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Nutrition Guidelines for Track and Field Athletes



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A healthy diet is a balanced diet. No matter your activity level, if you're not fueling your body with healthy foods and adequate nutrition, you'll never let your body function at its peak. That's why you should emphasize eating a local, seasonal diet and prioritizing nutrient-rich, whole foods because you can't train or recover well if you deprive your body of the right nutrients. Food is your body's fuel, and you'll only get as much out of your body as you'll put into it. With the right amount of nutrients, fluids, and electrolytes, you can keep your mind and muscles working at their best all day long.

Here's a few important aspects of nutrition and performance to consider.

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and optimal athletic performance. I suggest that you shop the perimeter of your local grocery store and skip foods that contain ingredients you can't pronounce. As a rule limit or avoid foods in packaging.

Below you will find seven key aspects of functional nutrition to start incorporating into your daily routine.

#1: EAT VEGETABLES

It will be a challenge but work everyday to eat as many vegetables as you can. Try to add them into other food sources such as smoothies, pizza, stir-fry and egg scrambles. Make an attempt to eat them each meal. Try to "eat the rainbow". Different colored foods tend to have different nutrient profiles, so "eat the rainbow" means eat a variety of them. Pay attention to the color of fruits and vegetables you eat, since the color of food can often tell you a lot about the vitamins and minerals it provides. For example orange carrots are rich in Beta Carotene, while green spinach is packed with Vitamin K, and yellow peppers are loaded with Vitamin C.

#2: REDUCE THE SUGAR

Sugar is the biggest problem in our diets today because the food industry puts it in everything. I suggest greatly limiting pre-made or processed grocery store foods like cookies, cakes, sauces, dressings and such. By doing so you are limiting inflammatory food. A major part of the eating for optimal performance is learning to manage your inflammatory response. While we're not saying to avoid the following foods altogether, research shows that added sugars, refined carbs, processed meats, and fried foods all drive inflammation. In general, try to eat them as infrequently as possible.

#3: FULL-FAT EVERYTHING

Include essential fatty acids (Omega-6 and Omega-3) in your diet. The Average American consumes roughly fifteen times more Omega-6s than Omega-3s. Aim for a healthy ratio closer to one-to-one to help regulate inflammation, improve cell function/structure, relieve muscle stiffness, and maintain a healthy heart. Try to include fish, seeds and nuts to your diet. Avoid low-fat versions of food. It's not real food.

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however, where the bleach for the all-purpose flour came from or what that does to your body.

#5: PROTEIN IS KING OR QUEEN

Protein should be such an important part of your diet because as an active person you will want to repair and build healthy, lean muscles. Protein also helps keep you more full throughout the day because it digests slower than most carbohydrates. Healthy protein sources include: lean animal meats and eggs, beans, quinoa, lentils, nuts, seeds and Greek yogurt.

#6 HYDRATION IS KEY

Hydration is a core tenet of optimal athletic performance. As a rule of thumb, try to drink 1/2 your body weight in ounces daily.

#7 SUPPLEMENT ACCORDINGLY

While I suggest 100% real food first, it can be a challenge to meet all your nutritional needs — even if you eat fresh, organically grown food at every meal. The right supplements won't replace a proper nutritional regimen, but they can ensure you get what your body might be lacking. Supplements to consider include: Multivitamin, Vitamin D, Vitamin B Complex, Omega Complex

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