

Nutrition Essential for Exercising



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- Yes...it is important to eat right in order to get the best possible benefits from your exercise program. So...here's the bare facts folks!

WATER: Your body is made up of approximately 60-70% water, and you generate 80-90% of what you need each day through what you drink and eat. Water is essential if you are an active adult because you lose water as you perspire during activity. Water is also lost through feces and urine. Water is distributed throughout your body, and is used in the digestion of food, used to transport other substances in the body, is used to regulate body temperature. It has a host of cellular-level purposes.

- “How much do you need?” Approximately six to eight 8-ounce glasses per day.
- “How do you accomplish this?” Keep track of how much you drink today, and build it up gradually. Make yourself a goal of drinking 2-4 additional ounces per day until you reach your personal goal. *Hint:* Carry a bottle of water with you.

PROTEIN: The protein you eat is used in your body to build new tissue, and in terms of your exercise program it is used as the building blocks for muscle. The average man needs about 56 grams of protein per day, while the average woman needs about 46. Most Americans eat enough protein, but we need to be aware of the best sources of *complete* protein. The best sources are animal sources, and are baked or steamed...not fried.

A few of the best choices are:

- Skinless Chicken (or ground)
- Skinless Turkey (or ground)
- Fish
- Eggs (hard-boiled egg whites are virtually perfect)

Secondary choices include, but may not be limited to:

- Beef (roast, steak, etc.)
- Pork (roast, chops, etc.)

CARBOHYDRATES: The carbohydrates (*a.k.a.carbs*) we eat are used mostly for energy, with our brain using only carbs for energy. There are simple carbs, and there are complex carbs, and it is important to examine the difference.

- Complex: generally found in a variety of plants, especially grains (wheat, rye, rice, oats, barley, millet), legumes, and tubers (potatoes and yams).

Developed by: Nikki Carrion MA

Founder & Facilitator of *Fit Xpress*

Source: *Fit & Well* 6th ed. by: Fahey, Insel & Roth

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- Simple: includes table sugar, fruit sugar, and milk sugar. Naturally found in fruits and milk, and added to soft drinks, fruit drinks, candy and desserts.

Weight loss and/or maintenance: Limit processed simple carbohydrates, and when making food choices think in terms of good...better...best. Fresh is always best, followed closely by frozen. When you open a box or can...see processing, preservatives and less nutritional value. With this in mind, think moderation.

Other Various Nutrition Facts:

Fiber: 38 grams/day for men and 25 grams/day for women.

Sources: All plant foods contain some. Those particularly rich include fruits, legumes, oats (especially oat bran), barley, and psyllium (found in some cereals and laxatives). Once again, it is important to eat fresh foods due to the fact that processing can remove the fiber.

Vitamins: Supplements are sometimes advised, but vitamin deficiency-related sicknesses are seen most in developing countries. Once again, fresh foods will reap the highest amounts of vitamins due to what is often lost in cooking, freezing and storing. It is important to know that extra vitamins in the diet can be harmful, especially when taken in the form of supplements. Ask your doctor if you have questions.

Minerals: Minerals, like vitamins, work to help regulate many bodily functions. The minerals most commonly lacking in the American diet are calcium, iron, magnesium and potassium. Again, focus on fresh food choices for the highest amounts of minerals. Lean meats are rich in iron and low-fat or fat-free dairy products are excellent sources of calcium. Plant sources such as whole grains and leafy vegetable are good sources of magnesium, and potassium-rich foods include spinach and other green-leafy veggies, cantaloupe, bananas, mushrooms and potatoes.

Anti-Oxidants: Many environmental factors cause our bodies to create what is called "free radicals". Free radicals are unstable molecules that roam our body doing damage at a cellular level. These free radicals have been implicated in aging, cancer, cardiovascular disease, and other degenerative diseases such as arthritis. Antioxidants in the foods we eat help us to protect our bodies by blocking the formation and action of free radicals, and by working to repair the damage they cause. Antioxidants are found in vitamin A, C and E, and in selenium. They are also present in the carotenoids found in dark-green leafy vegetables. An excellent source of antioxidants is berries (e.g. strawberries, raspberries, blackberries and blueberries).

Fats: Consume in moderation, not to total more than 30% of your daily intake.

➤ ***GOOD FAT:***

- Monounsaturated fat.
- Omega-3 & Omega-6 fatty acids found in fish.
- Mono & polyunsaturated fats found in oils, with the best oils for the kitchen being either canola OR olive.

➤ ***BAD FAT:***

- Saturated fat: found in butter, cheese and other high-fat dairy products.
- Trans fats: found in French fries, lard, packages cookies, crackers and chips, and other processed snack foods.

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