

A shirtless bodybuilder is shown from the chest up, holding a white plate with a floral pattern. The plate contains a large piece of dark, cooked meat, several whole red potatoes, and several sliced white potatoes. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

The Proper Nutrition For Bodybuilders Like You

Diet and Supplementation
For Your Lean Body

The Proper Nutrition For Bodybuilders Like You: Diet and Supplementation For Your Lean Body

Bodybuilders are not normal people. If they were, they wouldn't be walking around with muscles bulging from their shirts and with quads seemingly wanting to stretch the pants out. Bodybuilders are not ordinary people. If they were, they wouldn't be found munching on power protein bars and taking in amino acid supplements every couple of hours. You also don't usually see normal people staying for long hours in the gym, perfecting that every exercise motion just to get the right results on the targeted muscles.

Bodybuilders must be of a higher kind.

If an ordinary individual should find any similarity he has with these bodybuilders, it is the common quest for the perfect body – the former is just passive however, but rest assured he is thinking of getting that muscular body - while the latter is already busy sculpting his way towards the goal. While the same ordinary individual will spend a lot of time looking on the mirror at how he could improve on his current build, the bodybuilder is on the exercise bench lifting weights – and really doing something about his case - and only after which, that he looks on the mirror to actually see results.

In the same manner, while ordinary individuals need a certain amount of nutritional supplements, bodybuilders would need a lot more. Bodybuilders after all are not ordinary people; they are of a different breed – perhaps a higher one at that. And if one is so, one should consider seriously getting the right supplements to aid him in his bodybuilding goal.

Logic would lead us to believe that bodybuilders have a different nutritional need, if not higher levels of supplementation, than those who do not lift weights at all, or those who do not engage in any rigorous physical activity. It is just like saying to a 230-pound person to be contented with a small serving of food, since a 120-pound person would feel full with such. It just borders to ridiculous.

Bodybuilders And Their Nutritional Needs

Carbohydrates – It is in this food group where you basically get your energy from. Your main sources for this should be coming from fresh fruits, green leafy vegetables and whole grains. Go for those with low-glycemic carbohydrates as oatmeal, sweet potatoes, brown rice and whole-grain breads. These are the type of carbohydrates that can be used efficiently by the body for energy, and chances that it will be stored to body fat become minimal. These are also high in fiber, which can aid in digestion and control cholesterol levels.

Carbohydrates are important so that your body will not turn to your protein reserves if they no longer have enough carbohydrates as a fuel source. If this happens, this would be bad news for your muscles.

One should avoid binging on refined or processed foods as breads, cakes, chocolates, ice creams and the like. These have high-glycemic index. With these processed foods, one will not get any significant nutritional value. At most, it can fuel up your workout, but beyond that, there is not much benefit it can do for your body.

Excess carbohydrates are not advisable. It has been known that excess carbohydrates will be converted into fat. As any unused calories will be stored up in the body, and these are usually those found on your midsection.

Protein – This is composed of various amino acids and considered to be the building blocks for muscle tissue. This is used by the body to build, repair and maintain muscles.

What is important to note here is that, unless all the necessary amino acids are present, the protein one ingests can't be used for muscle building. That is why one must intake these essential amino acids from the food he eats and from supplementation.

Some foods that contain all the amino acids are milk, eggs, meat, fish and vegetable products as soybeans. These are called complete proteins, and can be used right away by the body for muscle building. Cold-water fish such as wild salmon or tuna, are rich in omega-3 fatty acids as well.

Fat – Fats are needed for healthy hair and nails. It also has some effects on one's hormones. Thus, going on an absolutely no-fat diet would not be the way to go. One will just be depriving himself of a necessary nutrient for the body.

What one should probably do is take in the healthy fats. Fats help produce testosterone. It also aid in producing other anabolic hormones. Fats can also be a source of energy for low-intensity exercises.

Monounsaturated fats are good for ones health. Good sources of this type of fat is olive oil and macadamia nuts. Nuts, avocados, canola oils help promote a healthy heart and joints. These foods reduce post-workout soreness.

The fats to avoid are the trans-fats from margarines, baked goods, shortening and many fried products. These will only contribute to the clogging of arteries, and no dietary benefits can be gained.

Supplementation:

** Before taking any supplements, make sure you refer them to your doctor for your safety. And if you should take these supplements, do so as per directions from the manufacturers or from your doctor.*

- Chromium Picolinate – This enhances insulin function and help in controlling blood-sugar levels. It also helps in preventing sugar cravings. This enhances carbohydrate, protein & fat metabolism.
- Conjugated linoleic Acid (CLA) – This is a fatty acid found in milk and meat. This helps in weight loss, and enhances muscle growth as well.
- Zinc – This plays an important role in glucose regulation. It also aids in insulin function.
- Omega-3 Fatty Acids – This has been found to reduce insulin resistance.
- Alpha-lipoic acid – This has been shown to lower and stabilize blood-sugar levels. It helps prevent muscle damage. It is also a powerful antioxidant that helps reduce free-radical damage. This works well with Vitamins C, E and the coenzyme Q10. This has also been shown to be a fat inhibitor and helps facilitate conversion of sugar to energy.
- CoQ10 – This is Coenzyme Q10. This is a nutrient that is important for the production of energy inside the human cells. This helps keep cells healthy and enables for faster exercise recovery. It also boosts mental focus and increases energy as well.

- Folic Acid – This helps in the regeneration of muscle tissue, skin and bone marrow.
- Biotin – This helps metabolize carbohydrates and fat. It aids in cell growth as well. It helps in the utilization of other B vitamins.
- Vitamin B Complex
 - Vitamin B-1 or Thiamin helps in the metabolism of carbohydrate and branched-chain amino acids (BCAA). It is important for the conversion of food into energy.
 - Vitamin B-2 or Riboflavin helps break down dietary fat, protein and carbohydrate. It is required for cell respiration.
 - Vitamin B-3 or Niacin – It promotes appetite and helps in using fat and carbs into energy. It also allows oxygen to flow into the body tissues.
 - Vitamin B-5 or Pantothenic acid – This facilitates the conversion of fat and carbohydrates into energy. It enhances immune function.
 - Vitamin B-6 or Pyridoxine – This plays an important role in the metabolism of protein and amino acids. Athletes are known to have higher requirements for this vitamin as compared to sedentary individuals.

- Vitamin B-12 or Cobalamin – This increases performance. It also helps in new cell growth and folate metabolism.

- Arginine – This is an amino acid that is known to provide for muscle strength. In the body, Arginine is converted to Nitric Oxide that causes blood vessels to increase in diameter. Because of such capability, it can aid muscle growth with the efficient delivery of nutrients to the muscles.

- Taurine – This is an amino acid supplement that has shown to enhance muscle strength. In fact, it is found in many energy drinks.

- Anti-oxidants (Vitamin C & E) – these vitamins make strong one's immune system.

- Creatine – This actually works by raising the levels of creatine phosphate in the muscle cells. This would mean increasing the ATP (adenosine triphosphate - high-energy molecule) levels that is used as an energy source for the muscles. **ATP – a major source of energy for every cell in the body.*

- Glutamine – This replenishes amino acid stores and for recuperation after a hard workout. It speeds recovery and aids in repairing cells.

- Glutathione – This is an antioxidant and provides for anti-inflammatory benefits. It also enhances one's immune system.

Pre-workout and Post-workout Dietary Supplement

- Pre-workout

It is important to have the right meal before an intense workout. This will ensure that during your exercise, you will feel strong and will have the energy to do your exercise at full intensity. One would not want that in the course of his workout, especially near the end, one would experience a “crash” so to speak, and is unable to complete his exercise regimen for the session.

Preferably this would be a meal replacement powder instead of solid food, since the latter takes a longer time to digest. Meal replacement powders made into a shake will provide you with the right carbohydrates that can easily be absorbed by the body and will fuel your workout till the end.

This will also help decrease Cortisol levels that normally increases during exercise. With high Cortisol levels, one’s muscle is in danger of catabolism, especially if these high levels are maintained for a long period of time, due to the absence of carbohydrates.

Also, the shake will preferably have whey as its protein source since it has a large amount of branched chain amino acids (BCAAs) that can be quickly absorbed by the body. BCAAs would protect your muscles from being used as a fuel during your workout, and will also provide for the necessary nutrients after your workout. There are also studies that show its effects in decreasing body fat storage especially in the middle area.

Drink the shake 30 minutes to 60 minutes prior a workout.

- **Recuperative Post-workout Diet**

It is also best to drink a protein shake right after a work-out. This will ensure that your body will be able to feed quality protein to make them grow. As muscles are already in dire need of such depleted nutrients, this post-work out drink would be of great help. The drink should be taken in 30 to 60 minutes after the workout.

Casein is another type of protein that is slowly absorbed by the body, and thus the delivery of the amino acids in one's system is gradual. Before going to bed, a glass of casein would be helpful since it will reduce protein breakdown, at the same time prolong protein synthesis.

Getting The Right Nutrition For Optimum Bodybuilding

It can not be denied that without the proper nutrition, a bodybuilder would not have optimum energy to be able to go on with his hard training. Without the right nutrition coming from the foods that the bodybuilder eats, his exercise performance will suffer. One will not be able to perform with intensity and such lack of nutrition will lessen the drive to perform more and better.

Eating the right food and getting the appropriate supplementation will be good to a bodybuilder. Natural food will provide him with the energy necessary to carry out his exercise regimen for longer hours and for many times a week. The nutrients derived from such foods will help the body function better and repair tissues torn during exercise. It will thus help build muscle.

Along with the right supplementation of multivitamins & minerals, amino acids, essential fatty acids and the like will prove to raise a bodybuilder's performance

to higher levels. One will not be found wanting of more energy, and will be alert and with great concentration throughout the day.

Occurrence of fatigue & toxic levels will be minimized with the right kind of food and supplementation. If one is a serious bodybuilder, one should get this part right - so that your bodybuilding efforts will be rightfully charged up, and you will get the optimum results desired.