

# FOREVER ACTIVE

PERSONALIZED FITNESS AND WELLNESS FOR MEN 50 +



## Everything Nutrition

### Introduction

Nutrition is always a hot topic when the new year rolls around. Making New Year's resolutions such as losing weight and exercising more are always popular and unfortunately very often are not achieved. Part of the reason for this failure is that the majority of people are not following the proper guidelines and recommendations with respect to their nutritional and dietary habits.

Foods you eat and don't eat have a direct impact on weight control, cognitive productivity and physical performance. Comments like "I started to diet but just didn't feel the same. I had a hard time concentrating at work," and "I want to exercise but I just don't have the energy," are common and valid because more often than not those who are making such comments are not eating or fuelling properly.

The goal of this newsletter is to present nutritional facts that you should follow on a consistent basis to help you live and enjoy a healthy lifestyle. Regardless of your age, your goal should be to achieve as high a quality of life as possible. This means to be cognitively and physically active and emotionally happy. Your nutritional habits play a huge role in your ability to achieve these goals.

### Lemon Water– The Myths and Reality

The benefits of drinking hot or cold lemon water has been promoted by nutritionists, natural food enthusiasts and celebrities for years. Unfortunately, the reality of drinking lemon water does not live up to the hype.

#### Weight Loss

There is no scientific research to support the claim that drinking warm water with a lemon will help weight loss. The claim is that pectin, a fibre in citrus fruit, is suppose to reduce appetite. However most of the pectin in lemons is found in the peel and the juice of a lemon contains less than 15% of the lemon's total pectin. Not enough to have any effect on your appetite. However, if the taste of lemon in your water helps you to drink more water, then that is a good thing.



#### Detoxification

Advocates contend that lemon water boosts the activity of detoxification enzymes in the liver. Once again there is no evidence that lemon water will enhance the liver's ability neutralize toxic substances so they can be eliminated from the body.

#### Clearer Skin

The myth is that the antioxidant content of lemon juice, flavonoids, can improve the complexion of your skin. Drinking water hydrates the skin but is not sufficient to prevent wrinkles which are related to genetics, aging, sun and environmental damage. There is research that eliminating refined high glycemic carbohydrates like white bread and sugar, and limiting milk while increasing omega-3 fat, could help complexion issues.

#### The Benefits

If the taste of lemon juice motivates you to drink more water, go for it. It is recommended that women drink 2 liters and men 3 liters of water per day. If squeezing in some lemon juice helps with this process, that is a good thing.

## **Nutritional Guidelines to Improve Cognitive and Physical Productivity and Performance**

“You are what you eat” - but your daily physical and cognitive productivity levels, mood and health are reflective of what you eat. A 2012 study that followed over 20,000 employees reported that those who ate an unhealthy diet were 66% more likely to report productivity loss compared with their co-workers who ate whole grains, fruits and vegetables. The message is clear: wrong food choices not only contribute to weight gain but also affect your quality of life on a daily basis.

### **Nutrition and Cognitive Performance**

Your mental effectiveness is affected by what you eat. Carbohydrates (CHO) such as grains, fruits and vegetables are metabolised into glucose, the main source of fuel for your brain to keep you feeling alert and focused. Research has shown that our cognitive abilities, problem solving, concentration, learning and memory are closely tied to how efficiently our brain uses glucose.

Glucose, vitamins and minerals are also needed to synthesize neurotransmitters that are used to communicate information throughout the brain and body/muscles.

### **Nutrition, Stress and Depression**

A nutrition poor diet can also affect your body’s ability to combat stress and depression. The physiological stress response requires many nutrients including CHO, protein, B-vitamins, vitamin C, magnesium and selenium. Research has clearly shown that a diet higher in saturated fats, sugar, refined starches and processed foods increases the likelihood of depression and anxiety.

### **Six Strategies to Help Your Cognitive and Physical Performance**

#### 1. Chose the Right Fuel– Carbohydrates (CHO)

To ensure your brain gets the needed glucose, include CHO rich foods at meals and snacks. It should be noted that not all Cho foods are created equal in this regard. Breads, cereals, rice, pasta and fruits are all good sources of CHO but not all supply your brain with sustained energy. High glycemic foods such as white bread, white rice, refined breakfast cereal, sugary drinks and sweets release their glucose quickly resulting in a rapid burst of energy followed by a significant drop in blood sugar. This results in a subsequent loss of energy, reduced concentration and beginning to feel hungry sooner.

Low glycemic CHO’s such as rye breads, oats, brown/wild rice, quinoa, sweet potatoes, whole grain pasta and most types of fruit, convert to glucose more slowly and provide your brain with energy longer.

#### 2. You Must Have Protein– It is the Body’s Building Block

Typically, it is recommended that you balance your meals 40% CHO, 40% protein and 20% fat. These percentages can vary a bit depending on your level of physical activity, stress etc. Protein is necessary for building and repairing muscle, tendons, ligaments, the components of the body that hold us together and allow us to physically function. Poultry, tuna, eggs, lean meats, tofu, nuts and Greek Yogurt are good sources of protein. An added benefit of protein in your diet is that it slows down digestion and as a result, curbs hunger. As well, research has shown that protein stimulates the activity of certain brain cells that cause alertness.



### 3. Eat Frequently

Your blood glucose drops two to four hours after eating a mixed meal so it is best to eat every three to four hours to keep your blood glucose and energy levels constant and to prevent hunger. Skipping meals is highly discouraged because of the rebound effect that occurs when you do eat. You end up eating more, resulting in an increased release of insulin that drops your blood glucose levels even lower than normal and you end up crashing energy-wise.



When you eat is just as important as what you eat and how much you eat. Block off time in your calendar if necessary. Consistency is very important to help maintain your blood glucose levels at a constant level. Another strategy is to bring snacks with you to prevent you from having processed and junk food. You are much more vulnerable to your sugar cravings when you are hungry and there is nothing else to have but that cookie you see lying around. Suggestions for a healthy snacks are: nuts, fruits, cheese, eggs, whole grain crackers, raw vegetables and hummus and energy bars made with whole food ingredients. Protein and fruit smoothies are excellent as well.

### 4. Don't forget your Fruits and Vegetables

In a 2015 study published in the British Journal of Health Psychology, it was found that participants that had higher intakes of fruits and vegetables throughout the day reported feeling happier and more creative at work than people who ate less of them. Vitamins, antioxidants and carbohydrates in fruit and vegetables increased the brain's production of dopamine and serotonin, two neurotransmitters involved in mood, behaviour and cognition.

### 5. Foods that have Anti-inflammatory Properties

Researchers believe that inflammation and oxidation of free radicals in the body contribute to as host of ailments such as arthritis and cancer. Fruits such as tomatoes, strawberries, blueberries, oranges and colourful vegetables along with fatty fish salmon and tuna, lentils, beans, green leafy vegetables and nuts such as almonds and walnuts, are excellent in minimizing inflammation and oxidation in the body.



### 6. Keep Hydrated

It is recommended that women drink two liters and men three liters of water per day. That is a lot of water, especially if you don't feel thirsty. It helps to keep a bottle of water near by at all times. Not only will it be handy for you to get to but it will also act as a reminder to keep drinking.

Research has suggested that even minor dehydration can impair your ability to concentrate, memorize and perform physically. Drinking two or three small cups of coffee per day is ok but drinking too much coffee during the day can keep your brain over stimulated and affect your ability to sleep. It takes about six hours for about half of the coffee you consume to be eliminated from your body.

### Summary

Eating healthy is a great starting point toward living a healthier and more productive life. Bad habits are hard to break and good habits take time to develop. Try to plan your meals and be aware of what you are buying at the grocery store. It is important to be patient with yourself. Don't expect to eat well 100% of the time. Follow the 80-20 rule. If you follow these guidelines 80% of the time you are succeeding. It is a new year so start today and you will feel better for it.

## Pre and Post Exercise Nutrition

The key to getting the full benefit of exercising is to exercise consistently over a long period of time. The key to training for a marathon is not having a great week of training but, after developing a strong base of fitness, training continually for 18 weeks. When it comes to exercising for improved health the same principle applies. Anyone can exercise for one day, one week or one month. Unfortunately that type of performance has no long term positive health effects. You must exercise consistently and it must be sustained for a long period of time, hopefully forever, for sustained healthy physiological effects to occur.

What you feed your body is a key component to being able to exercise on a consistent basis without feeling too sore and too tired. You need to “feed” your body to be able to perform physical activity consistently. Page two of this newsletter deals with what you need to do nutritionally to improve your overall level of performance and productivity. In this section I will outline what you need to do nutritionally specifically pre and post exercise.

### Pre - Exercise Nutrition

Any exercise lasting more than one hour requires special attention to your dietary needs. However, it is a good rule of thumb to follow these recommendations even if you are exercising for a shorter period of time.

#### Key Points:

1. Eat one hour before exercise and intake high level of carbohydrates such as whole grain breads, cereal, fruits (bananas) to fuel muscles and maintain normal blood sugar. It is best to avoid large protein (meats) rich meals within 2-3 hours of exercise.
2. Drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration.
3. The best pre-exercise foods are tried and true favourites that will not cause gastrointestinal upset.

#### 3-4 HOURS BEFORE EXERCISE



- Turkey and Swiss sandwich, apple and low-fat chocolate milk
- Peanut butter and jelly sandwich with banana slices and low-fat milk
- Low-fat Greek yogurt with berries and small salad with chicken
- Always remember to hydrate with at least 16-20 oz. of fluid

#### 30-60 MINUTES BEFORE EXERCISE



- Sports drink
- Fruit, apple sauce, or fruit snacks
- Small granola bar, pretzels, or graham crackers

### Post-Exercise Nutrition

Have your recovery meal or snack within 30 minutes of finishing your exercise. This helps to speed up muscle repair and refill energy stores in the muscle.

#### Key Points:

1. Consume carbohydrate-rich foods such as whole grain breads, crackers, pitas and pasta, whole fruits and fruit juice, milk, yogurt, smoothies, starchy vegetables like potatoes, squash and corn. This will help to refill carbohydrate stores.

2. Include protein-rich foods, such as lean meats, poultry, fish and seafood, cheese, eggs, nuts, Protein is important to repair, maintain and build new muscles. Protein provides amino acids, which are the building blocks of muscles.

3. Drink enough fluids to replace what you lost in sweat during exercise. Aim for 500 to 750 mL (2 to 3 cups) for every pound (0.5 kg) of weight you lose during exercise. This is especially important if you plan to exercise again within the next day. If you don't know how much weight you lost, use your thirst as a guide. If you don't exercise intensely, choose water to rehydrate. Sports drinks are a good choice if you sweat a lot or exercise intensely.

**Post-Exercise Nutrition for Recovery**

- "To maximize recovery, consume carbohydrate & protein within 30-60 minutes after workout"
- First 2h after exercise – Very important!!
  - Repair muscle damage
  - Replace muscle & liver glycogen (energy stores)
  - Replace fluids and electrolytes
- Consume high carbohydrate foods (50-100g)
  - Add some protein! (~10g-20g)
  - CHO:PRO ratio (~ 3:1, 4:1)
  - Whole foods preferred!