

A HEALTHIER LIFESTYLE

Life is a very demanding hobby. To meet its physical and emotional challenges, we need balance. Nutrition, like exercise, is essential to achieving physical and mental balance. Unfortunately, many people who strive for lofty goals in their lives, whether it is at their job or during an athletic competition, compromise with their nutritional needs even though it is an important part of their success. An example is the ballet dancer who literally starves herself to attain an optimum weight, or smokes to control appetite, or eats poorly because she doesn't understand proper nutrition.

Whether it be in athletics or general healing, good nutrition is essential when considering injury prevention, muscle and ligament growth. In order to build good quality muscles and ligaments, it is essential to eat high quality foods that support these tissues. Otherwise, injuries are more likely to occur. There is a lot of physical stress involved in most athletic events or in lifestyle fitness programs. And strains and sprains will occasionally occur. With an inadequate diet, tissue repair will be slow. The healing tissue will not be good quality, thus contributing to a chronic musculoskeletal condition -- a life-long cycle of aggravation that inhibits quality living.

The following pages will concentrate on nutritional aspects of health, diet and weight control to aid injury recovery and enhance quality living. Food components are divided into three groups:

- 1. Protein:** We get protein from meat, dairy products, eggs, nuts and seeds. Protein is never a source of immediate energy and is a poor source of energy during exercise. It is the building block for tissues in the body. But the body has no way to store extra protein. So, if you eat too much protein, it will be converted to fat. You should eat no more than 16 oz. meat (flesh foods) per week, and it is better to combine (protein compliments) like beans and rice at a meal to get your complete protein, rather than to eat meat alone -- because most meat has a high fat content. A diet should not contain more than 15% protein intake per day except for athletes who require a few percent more.
- 2. Fat:** Fat comes mostly from fried foods, beef (40% fat, 20% protein), many sauces, processed fast foods, and dressings, etc. Fat is a secondary source of energy, especially during the latter stages of endurance sports such as marathon running. Stored in the muscles, under the skin and around the inner organs, fat is not utilized for quick energy. Most Americans have an excess of fat stores, which need to be reduced.
- 3. Carbohydrates (CHO):** Carbohydrates are found in fruits, vegetables, baked potatoes, bread, etc. They are the primary energy fuel for the body and especially good for exercise. Your body stores carbohydrates in the muscles and in the liver in the form of glycogen. You should eat complex carbohydrates such as vegetables and baked potatoes instead of sugar candies and other white sugar products, which are hard on the body.

Proper Food Combining

Those interested in vital dietary health and well-being have long recognized that certain foods don't digest well together. A few principals about digestion can help you understand why these dietary suggestions are so important. First, proteins and starches require different types of digestive juices for optimal breakdown. Proteins require acidic gastric juices, whereas starches require alkaline Ph levels.

Digestive juices cannot be both acidic and alkaline simultaneously; mixing these two extremes results in an inefficient Ph that isn't useful in digesting either one. Foods will take longer to digest while requiring more of the body's energy. This is why starches and proteins should, for the most part, be eaten during separate meals. Eating starch and protein together, like meat and potatoes, makes efficient and rapid digestion impossible. The result is

poor and incomplete digestion with partial putrefaction of proteins and fermentation of starches. An example of putrefaction is the putrid odor that is produced by a dead animal rotting on the side of a road. Fermentation involves the breakdown of starches that produces a gas, similar to what happens in the brewing of beer. A good example is seen when we eat beans. They are a healthy food; but being partially starch and partly protein are hard to digest for some people. Because of this dual nature, beans often produce gas.

Let's discuss foods in four basic groups: proteins, starches, vegetables and fruits. Proteins require an acidic Ph. They include all meats and dairy products, eggs, nuts and seeds. Vegetables can digest equally well and quickly with either an acidic or alkaline Ph. Fruits are very easily and quickly digested, but should be eaten alone for reasons we'll discuss later. Starches require an alkaline Ph. They include everything else: bread, grains, cooked potatoes, beans, legumes, pasta, baked goods and pastries. Improper food combining all too often results in health problems such as gas, constipation, diarrhea, indigestion, bowel cancer, ulcers, hemorrhoids, appendicitis, diverticular disease, irritable bowel syndrome, fatigue and sub optimal nutrition. You can see how important it is to eat properly especially since there is so much required of our body for optimal health. Good nutrition is important if you want to live a high quality life.

Traditional diets of meat and potatoes, pizza, any meat sandwich, peanut butter and jelly or toasted cheese sandwiches, etc., can eventually result in the health problems listed above. Athletes while trying to perform at optimum levels will commonly eat sub optimal diets. That's like trying to get top performance out of a sports car while using watered down gasoline. Eventually, the machine will not only perform inadequately; but will break down. Most Americans grow up eating meat for breakfast, lunch and dinner -- and always with bread, potatoes, or other starches. But after the meals, they often reach for the antacids, belch or feel exhausted and take a nap. Why? It takes a lot of energy just to digest their food. There is a better way to eat. It does mean changing some bad habits. But the benefits -- both long and short term are easily worth the time and effort.

Moderation is the key. I'm not suggesting that you never mix proteins and starches again. That would mean never eating pizza again! I just recommend that you combine your foods properly as much and as often as possible. Meat in particular digests much more easily and quickly when not combined with starches in the same meal.

To review, proteins and starches require different types of gastric juices for efficient and optimal digestion. A properly combined meal should completely leave the stomach within 3 hours. An improperly combined meal can remain in the stomach for 8 or more hours. That's why we feel bloated and stuffed after too much or improperly combined food. Thus, it is better to designate your meals either protein or starch and combine one of those categories with vegetables. For example, eat a large salad and steamed vegetables with your meat for a protein meal. At a starch meal, eat anything except protein or fruit. Like spaghetti with meatless sauce, bread and vegetables.

Start by eating one properly combined meal each day and compare how you feel afterwards. Better yet, eat properly combined meals for one month, and then retest your old habit of protein and starch together. Notice if you experience fatigue, gas, bloating, belching, constipation and other unpleasant symptoms after the improperly combined meal. An after-meal energy drop is very common, but totally unnecessary. A properly combined meal digests quickly and efficiently with little energy output by the body. Trying to utilize and dispose of an improperly combined meal requires extra energy output by the body resulting in after-meal fatigue and generally low energy levels of the average person, much less an athlete trying to perform at optimum levels.

How much disease and premature aging or organ exhaustion is associated with a chronically poor diet? Remember that our amazing body can slog along and make the best of a bad situation for many years before succumbing to sub optimal and negative lifestyle habits. Or you can feel and be vital, energetic, trim and alive now and for many years to come. And more importantly, you can perform in your chosen occupation vibrantly, energetically and enthusiastically.

Eating of Fruit

Proper eating of fruit is another important factor in food combining. "Eat fruit alone or leave it alone." Fruit contains fruit sugar and is "predigested" or quickly digested and processed in the stomach. When eaten alone, fruit exits the stomach into the small intestine within approximately 20 minutes or so. If we eat fruit with or immediately after other foods, the fruit is blocked from its normal and rapid course of digestion. Blocked by the slower digesting starch or protein, fruit sugars begin fermenting and allow increased bacterial growth, gas production and other by-products of improper digestion.

Some people can't eat fruit because they get indigestion. Indigestion symptoms after improper combining are nature's way of complaining. Fruit is a perfect food when eaten alone or twenty minutes before other food. Since most meals take about three hours to leave the stomach, wait that long after lunch or dinner before eating fruit again. If possible, try eating nothing but fruit until noon. At the least, start your morning with fruit and wait twenty minutes before eating other breakfast foods. You could accomplish this by drinking a fruit shake/smoothie for breakfast. Fruit is an instant and sufficiently long lasting energizer for a busy morning. It is full of nutrients, organic water and fiber, so it nourishes, hydrates and cleanses the digestive system. It is an excellent substitute for coffee and gives the same "kick" but without the side effects of caffeine. Eating only fruit until noon allows the body to focus on the elimination processes. Just remember to preferably wait twenty to thirty minutes after eating fruit before eating any other foods. This allows the fruit to speed through the digestive tract before other foods can block its course.

Many athletes snack on fruit for quick energy. Eat a piece of fruit every hour or so. You'll be amazed at the energy and lightness you'll feel. This nutritional approach is sufficient even for those with strenuous, high-tension jobs or those who participate in very athletic activities.

Remember... this entire process of improving your health is a journey – it's not just about dieting and exercising. You have a choice in what matters. Choose to do what is best for you!

Whatever you do, to improve your diet today -- will be of untold benefits tomorrow!