Eating for Success

Have you ever felt like your muscles can’t muster enough energy during a workout? There are a couple factors that could be contributing to this, but one of the top culprits could be your nutrition. Just like a high-end sports car, your body is not going to perform correctly unless you put the right kind of fuel in it. However, did you know that the timing of your meals can also impact performance?

Before you hit the weight rack, your body will need some proper preparation with the help of a pre-workout meal. Between 1-2 hours prior to an intense workout is the advised amount of time that the right Macronutrients should be consumed. A post-workout meal is just as important and is best had 30 minutes to 1 hour after you’ve had your cooldown as your body responds to the nutrients more readily during this time. The bottom line is to choose foods that will 1) sustain energy 2) boost performance 3) hydrate 4) preserve muscle mass 5) speed recovery. You’ll want to cover most if not all of these factors if you want the best results.

The three Macronutrients are Protein, Carbohydrates, and Fats. Each one plays an important role in maintaining a healthy body and overall physique. Protein had before and after weight-lifting has been shown to help muscles increase in size and recover more quickly from damage by adding essential amino acids to your body. The faster regeneration of new muscle fibers helps prevent more injuries in the future as well. Carbohydrates consumed before a workout help you feel more energized as they are quickly converted to usable energy and are your best Macronutrient for fast fuel. They also assist with the prevention of muscle breakdown in addition to preserving muscle and liver glycogen that can be used for energy at a later time. Fats have not shown much promise when it comes to fueling your body during a workout or generating muscle tissue, but they do help to slow digestion which maintains insulin and blood glucose levels. This will help prevent that “energy crash” and sustain the Central Nervous System which in turn will allow for proper muscle activation during an exercise.

Planning ahead of time is going to be essential for optimum results. This will depend on what time of day you’re planning on working out and which Macronutrients you need. Looking for a less time consuming plan? Pre and post-workout shakes have been growing in popularity for their ability to include protein/veggies, keeping you hydrated, and they can be made in bulk and frozen. At the end of the day, there is not a perfect meal when consumed at the right time that will magically take your workouts from 0 to 100. As previously stated, each Macronutrient is going to be vital in some way for your overall health, but the important thing is that you’re having successful workouts and seeing the results you want!