

PEAK SPEAK- June 2007

Welcome to our newsletter!

In PEAK SPEAK you'll find general fitness info, workout ideas, nutrition tips, and news about our health club.

Feel free to forward email or printed copies of our newsletters to anyone you think might find the content interesting.

We'll keep past issues available on our web site.

If you have any questions about the content, or ideas for features, please see Joe or Pete.

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Recover, Replenish and Refuel!

Do you have a post-workout nutritional regimen?

If you answered "no", you may be cheating yourself out of results that you should be achieving from your workouts. You may be wasting a great deal of your effort in the gym by not maximizing your post-workout nutrition.

When you exercise, your body burns carbohydrates for energy and breaks down your muscle tissue (especially if you are weight training). Immediately after a workout, the body's natural recuperative processes act to enhance its ability to utilize nutrients such as glucose (sugar) and protein to rebuild and recover from your exercise. Remember, development of lean muscle mass is basically triggered by the body's systematic "repair" of muscle tissue broken down during exercise.

The good news is that at the completion of a workout, your body is primed to process fuel to repair, recover and build muscle. The bad news is that depriving your body of the right fuel at the right time will force your body to use whatever materials it has at hand to do the job- including existing muscle tissue! There is a period of time following the workout during which the body MUST have the appropriate nutrients on hand in order to complete the repair work that leads to muscle growth. While there are differing opinions as to the length of this "recovery window", most fall into the one-to-two hour range. That means that you should be ingesting a sensible combination of carbohydrates and protein within one to two hours after your workout.

Taking in nutrients immediately after exercise helps you to recover faster and feel better after a workout. This helps you not only to gain muscle faster, but also to keep your metabolism fueled so that you lose fat at a faster rate. Failure to take in these nutrients can trigger processes that may do more harm than good! For example, without these nutrients, your body starts breaking down muscle tissue in undamaged areas of your body in order to get raw materials to help repair the areas you just worked. Over time, this will result in a loss of muscle from your whole body.

Exercise without proper post-workout nutrition can actually cause you to lose muscle!

Recover, Replenish and Refuel! (cont'd)

Both protein and carbohydrates are important for fast recovery.

Protein - Immediately following a workout (within a few minutes of completion), it's important to take in some protein. The easiest and best way to do this is in the form of a protein powder, though a food source such as milk will do. Taking protein right after a workout gives your body something to rebuild with instead of tearing down its own muscle tissue for raw materials. Do not take protein right before a workout as it will just sit in your stomach and possibly cause bloating. Try to get about 30 to 40 grams of protein in as soon as you can after you're done.

Carbohydrates - Take in about 60 to 100 grams of carbohydrates to help the body refuel. Your body is most efficient at rebuilding its carbohydrate stores immediately after a workout. It's important to take advantage of this period. A few common examples of healthy carbs to take after a workout include juices, fruits, and sports drinks. Examples of protein foods include milk, eggs, poultry, fish, meat, or soy products. Flavored yogurt is an excellent example of a post-workout snack. It contains carbs, protein and calcium all in one.

Post-Workout Meal - About one hour after your workout, take in a high quality source of protein (as in the examples above) and a good supply of carbohydrates such as grains, potatoes, cereals, etc. At this time, the body has settled down from the stress of the workout and is looking to rebuild.

If you're looking to get as much from your workouts as you possibly can, you can see that post-workout nutrition is critical. By supplying an ample amount of raw materials right after you're done, you will be preventing the body from breaking itself down in order to recover. This means more results from the effort you put into your workouts!

Note: The quantities of protein and carbs required vary from person to person, depending upon a wide variety of factors. Therefore these should not be interpreted as precise dietary requirements, but rather as general nutrition guidelines.

Weight Training: Most Common Mistakes

In previous Peak Speak articles, we've extolled the virtues of strength training for women and men of all ages. And we've highlighted a few key weight-training exercises, along with tips for proper execution. Weight training can be an extremely beneficial, effective component of any fitness program. Unfortunately, it can also be dangerous and counter-productive if not done properly.

Following are some of the most common weight training mistakes we've seen over the years.

1. Using too much weight.

Using too much weight causes you to "cheat", or engage unintended muscles into the movement in order to compensate. Signs that you're using too much weight include using momentum to move the weight, bouncing or jerking movements, and using your body weight to move the weight (e.g. leaning or swaying). This leads to bad technique which not only minimizes results but also can lead to injury. Bottom line- you will achieve MUCH better results using the appropriate weight and proper form than you will by adding extra pounds and cheating to complete the movements.

Tip: if you can not complete a weight lifting movement 7-8 times with good, fluid form (no bouncing, jerking, cheating), then the weight is too heavy.

2. Using too little weight

This seems to be most common in female weight trainers, and is probably attributable to the old myth about becoming "muscle-bound" if you lift heavy weights. Using insufficient weight- while not inherently dangerous like using too much- is nonetheless a problem because insufficient weight does not stress ("overload") the muscles. And the act of stressing a muscle group is precisely what triggers the muscle-building process.

Tip: If you can complete a weight lifting movement (properly) over 15 times with little or no strain, then the weight is probably too light.

Weight Training: Most Common Mistakes (cont'd)

3. Copying improper technique

Many of us pick up new exercises by observing other lifters in the gym. Unfortunately, many of the people you see executing weight-lifting movements are not executing the movements properly. We estimate that fully two-thirds of the people we observe lifting weights are using improper form. Frankly, some of the worst form we've seen has been evidenced by people who've been lifting weights for years and consider themselves "experts". That's why it's easy-particularly for a novice- to pick up bad habits by assuming other people know what they're doing.

Tip: Whether you're a beginner or not, it's a good idea to check in with knowledgeable source (like a personal trainer) for advice on proper technique.

To make sure that your weight training is safe and effective,

- ✓ *Don't sacrifice proper form for the sake of using more weight.*
- ✓ *Ensure that the amount of weight you use is sufficient to tax your target muscles.*
- ✓ *Check in with a trained expert to ensure you are executing the movements properly.*

Pete and Joe Bellisano are both certified trainers with many years of weight training experience. They'd be glad to answer any questions you may have about avoiding common weight training mistakes.