

SPORTS NUTRITION

Sports nutrition professionals have used research to establish the notion that a balanced diet is vital to optimal athletic performance. A balanced diet will consist of a high water and carbohydrate intake, moderate protein, and low fat. The main nutritional objectives in athletics are to increase lean muscle tissue and decrease excess body fat. A balanced diet sound with nutritional practices (not jeopardized by inappropriate [supplementation](#)) plays a major role in achieving athletic performance goals.

A balanced diet will provide sufficient nutrients and energy necessary for the high demands of training and competition. Maintaining a properly balanced diet ensures high levels of energy and faster, more efficient recovery during and between exercise bouts, as well as the proper growth of muscle, bone, collagenous tissue, and the enhancement of mental awareness. In fact, *the lack of progress or "staleness" during training can be related to a poor nutritional lifestyle, and not the training program.*

Keep in mind that the recommended daily allowances (RDAs) of most nutrients are the same for athletes and non-athletes. The most common difference in daily intake between athletes and non-athletes is the amount of calories consumed. In most cases, athletes require more calories per day to meet the energy demands of athletic training and competition. The energy needs of an athlete depend on his/her basal metabolic rate ([BMR](#)). Individual BMRs vary with age, gender, and the amount of lean body mass. A well balanced, nutritionally sound diet aids sport performance for all athletes.