feine.

- To tell if you are dehydrated or drinking enough water. pay attention to your urine - if it's dark or there's only a small amount that's a sign of dehydration.

Knowing What to Drink

As you can see, we really have pushed the water here, but that's because it's is the best type of fluid for you to consume. There are also many various sports drinks on the market that claim they too can help you.

When considering whether or not you need to drink sports drinks, consider the following:

Water: Most of the times you will only need water - your body does not need fuel from the fluid you drink.

You should drink water during a standard workout or game, and should only require sports drinks if your physical activity is more than 90 minutes at a time.

Sports Drinks: If your body will have to go for a longer period of time, or you have to compete quite often (several games in just a short amount of time) then you need to consider sports drinks.

When drinking sports drinks, ensure that you find those that contain carbohydrates and electrolytes, as your body will need these in these stressful situations.

The sports drink you choose should have less than eight percent in total solids which includes both carbohydrates as well as electrolytes.

If you go with something that has more, it is not easily absorbed into your body, delaying any benefit it may have. Dilute sports drinks by 50% if they contain over this amount.

Avoid fructose sports drinks. Look at the label, and if you see it has fructose as the only source of carbohydrates, then you will want to avoid it. It will take your body longer to absorb and will delay results even further.

Juices

You can use juices at the same time that you would use the sports drinks, only during long, hard sessions of endurance. However, you will want to dilute them with equal amounts of fruit juice and water.

This is because standard fruit juices have a high concentration of carbohydrates, too much for your body to easily absorb.

You should consider fruit juices such as orange juice to refuel on.

When you use these tips to help you keep your body fuelled, you will find yourself completely ready to perform at a high level. It is necessary to ensure you provide optimum levels of hydration as it applies to sports nutrition.

Chapter 3: Fuelling Your Body

Food: Your body needs it to help it to do virtually every single thing that it has to do. From breathing to walking to playing your game, your body depends on food for fuel.

While water is essential to life, food is essential to performance. Without the right amounts, types and timing for the food you eat, your body will not be able to reach its highest level of performance no matter what you plan to do.

No workout will work for your body more effectively than the fuel that you give it. It has a direct relation to your performance and therefore is one of the building blocks in successful sports nutrition.

The Balanced Win

As an athlete, you have individual needs, but there is no doubt that if you want to win at physical activity, you need your body to have a balanced diet.

The combination of foods will provide your body with all the essential building blocks that it needs. This includes vitamins, minerals, fats, car-

bohydrates, and proteins. Each of these elements plays their own role, each one crucial to your success.

Think of food as a team effort. You know that you are only as good as your team is, right? When you do not provide all of the right nutrients to your body, each part can not perform as an effective member of the "team" and then the overall whole suffers.

How many times does the star athlete go down in a game and the team crumbles around them? Or, how many times does someone that is a smaller asset and the star can not longer hold the team up? The same is true for food.

The body needs each one of these pieces for the whole to work. Your goal is to learn what it needs and how it needs them to get the whole working well.

Over the course of the next few chapters, you will learn what part each element plays in the whole race. But, for now, we want to take you back to grade school where you learned what your body needs to sustain a good overall healthy lifestyle.

Foods: A Plan for Successful Diet Management

What you eat is just as important as how much you eat, so let's break it all down for you.

Do you remember the food pyramid from school? That is the ideal basis to use for your basic sport nutrition education.

While we will tweak it later, this is the best way to determine how well your level of nutrition stacks up.

What You Need

Here's the breakdown of what your body needs to perform. The more you demand from your body, the more it will need - we'll go into more detail on what that will include later.

Dairy Group:

Your body needs dairy to provide calcium. Proteins, vitamin A, and riboflavin are also found in dairy, making it necessary for good nutrition.

You should consume at least 3 servings per day which is about 8 ounces of liquid or about one and a half ounces of solids.

You will find dairy in milk, yogurt, and cheese. You should limit the amount of fat that comes in from these items though. Low fat products increase the good while decreasing the bad.

Vegetable Group:

Vegetables are an ideal source of nutrients / vitamins and minerals

To balance what you eat, try to eat lots of different colours and look especially for more nutrient-rich dark coloured vegetables for greater benefit.

You should have five servings of vegetables per day where 1 serving is about half of a cup of raw or cooked vegetables, one cup of leafy vegetables or six ounces of juice.

Great choices in vegetables include tomatoes, broccoli, and Brussels sprouts for their high levels of vitamin C. For vitamin C, go with carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, greens, and spinach.

Darker colours, like dark greens, deep reds, oranges and yellows are ideal for a good overall nutritional value.

Meat Group:

Meat is a good source of protein, the very building block for muscles. Therefore you need to ensure that you get enough protein in your diet to allow you to build your strength. Meats also provide your body with iron, thiamin, riboflavin, niacin and zinc.

You need to consume three servings of protein per day. This is about three ounces of cooked meats, two eggs, one cup of cooked beans or lentils, or four tablespoons of peanut butter.

Good sources of protein include lean amounts of beef, pork, lamb, poultry, dry peas and beans, peanut butter and eggs.

Grains Group:

Carbohydrates are a necessary building block for energy in the body and many will come from grains. These provide complex carbohydrates including starch and fibre, along with protein, the B vitamin group and iron.

You need to consume eleven servings of carbohydrates per day. One serving is equivalent to one slice of bread, three or four crackers, half of a cup of cereal, rice or pasta, or one ounce of breakfast cereal.

Good choices for sports nutrition include grains that are whole grain, which include cereals, bread, pasta, and rice.

Fruits:

Fruits are another source of many of your necessary minerals and vitamins. They have vitamin C which is powerful and can be found in your citrus foods.

Additionally, melons, strawberries and blueberries are all great sources. Apricots are great for Vitamin A.

You need to consume four servings per day in fruits which is one whole fruit item such as a banana or an apple, half of a grapefruit, six ounces of fruit juice, or a quarter of a cup of dried fruits.

Calories

When it comes to your fuel intake, you also need to keep in mind that the more that you do, the more fuel you will need to provide. If you want to go further in your vehicle, it needs more gas right? The same here is true.

We monitor how much we intake by calorie count. The average person will need to consume about 3000 calories per day. If you are intensely athletic, you should increase this to 5000 calories a day.

But, you must do this in the right manner. That is, you should increase it through eating a balance of all food groups that we have mentioned and it should be done with lean foods rather that fatty foods.

The amount of exercise, practice, competition and physical exertion that you need to put out will ultimately determine the amount of calories you need.

You do not want to eat too many or you will gain weight in fat, but you do want to provide enough for weight gain in muscle as well as for energy use.

Tips to Remember

1. Eat often, but eat less. Your body should not need to wait hours before its next meal, and you need to provide it with fuel on a consistent basis, so eat a small meal every few hours.

2. Snacks are ideal between big meals, but don't go for empty calories or poor nutrition. Great choices for snacks are vegetables, fruits, salads, and nuts, which provide high levels of minerals and vitamins your body needs.

3. Get your energy from all the food groups. Carbohydrates are ideal for times when you are pushing yourself hard - perfect for a workout, but leave out the bad stuff! Go without the butter and the dressings.

4. Breakfast is essential. Your body needs a kick start in the morning to get the metabolism moving and get your body working the right way from the start. Don't skip it.

5. Skip late night meals. They will not provide you with anything necessary for your health. You need to provide your body with nutrients. Food is fuel, not needed for sleeping!

In The Next Chapters

In the next chapters, we will break down all the needs that you have and tell you how to balance the carbohydrates, the proteins, the fats and other elements in your diet.

It is important to know when to eat and how these elements of your diet power your diet and your sports abilities.

Chapter 4: The Role of Carbohydrates

We hear a lot about carbohydrates these days. Often, they are called bad and unhealthy, yet this is not true.

Go back to an analogy of the team. As a team, nutrients work together but if you take one away or lessen the amount you eat of it, you drastically lessen the quality of the rest of the team.

In this case, you need to realize that it is necessary for your body to have the carbohydrates that it needs to power through your body's demands. Carbohydrates are essential, but not all of them are good.

You should always look for whole grains when it comes to carbohydrates and you should look for things that are low in sugars and bad fats and stay away from processed foods.

The Role of Carbs

Carbohydrates are necessary as part of a balanced diet, but what role do they play in your body when it comes to sports nutrition?

If you look back at your food pyramid, you will notice that you are supposed to consume 11 servings per day of grains.

Grains make up most of your carbohydrate intake, but that is not all. In fact, you will intake carbohydrates when you eat fruits, vegetables and

other foods. Most commonly, starch foods will contain mainly carbohydrates. Carbohydrates should be consumed at 65 to 70 percent of your body's calories!

How They Effect Your Body

Carbohydrates are necessary for the production of energy in your body.

- The body will take carbohydrates and convent them to sugars for easy consumption.
- The starch in carbohydrates is used for energy in the form of glucose (the sugar) to power the body through exercises.
- Carbohydrates are also stored in your liver as well as in the muscle tissues throughout your body. This is called glycogen.
- Carbohydrates provide a high power boost of energy for a short time period.
- When the body does run out of carbohydrates in this type of fuel, it will then burn other elements including fat and then it will go to protein to use for energy output.
- When your body goes to fat usage for energy, your performance level will drop.
- When the body goes from fat to protein, it is beginning to take apart muscle mass which is counterproductive and therefore will cause performance to further drop significantly.
- Not enough carbohydrates when you begin to exercise, play your game, or physically exert yourself and your body will resort to turning to stored fat and stored protein.
- Do not exercise heavily for more than 60 minutes without consuming any carbohydrates.
- Do not do any high intensity sport without carbohydrates available to power your body through fuel.

Points to Remember

There are two things that you need to remember when it comes to carbohydrates:

1. Eat quite a few carbohydrate foods for the several days before your event, heavy exercise routine, or any other time in which you will need lots of available energy. This will help to load your muscles with glycogen: fuel for your body's needs.

2. When participating in a high intensity, long term event or several events over a short period of time or other instances where you will need to burn energy for an extended period of time, replenish your carbohydrates as you go. You can do this with fruit juice or through carbohydrate drinks like those we talked about earlier.

Carbohydrate Loading: Good or Bad for You?

If you are considering carbohydrate loading, which is the method of adding additional carbohydrates to your diet prior to a race, event or competition, you need to look at what your needs are for that event as well as your physical condition.

The goal of carbohydrate loading, which is also known as glycogen loading, is quite straight forward. Remember how we said that your body takes carbohydrates and breaks them down into glycogen?

Glycogen is then stored in your muscles as well as in your liver. When your body needs to access reserved or stored carbohydrates, it will go to the stored glycogen first before it attempts to break down fats and proteins.

When you are carbohydrate loading, you are packing your liver and muscles full of glycogen to allow your body to have those reserves full and readily accessible to your body when the time does come.

It can be quite helpful to an athlete to have glycogen ready to go, but it should be done effectively and with good sources of carbohydrates.

How to Use Carbohydrate Loading

To see the benefits of carbohydrate loading, you will want to consider this.

- Several days before you will need to use the stored glycogen for your race or competition, eat a diet that is rich in protein, high in fat and low in carbohydrates.

- This is accompanied by the intense training workouts you are probably doing to get ready and in shape for your competition.

- This will deplete the body's reserves of glycogen, something that needs to be done first.

- Now that it is nearly depleted, two to three days before your event, you will be ready to carbohydrate load your body. Eat a very high amount of carbohydrates during this period of time. This should be foods from the grain group.

- You should not be doing any type of strenuous exercise during this period of time, as you do not want the body to burn through those stored glycogen carbohydrates. It also gives your body the ability to repair damage from the last workouts to enable you to work harder on the day of the event.

You should not need to use carbohydrate loading unless you need your endurance level to remain high for an extended amount of time, such as in a long running race or in a bike race.

Finally, most athletes will eat an overall high amount of carbohydrates during their exercise regime as it is the fuel your body needs.

Carbohydrate loading should only be done as preparation for high intensity, long events, not as a regular routine.

Chapter 5: The Need for Protein

Another aspect of the athlete's sports nutrition is protein. Protein is yet another fundamental building block that you need to incorporate into your diet in the right manner in order to succeed at building your body into an energy producing machine so you can win at your game, whatever that is.

However don't go overboard, as too much protein can be detrimental to your performance.

Again, we can bring back that team. Here, without protein or with too little protein, your body will have a difficult time building up to the endurance level that it needs.

It will not have enough of what it needs to build muscle tissue so that your workouts are meaningful.

As part of your body's necessary team for success, protein intake should be monitored carefully, especially around your events and competitions.

What is Protein?

Protein comes from most products in the meat group. It comes from fish, beef, poultry, pork, lamb, eggs, nuts and dairy products as well.

The amount of protein you eat will vary but it should be consumed at about 15 percent of the total amount of calories that you take in, still a significant amount and right behind that of carbohydrates.

While carbohydrates will be used to provide your body with the energy it needs to go from one place to the next, protein is essential for building the body up so that it has the physical capabilities for that to happen.

Proteins are what give your body the necessary abilities to build new tissue in your body, to repair damaged tissues in your body and to maintain fluids throughout your body.

What is important to note about protein is the body's inability to store excess amounts. Unlike that of the carbohydrate, it can not store it up to use when needed.

The body will use protein for its needs and then it will burn it for energy. If it does not need to use it for this matter, then it will convert the protein into fat and pack it onto your thighs, and everywhere else for that matter.

Therefore, balancing the right amount of protein in your diet is essential to the athlete competing to win.

What Do I Need?

When it comes to protein, there are several things that you need to carefully consider. How much you need is varied depending on these characteristics:

- What type of exercising are you doing?
- What level of exercise are you doing in terms of intensity?
- How long will you be performing these exercises for?
- The total calories consumed also play a role in how much you should intake.

- And, this also is dependant on the amount of carbohydrates that you are consuming.

Your level of fitness plays a role in the amount of protein your body needs. If you are physically active, as most athletes are, your body will need more protein than if you were not active or were minimally so.

When you first begin your exercise program, you will need to increase the amount of protein calories you are taking in as well.

That is, you should increase intake because your body will be building muscles faster and toning them faster at this time.

Your body will need additional protein calories then, but this will soon taper off when there is less muscle and tissue building taking place.

In your exercise type, your level of protein is very important. This is determined by how intense the exercise you are doing will be as well as the duration of the exercise.

Those that need endurance for a longer period of time will in fact need more protein to burn as fuel when you run out of carbohydrates. Endurance runners, for example, need to have more protein in their diets than those that are short duration athletes.

If you are a body builder or you will be doing strength building exercises in general, you also need to increase your intake of protein.

Calorie intake also makes a difference. If you eat the wrong amount of food, generally speaking, your body will resort to burning protein as fuel.

If you do not eat enough calories in your diet, your body has to go to the protein to burn for energy. It burns more protein then so you will need to increase the protein you eat.

Carbohydrates that you take in also play a role in the amount of protein that you need. If you do not eat enough carbohydrates, your body has to use protein to burn for energy.

If you start a race with lower levels of glycogen, you will end up burning more protein than you would otherwise. In fact, you can burn up to 10 percent more this way.

Of course, we said that you want your body to burn carbohydrates as opposed to burning proteins!

The Truth about High Protein

We are not talking about the weight loss diets that you will only consume protein for, well, the rest of your life.

Remember our team analogy, that's not a good diet to be on for anyone!

What we are talking about is muscle building high protein diets. While an athlete that is working to build muscle mass does need to intake more protein calories, it is where you get these from that matter.

You are sure to have seen high protein meals and drinks on the market. These are used to target those that are looking to add additional grams of protein to the diet easily.

In sports nutrition, it is not necessary for you to resort to those products unless you do not eat the right amounts of proteins from natural sources.

It is commonly believed that eating high protein supplements like these is not necessary as long as you naturally increase the amount of protein calories that you take in.

To do this, add into your diet more low fat, high protein foods just as a natural addition to your diet. This may include eating more meats like poultry, beef, pork, fish and nuts.

Also, remember that high protein diets are only geared to those that are looking to build muscle mass.

- If you are just starting out in your exercise routine, you will need additional calories from protein.

- If you are looking to build muscle mass, you too will need to increase the amount of protein you intake in a high protein diet.

The standard athlete does not necessarily have to eat more protein than the 15 percent that we mentioned unless they fall under one of these categories.

In addition to this, it is important to note that many high protein diet supplements and foods can do more harm that they are worth.

For example, they are known to cause people to lose their appetite, which in turn causes them to miss out on necessary carbohydrates they need for sustained exercise.

Additional problems include dehydration, diarrhoea and too much pressure on the kidneys to perform.

Maintaining the amount of protein that you put into your diet is crucial!

Chapter 6: The Story with Fats

We've all heard a lot about fats, but remember that many of the points you will read here will not provide a balanced diet outside of sports. These are geared to provide your body with the foundation of producing higher amounts of energy and therefore endurance.

When it comes to fat, there is much to learn as well.

What Is Fat?

Fat is a product that you ingest when you eat foods. While there is not just one food group that it comes from, there are many things that you need to realize contain higher amounts of fat.

Fat comes from anything that is from animals. This type of fat is called saturated fat and is the worst of the two types. This would include:

- Meats of all types; even lean meats will have some levels of fat in them.

- Eggs have a high fat amount of fat.
- Milk, even low fat milk, still contains a good amount of fat.
- Cheese too may be low fat, but will still contain a good amount of fat.

Unsaturated fats are fats that come from vegetable products of all types in varying amounts. Your oils are high producers of fat.

Unsaturated fats are the better, healthier type of fat to have within your body.

How Much To Consume

When it comes to how much fat you should be consuming, it is not as complex as that of your carbohydrate or your protein calories.

You should not consume more than 25 to 30 percent of your calories in fat. Generally speaking, this is not hard to do, unless you are used to eating deep fried products or those that are covered with saturated butters and sauces.

Sorry, but the body needs to be regulated here!

Fat in the Body

Your body does need some fat though. Have you heard of those diets in which people will cut out nearly all the fat in their diet?

Let's look back at our team playing theory.

You need to consume a balanced diet of products, ones that will incorporate various amounts of fats to balance your needs.

Your body only needs a small amount of fat though, to help with several functions. From a sports nutrition stand point, fat is used to burn as energy. Remember when we said that our bodies will first burn carbohydrates and then will resort to proteins?

Fat is next on the list of energy sources when there is not enough carbohydrates or glycogen available to burn.

So, why not load up on the amounts of fat that your body consumes as it seems to be a fundamental part of energy and fuel? There are many reasons for not doing so.

The main reason that you do not need to eat excess amounts of fat is because of how unhealthy it is to the rest of your body.

Too much fat in your body can cause a number of health problems starting with heart disease, the number one killer in the United States. It can also lead to cancers, complications of other conditions and just an overall unhealthy lifestyle.

If you are consuming too much fat, you are probably not getting the right amount of carbohydrates that you need.

Even more so, when we talked about carbohydrates, we told you that carbohydrates are easily burned by the body for energy. When it comes to burning fat, it is harder for the body to do.

Therefore, fat should not be consumed in order to burn as energy for the body.

Where Fats Are Used

There are three main times in which fat will be used to burn energy in your body or will be needed for you to have on hand for that reason.

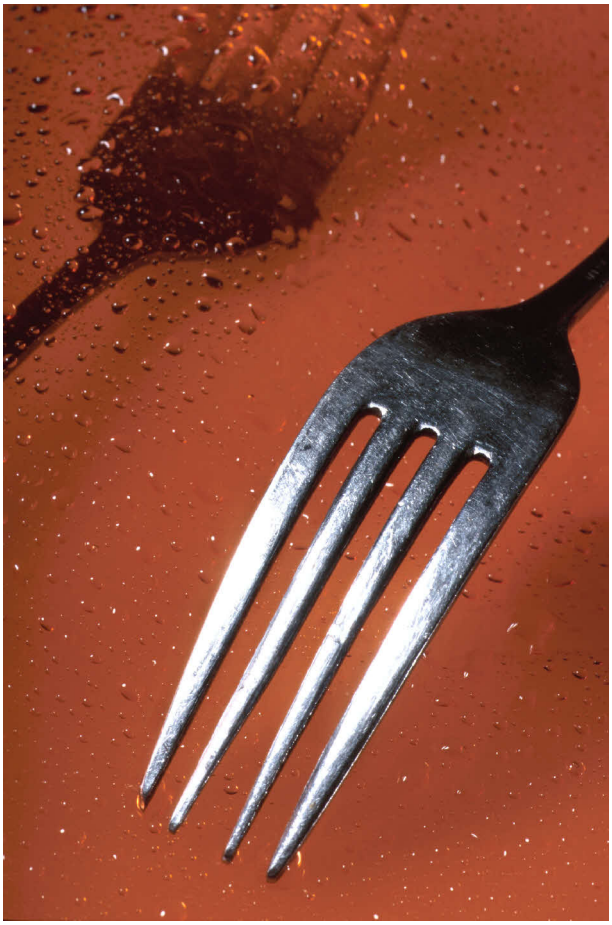
1. If you are participating in extreme or intense exercise, your body will need more energy to burn than you have stored in glycogen or in carbohydrates readily available. It will then turn to stored fat for help in providing you with the energy that you need.

2. When your body is at rest or you are just doing low to moderate amounts of work, your body will then primarily use fat to burn as fuel. During this time, just small amounts of fat will actually be burned, though.

3. If you continue to exercise for long periods of time, such as when you do during a marathon, a long endurance race of any type, your body then needs to tap into fat stores to help it to power through all of these needs.

When it comes to fat and sports nutrition, it is something that you really do need to monitor. Consuming a lot of fatty foods, especially those that are made from saturated fats, will put your health at risk.

As far as sports nutrition goes, too much fat can cause your performance to slip. The body does not perform as well as it does with carbohydrates or even by burning protein when you are consuming fats.



Chapter 7: Meal Planning For Your Game

We have broken it all down for you now. As you have learned, there is much to getting your body fed the right amounts of fuel at the right time. It is not easy, but you can do it.

Now that we have broken it all down, we can start to put it back together for you.

To do that, we will work on developing a pre game plan for what you should eat, how you should eat it and how much you should eat prior to your athletic performance.

What you eat right before your competition or performance will directly reflect what will happen in that performance. In short, your body will only perform to the level that you have prepped it for.

Have you ever been mid event only to feel so tired that you just feel as if you can not take just one more step? This is your fuel running out.

If you are a car, you are done, on the side of the road waiting for your driver to refuel you. But, if the driver prepared before the start of the

drive, you would not have any problem hitting the destination and doing it in the way that you want to succeed.

It Starts before Game Day

One thing to take note of is the fact that your pre game planning needs to start several days before you actually head out there to compete.

Don't plan to just wake up, eat breakfast and hit the run. You need to plan several days in advance for what will happen just this one day, this one race, this one competition.

As we discussed, the goal is to store up enough glycogen in your body so that you can withstand the demands of your event. We are not however talking about carbohydrate loading, as this would only be used when you are going for a long intense effort, not for a standard event that is short lived.

By following a good regime, your body will be better able to meet your exercise needs. The right plan can also do things you may not have considered:

1. It can help to keep your blood sugar at a level amount which controls your energy amounts.

2. It helps to build up your muscle and liver glycogen as discussed.

3. You will have virtually nothing in your stomach at game time, meaning that you do not have that full, "can't do a thing" feeling.

4. It helps you to avoid hunger as well as an upset stomach during your event.

5. It finally helps to keep your body completely hydrated to keep your energy flowing where it needs to be during your event.

Things to Consider

As someone that is competing in an athletic event, you need to position yourself for success by providing the necessary fuel for your body.

Here's a break down of what you should be doing now.

- Your last meal before your event should happen no less than three full hours before your event. Do not try to eat a meal right before, or your stomach will be upset, will weigh you down and you will feel no benefit from the foods consumed.

- Keep yourself fully hydrated for several days before your event. Remember that it takes the body time to re-hydrate itself (sometimes even days) when you are dehydrated.

- Now, the meal before your event should be something that is high in starch. It should be carbohydrate full to allow your body to easily digest it, quickly and effectively, to give you the necessary power to go. It is also helpful in maintaining your body's blood sugar level.

- In that meal and the previous one, you should limit the amount of protein you are consuming. Remember, proteins are harder for the body to digest and will hold you back ultimately. It will not contribute anything to your energy levels, and too much will cause dehydration.

- Do not eat foods or drink fluids that contain caffeine, as this will also cause your body to dehydrate. Even energy drinks that have caffeine in them will ultimately restrict your performance.

- Stay away from foods that are high in sugar, as these will not do anything but keep your energy waning rather than help you to power through.

- Drop the oils. We also mentioned how fats are not a good thing for your body. So, especially in this last meal before your event, limit the foods that you eat that are high in fats. Don't forget to consider the butter on your pancakes and the oil in your salad dressings.

What Should I Eat?

Go back to our breakdown of foods that fit well within the categories of carbohydrates (check out the grains!) in proteins (meats and dairy products) and avoid those foods that are high in fats.

Really, you can eat anything you want as long as it fits within the calorie suggestions and in the food groups we have listed there.

Chapter 8: Foods That Work Well

Okay, so you would like some help in determining what foods are ideal for the pre game meal or perhaps an overall look at what you should be eating.

Here's a break down that will help you.

Foods High In Carbohydrates

The first and most important aspect of sports nutrition is to provide your body with the building blocks of what it needs to perform, i.e. carbohydrates.

Following are some ideal foods to consume as high in carbohydrates. These are the foods to eat prior to your game, your competition or your events.

Potatoes

Potatoes are high in starch and carbohydrates, and they make for the ideal pre event meal choice. You can eat them any way that you would like - baked mashed, pan fried, broiled, etc, but just avoid deep frying them (no French fries please!)

Also you need to be careful with what you put on them. Things like butter or gravy can be heavily saturated with fats that you do not need. Sour cream also falls into this category.

If you can't live without it, then consider cutting down on the condiments or additional additive s on top.

Pasta

Pasta is a quick and easy meal and it's great for sports nutrition preparations. It can be topped with spaghetti sauce or taken plain.

However be careful when you add oils, butter, or heavy sauces to the pasta though, and you shouldn't top it with too much meat, especially when this is a pre-game meal. Cheese too should be avoided or kept at a minimum especially as it contains lots of fat.

Rice

When it comes to rice products, you have all types of options. Consider mixing the rice with vegetables, add some hot peppers for taste (don't over do it though or you'll end up with stomach ache!)

Again, you should limit the additions to the rice - no foods that are high in saturated fats. Avoid gravy, butters or other heavy cream sauces.

Cereals

Most cereals are okay, but you do need to look at what is in them. Avoid foods that are high in sugar or fats., as many cereals are.

You should consider foods like oatmeal, porridge and other warm cereal type foods, but again make sure that you check the ingredients.

Always top the cereal with low fat milk products, and avoid adding additional sugar.

Bread

Bread is a big yes! There are plenty of ideal products, from slices to rolls, you have many choices to pick from.

But, again, you really do need to limit what you put on the breads. You should not top them with lots of butter or fill them with high protein or high fat foods. Spreads and other products that are added that are high in fat will greatly reduce the benefits.

Fruits

Some confusion surrounds fruit in sports nutrition. While they do have sugar in them, it is natural sugar that allow our bodies to better stay hydrated and to take in the carbohydrates that we need.

Your options are many and should include things like oranges, bananas, and apples. In the form of whole fruits, most are easy for your body to digest and will provide the necessary nutrition.

In the way of juices, you will want to look at the ingredients. You do not want your fruit juices to have more than 8 percent carbohydrates or electrolytes as this will make them harder for your body to digest.

Dairy Products

If you have to have your milk with your breakfast by all means have it. Actually, any and all low fat dairy products are perfect for the sports nutrition guide. Try a variety of things including low fat milk, low fat cheeses, low fat yogurts and others.

Again, avoid things that are high in fat or that are added to the dairy products (such as chocolate!)

Chapter 9: Foods That Will Hurt

Unfortunately, not all foods are good for our sports nutrition diet - if only that were how it worked!

But, remember, you have to regard giving up food to win the race, the marathon or to find ultimate fitness as a reward far better than any food product out there.

Remember, giving up on these things does not have to be permanent, (unless you plan to be regimented all the time!). In fact, you may be able to squeeze something in when you are not performing or practicing, if you dare take a break!

Here are some foods you just should avoid and reasons why they are anything but helpful to your overall performance.

1. Candy. There we said it. You have to give up candy products because of the amount of sugars in them. They can throw off your blood sugar and cause you to have less than ideal results in your performance.

   They can also make you feel awful after only a few minutes of being in your system. They create a natural rush that can only be sus-

tained for a short period of time, after which your energy level will drop dramatically.

2. Caffeine. We have already mentioned this but it has to remain on our "do not touch" page. Caffeine will slow you down, keep you from staying hydrated, and it will ultimately ruin your game.

3. Keep yourself away from foods that you know upset your body. While these foods may seem healthy and helpful to you, they can cause your stomach to hurt, your body to shift it focus to concentrate on healing and consequently loss of performance edge.

   This would include any food that gives you gas, things like raw vegetables, beans and popcorn. This can be a very individual thing, but you know your body and what you should avoid.

4. Fatty foods. We have talked a great deal about the harmful effects of fatty foods in your diet as an athlete. It has to be on our list here because of the amount of performance success it is likely to steal from you. This would include foods that are high in saturated fats like creams, fatty meats, deep fried products, and high fat dairy products.

Cut out these products from your diet and you will ultimately have a better result overall for all of your hard work.

Chapter 10: Supplements

So what about supplements? Are they good for you? Will they enhance your performance?

There are various types of supplements on the market, their goal obviously being to supplement your diet, i.e. Provide essential elements for your body which your day-to-day diet does not provide

In that, it goes without saying that natural is always going to be better. That means that it is a much better option for you to ensure that you have a high quality of natural foods in your diet rather than having a bag full of vitamins and minerals that you have to take.

Do I Take Them or Not?

There is no easy to way to answer this question but we can break it down to help you to understand both points of view.

As an athlete, your body will demand more nutrients including vitamins and minerals of all sorts, along with additional calories to provide fuel to keep up with your demands.

As we said the best way to get the things you need to balance your diet is to get it from natural, whole foods. This is not always easy though. Not only do you need to increase the levels of calories that you consume, but you also need to consider the various minerals and vitamins your body needs to make that happen, the most essential being:

- Niacin
- Iron
- Riboflavin
- Thiamin

In most cases, if you can eat a well balanced varied diet, you can achieve this without supplements.

But, if you can not commit to this level of dedication, then providing yourself with a solid supplement can be helpful. Yet, you still have to pay attention to what you are taking.

When purchasing vitamins, you need to make sure that they are of the highest quality and that they are easily absorbed into your body. They should be purchased from a health food store or somewhere which provides optimum health products.

Beware!

Some vitamins can be dangerous if you take too much of them. This can do the exact opposite of what you are trying to accomplish. If this is something you are not sure about, seek out the help of a dietician, your pharmacist or even your doctor.

Your doctor can also advise if you are deficient in any of your vitamins, which will help you to balance yourself accordingly.

Conclusion

Sports nutrition is a complex matter. What is important to you and your body may or may not be important to someone else.

It can not be stressed enough that the athlete should have a complete health physical done to ensure that he is ready to pursue his athletic dreams and his physical height of perfection.

The goal of a physical should be to rule out any conditions that may hinder you but it also should provide information about what you need to succeed.

You can learn about your nutritional needs, based on your specific body type and your ability to meet any deficiency that you may have.

When it comes to sports nutrition, there are few things that are a given. Everyone is different and our lives and goals are all different.

Yet, when we condition ourselves from a nutritional standpoint, following basic rules of maintaining healthy bodies, we will see our bodies improve.

Over time, your body will become healthier to take on whatever physical challenges that you provide for it.

Your body will be honed to fit each of your demands to the level of perfection you crave. And, with it will come the highest level of success you can achieve both physically and mentally.

Remember, though, that this will not come without a price. You will need to work for it and you will need sheer dedication to make it happen. In the end, this is what will define you and your success.

Dedication to your sports nutrition is the one of the basic cornerstones of everything that goes into being an athlete.

We wish you every success