With Nutrition, Timing is Everything

*Time carbs, protein and fluids to maximize workouts, say authors*

Champaign, IL (PRWEB) May 20, 2010 -- Consuming nutrients at the right time and in appropriate amounts can take fitness and performance to a new level. The complex science behind nutrient timing, however, requires the help of sports nutritionists, usually restricting the practice to elite athletes working with professional ‘food coaches’.

Now, renowned sport nutritionists Heidi Skolnik and Andrea Chernus—who work with elite athletes from New York Giants football players to Julliard School dancers—break down the nutrient timing issue for all types of athletes in a hands-on guide. In "Nutrient Timing for Peak Performance" (Human Kinetics, June 2010), they advise when to eat what so nutrients have their greatest impact on athletes’ bodies.

“The timing of nutrients can have a big impact on an athlete’s energy,” claims Skolnik. “Plus, when and how much you eat can help not only with muscle hypertrophy but also with immune function.” She adds that staying well fueled can also reduce the risk of injury.

Skolnik and Chernus explain in layperson’s terms the science behind nutrient timing and detail nutrients like carbohydrate, protein, smart fat, essential vitamins and minerals and the role of fluids and supplements. With that base of information, they provide the strategies, plans and sample menus to help people develop their own individualized Nutritional Blueprints incorporating the Nutrient Timing Principles (NTP).

Before exercise, for example, the authors suggest specific strategies for ingestion of carbohydrate, protein and fluids. Carbohydrate before exercise provides a “topping off” of fuel reserves and blood sugar, says Skolnik helping athletes stamina, concentration and skill remain strong. Pre-exercise protein, meanwhile, may be difficult to tolerate, but small amounts may aid in reducing muscle soreness. Strength athletes, specifically, benefit from a small amount of high-quality protein to aid insulin release, inhibit muscle breakdown and facilitate muscle repair. However, “it need not be immediately before exercise in any special form,” adds Skolnik.

Fluid needs vary by individual, but the authors generally advise drinking 17 to 20 ounces of fluids two to three hours before exercise to supply optimal fluid to muscle tissue in advance of the workout and for any excess to be excreted. They also advise drinking 7 to 10 ounces of fluids 10 to 20 minutes before exercise. “This will help ensure that blood plasma is hydrated,” explains Chernus. “This timing strategy also ensures that there is some fluid in your stomach so that as you drink during your training, absorption will be faster than if you began with an empty stomach.”

The authors go on to provide advice for fueling during and post-exercise, and they give specific guidelines for strength and power athletes, endurance sport participants and stop-and-go athletes.

“Our goal is to help athletes formulate an eating plan to meet their goals,” says Skolnik, “whether they are male or female, compete seriously, participate for fun, or are training for health, well-being and aesthetics.”

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