



VIVIFY

E-Book
The Basics of
Nutrition



INTRODUCTION

Whether you're a student of nutritional science or just trying to be healthier, it can be tough to sort through all the information out there on what to eat.

From fad diets to “superfoods,” it seems like everyone has an opinion on the best way to fuel your body.

But don't worry – we're here to help!

In this guide, we'll outline every actionable piece of advice you need to know about nutrition, from the basics of macronutrients and micronutrients, to how to create a healthy diet for yourself.

Let's get started!



WHY IS NUTRITION IMPORTANT?

Food is crucial for survival, and it is at the very foundation of Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

This important principle holds true for all people, whether we are active or inactive, healthy or sick.

But in the context of physical fitness, food takes on even greater importance.

Whether an individual is training for a grueling race or simply trying to lose a few pounds by hitting the gym regularly, nutrition must be a top priority.

After all, it is only through adequate fuel that we can reach our fitness goals and maintain optimal health.

Now let's have a look at the top 3 reasons why nutrition is crucial.

Health

At first glance, it may seem like nutrition is an optional concern, something that we only need to worry about if we plan to embark on a diet or fitness regimen.

However, first and foremost, we cannot underestimate the importance of nutrition for maintaining healthy functioning and supporting our overall well-being.

Every cell in our body requires certain nutrients in order to perform at its optimal level.

Without these nutrients, our bodies are unable to maintain homeostasis, leading to decreased energy levels and an increased risk of disease.

Because nutrition is so crucial for radiant health and vitality, it should be at the forefront of all of our actions, especially when it comes to the food that we eat.

The foods that we choose to consume directly impact the internal workings of our bodies.

By promoting a balanced diet full of whole foods rich in essential vitamins and minerals, we can keep ourselves running like well-oiled machines from head to toe.

Ultimately, nutrition is essential first and foremost because it gives us what we need for a healthy organism and optimal functioning at every level.

And health is quite important for everyone, but especially for athletes and trainees who have one goal in mind - to have a prolonged training career.

Energy
When it comes to improving physical performance, adequate nutrition is key.

Firstly, quality foods provide the energy needed for sustained training and working out.

For example, complex carbohydrates such as whole grains can be broken down slowly to deliver a steady supply of fuel.

Moreover, nutritional deficiencies can lead to low energy levels and poor performance in exercises or competitions.

Thus, for trainees hoping to reach their full fitness potential, it is essential to focus on nutrition.

It is namely nutrition that will help establish the foundation for success.

Recovery

As any athlete knows, the right training stimulus is essential for achieving peak performance.

Whether you are running a marathon, lifting weights in the gym, or hitting the field for an intense game of soccer, vigorous exercise requires a great deal of energy and focus.

However, simply putting in the hours at the gym is no guarantee of success.

For best results, it is also important to train smart and give your body adequate time to recover.

One key component of recovery is food.

Eating a well-balanced diet made up of nutrient-rich options helps to provide your body with the fuel it needs to build muscle and replenish vital energy stores.

Moreover, choosing the right types of meals after a workout can help promote faster muscular repair, preventing soreness and ensuring that you are feeling ready for your next workout in no time.

For athletes at all levels, food is one of the most important elements of recovery – and it can mean the difference between playing at your peak or falling short.



THE FUNDAMENTALS

As you learned, nutrition is an essential component of our performance, health, and well-being, but it can seem like a confusing and complicated topic.

Today, there are countless products and diets that claim to be the key to perfect nutrition, promising to provide everything from increased energy to maximized performance.

However, many of these claims are rather dubious, and the results that people often experience are more likely due to a healthy foundation than some magical quick fix.

At its core, good nutrition is really just about getting the right balance of nutrients from foods that you enjoy eating.

By focusing on these basic fundamentals instead of following the latest fad diet or supplement trend, we can truly achieve optimal nutrition for both our bodies and minds.



After all, even though we often associate nutrition with weird diets and miraculous supplements, it's actually quite simple at its core – just focus on eating real food!

Now let's have a look at what is actually important in your day-to-day nutrition.

Protein Intake

Protein is absolutely essential for a healthy diet. They do most of the work in cells and repair damaged tissue throughout the body, supporting everything from skin and muscle to nerves and organs.

This makes it one of the key building blocks of good nutrition, crucial for both our physical health and our overall well-being.

But how much protein do we really need in order to maintain optimal health?

The answer depends on a variety of factors, including age, weight, gender, and activity levels.

Generally speaking, though, 0.65-1g of protein per pound of bodyweight is in the ballpark for most people - go on the lower side if you don't really train and have less muscle mass, and go on the higher side if you are an active person with more muscle!



Fat Intake

In order to meet all of our nutritional needs, it is important that we eat a well-balanced diet.

One area of particular importance is fat intake.

While most people associate fat with body weight and heart disease risk, fat actually plays numerous critical roles in the functioning of our bodies.

For example, fats are needed to absorb certain vitamins in the intestines, and they are also involved in building cell membranes, maintaining hormonal levels, and regulating immune responses.

Given these various functions of fats, it is clear that they are an essential component of any healthy diet.

The optimal daily fat intake forms at around 0.35-0.45g per pound of body weight, derived from quality sources like fatty fish, avocados, nuts, meat, butter, olives and olive oil.

About Carbohydrates

While carbohydrates are often thought of as the enemy when it comes to health and fitness, they actually play a very important role in many physiological systems.

Carbohydrates are the body's preferred energy source in many regards, so they provide fuel for everything from our muscles to our brains.

Additionally, carbohydrates can provide quick energy during intense workouts or athletic competitions, making them an important part of any athlete's diet.

So while carbs may seem like bad news at first glance, when seen in the context of their many vital roles in the body, we can see that they are far from deserving of all the negative attention they have received over the years.

In fact, when managed properly, carbohydrates can actually be a very good thing!

Much like everything else, they should be consumed in normal amounts from quality food sources, such as whole grains, potatoes, sweet potatoes, oats, fruits, and veggies.

RECOMMENDED FOOD SOURCES

There is no question that protein, fats, and carbohydrates are all essential components of a healthy diet.

However, beyond the amount of these nutrients that we consume, it is also important to consider where those nutrients are coming from.

By focusing on natural, high-quality foods as much as possible, you can truly maximize the benefits of your nutrition and achieve optimal health and well-being.

Now let's have a look at the two main types of sources - animal foods and plant foods, and what each provides.

Animal-based Food

Animal foods have long been regarded as important sources of essential nutrients.

And indeed, compared to plant-based foods, they tend to have a more complete nutritional profile.

This is due, in part, to the fact that animal foods contain all of the essential amino acids that are required by the human body.

These amino acids are critical for a range of functions, from protein synthesis and cell growth to brain development and immune function.



In addition to their rich nutritional content, animal foods are also particularly satiating and satisfying.

This means that you feel fuller for longer after eating them, making it easier to stick to healthy portion sizes.

And unlike some plant-based foods, animal products give you more bang for your buck when it comes to nutrients per gram of food consumed.

So if you're looking for a nutrient-dense source of food that will also help keep your appetite satisfied throughout the day, animal foods may be just what you need.

In your nutrition plan, make sure to include the following products:

1. Beef Meat
2. Beef Organs
3. Chicken
4. Fish & Other Seafood
5. Eggs
6. Dairy products

By including these products, you can rest assured you are providing your body with the nutrients it needs to sustain healthy functioning and, of course, recovery from strenuous activities.



Plant-based Food

While it is true that plant foods are typically not as nutritious as animal products, this does not mean that they should be entirely excluded from your nutritional plan.

In fact, plant foods are an important part of a healthy diet due to their high fiber content and corresponding health benefits. Additionally, including a bit more diversity in your meals can help you meet all of your nutritional needs without relying too heavily on any one food group.

So if you are concerned about diversity and enjoyment in your nutrition plan, there is no need to worry – simple modifications like these can help ensure that you continue to make nutritious choices without sacrificing flavor or variety. Here are our top 8 favorite plant products to include in your nutrition plan:

1. Sweet potatoes
2. Normal potatoes
3. Beetroots
4. Leafy greens
5. Carrots
6. Cucumbers
7. Any and all fruits
8. Nuts

By including these products in your meals, you are granted to have a sufficient amount of carbohydrates, as well as other important vitamins and minerals. Ultimately, the goal should be to have a variety of both animal and plant products.



ABOUT JUNK FOODS

Many people view junk food as an inherently bad thing and believe that it should be avoided entirely in order to maintain a healthy diet.

While this certainly holds true for certain types of junk food, such as highly-processed foods stacked with trans-fats, others are not so bad when consumed at the right frequency.

In fact, consuming your favorite junk foods regularly can actually help to reduce your cravings for them.

Why? Because the more you do something, the less special it becomes.

With that in mind, if you're looking for an effective way to strike a balance between healthy eating and keeping your favorite treats on your menu, try incorporating junk food into your routine more regularly, but keep it at lower amounts so that the balance is in favor of nutritious foods!





FINAL THOUGHTS

As a non-competitive athlete, you don't really need to count calories (well, unless you have a specific weight target.)

Ultimately, you should recognize what is truly essential in your nutrition and focus on consuming foods that provide these nutrients.

This will allow you to develop a healthy relationship with food, thereby allowing you to create a meaningful, effective habit.

A sustainable habit that will stick for a lifetime.

