

Louise's Healthy Nutrition Hints

✓ Protein & Your Athletic Performance- Too Little? Too Much? Just right!

First, the science. Your muscles are in a continuous cycle of building (anabolic) and breaking down (catabolic). The amount of protein in your body is in direct correlation to your nitrogen balance. So, if you have a negative nitrogen balance, you are breaking down proteins quicker than you are building them. Conversely, with a positive nitrogen balance, you are creating new proteins faster than you break them down. Knowing this science makes the math simple: muscle building=a positive nitrogen balance. This is predominantly true for those of all ages and fitness levels. Since we all lose muscle as we age, it is critical we do our best to preserve muscle to keep us staying mobile for everyday function. It is also necessary for getting the fast recovery you need if you are doing more intensive workouts (weight resistance, triathletes, long distance runners, etc.).

But how much protein do you need? There are many factors to consider, including your food sources, quality, digestibility/absorption, amino acid profile (essential/non essential) and your activity level. Complete sources are meat, poultry, fish, eggs, some dairy products, quinoa, buckwheat (contains no gluten!), chia seeds and hemp, to name a few. Another factor to keep in mind is that your protein consumption needs to be evenly distributed throughout the day to maximize muscle building, as well as to help keep you satiated. Eating excess protein at one time will either result in being burned off, which is not ideal, or it being converted to glucose (sugar) and, in turn, to fat.

If you have an average activity level, the number of grams of protein you require is roughly $\frac{1}{2}$ your body weight in pounds, spread out throughout the day.

If you participate in endurance/serious weight/resistance training, your intake should be approximately 1g per your body weight or less. If you would like to know the specific protein requirements that will help you maximize your athletic performance, contact Louise @ 905 201 0141.

Lastly, it is important to note that glucose is the body's primary fuel, used to power your muscles during your workouts as an instant source of energy. It does need to be replenished, so keeping a healthy carbohydrate/protein/fat ratio is crucial. Keep your glycogen stores topped up (i.e.: caution - low carbohydrate diet) since you need a healthy amount of carbohydrates to maximize muscle development.