



10 HABITS OF BASIC NUTRITION

We have found the following 10 nutrition rules to make the biggest difference in our clients. We call these rules the "10 Habits". Consistent application of all 10 of these habits will guarantee big long-term results.

HABIT #1 – FEED EVERY 2-3 HOURS

Most North American's eat somewhere around 3 meals a day. I'd imagine that their physiques are not the physiques you want to emulate, so a different approach is called for. Research has demonstrated, feeding every 2-3 hours is important for many things. Regular feeding intervals stimulate the metabolism, balance blood sugar, and improve health, body composition, and performance. So make sure that when it comes to eating, you jump on the every 2-3 hour train.

If you are wondering how many meals you should be eating a day, just divide the time you are awake by 3. So if you are awake for 15 hours, divide that by 3 and you should be consuming 5 meals a day.

HABIT #2 – INGEST COMPLETE, LEAN PROTEIN WITH EACH FEEDING

Make sure that every time you eat there's a serving of protein involved. By doing so, you'll be sure to maximally stimulate your metabolic rate, improve your muscle mass and recovery, and reduce your body fat. Keep in mind that protein is not limited to just breakfast, lunch and dinner. EVERY feeding opportunity, every 2-3 ours, should contain complete, lean protein.

HABIT #3 – INGEST VEGETABLES WITH EACH FEEDING OPPORTUNITY

Science has demonstrated that in addition to the vitamins and minerals (micronutrients) packed into veggies, important plant chemicals (phytochemicals) that are essential for optimal physiological functioning are also present. Vegetables and fruits also provide an alkaline load to the blood. Since both proteins and grains present acidic loads to the blood, it's important to balance these acids with alkaline rich vegetables and fruits. Too much acidity and not enough alkalinity means the loss of bone strength and muscle mass. So ensure you are balanced by getting 1-2 servings of veggies with every feeding opportunity.

HABIT #4 – IF FAT LOSS IS YOUR GOAL, EAT VEGGIES AND FRUITS AT ANY FEEDING; "OTHER" CARBS MOSTLY AFTER EXERCISE

All this means is eat non-fruit and vegetable carbohydrates (including simple sugars, sports drinks as well as starchy carbs such as rice, pasta, potatoes, quinoa, etc.) during and within the few hours after exercise only. Your body's carbohydrate tolerance is best during exercise and the few hours after exercise, thus the majority of your daily carbohydrate energy should come during these times. During the rest of the day, stick with carbohydrate sources like vegetables and fruits. These foods are alkaline, contain more fiber, have a higher micronutrient/macronutrient ratio, produce a smaller insulin response and better manage blood sugar.

HABIT #5 – EAT HEALTHY FATS DAILY

About 30% of your diet should come from fat. However, you must ensure that this intake is balanced between saturated, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat. A goal of 1/3 of each is recommended. By balancing out your fat intake, health, body composition, and performance can be optimized. By focusing on adding the healthy monounsaturated and omega 3 fats into your diet, you'll easily balance out the saturated and omega 6 fats so prevalent in the North American diet. An important recommendation is to include fish oil supplements in your nutrition plan. This supplement improves body composition and protects against heart disease, cancer, diabetes and more.

HABIT #6 – MOST CALORIE-CONTAINING DRINKS (ASIDE FROM WORKOUT NUTRITION) SHOULD BE ELIMINATED.

Fruit juice, soda and other sugary beverages should be eliminated from the diet. While many people believe that fruit juice is a healthy alternative to soda, fruit juices offer very little in the way of good nutrition and is certainly no substitute for fruits and vegetables. As the micronutrient/macronutrient ratios of sodas and fruit juices are abysmal, you should be eating calories and drinking water as your habitual beverage. This is especially true with athletes who lose a lot of water, through sweat, during their training and competition.

HABIT #7 – EAT WHOLE FOODS INSTEAD OF SUPPLEMENTS

Most of our food intake should come from high quality whole food sources that conform to the other 9 habits listed here. While there are certain times where liquid nutrition or bars are useful (during and immediately after exercise, as well as when traveling) your daily dietary intake should be composed of whole, largely unprocessed foods. When it comes to vitamins, minerals and phytochemicals, no pills can even come close to what good old fruits and vegetables contain. So skip the multi-vitamin and instead eat an extra few servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

HABIT #8 – PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE FEEDINGS IN ADVANCE

The hardest part about eating well isn't necessarily understanding which foods are good and which are bad. Nor is it understanding proteins, carbs, and fats. Nor is it understanding when to eat certain foods. The hardest part is consistency. Sometimes good nutrition is not about the food as much as it is about making sure the food is available when it's time to eat.

You'll need to come up with food preparation strategies in order to ensure that you can consistently get the nutrition you need, when you need it. Whether that means cooking a bunch of meals on Sunday for the upcoming week, getting up 30 minutes earlier and preparing food for the rest of the day; or hiring a food preparation service to do it for you, it's critical to have a plan. As the old cliché very accurately states, "Failing to plan is planning to fail."

HABIT #9 – EAT AS WIDE VARIETY OF GOOD FOODS AS POSSIBLE

Most of us eat in a very habitual manner, ingesting similar breakfasts, lunches, and dinners day in and day out. Boring, but easy.

By establishing the habits above as the norm, it will eventually be easy to follow them. And that's good. You get a gold star once you've been able to follow them at 90% adherence for 3-4 weeks.

However, it is also important to balance out this daily habit with seasonal foods and a healthy variety. Find healthy alternatives to the foods you habitually eat. For example, be sure to use a variety of protein sources. Instead of the old standbys like chicken, beef, and eggs, you can incorporate game meats like venison, bison, wild boar, etc. Do the same things for your fruits and vegetables. The Gourmet Nutrition book comes in handy here, providing fresh nutritional ideas and recipe ideas.

HABIT #10 – PLAN TO BREAK THE RULES 10% OF THE TIME

An important thing to remember about following these 10 Habits is your diet doesn't have to be perfect 100% of the time. 100% nutritional discipline is never required for optimal progress. The difference between 90% adherence and 100% adherence is negligible. You just have to be sure you are clear on what 10% really means. For example, if you are eating 6 times per day for 7 days of the week, that's 42 feeding opportunities per week. 10% of that would be about 4. So you have 4 "imperfect" feeding opportunities. These opportunities include junk food and even skipped feedings. Therefore, if you break 1 of the 10 rules, that counts as one of your 10%. So don't waste your skips by missing a feeding. Schedule your 10% feeding opportunities and enjoy them.