

FEMME FATALE *Physique*



Protein is Lovely.....

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The Gist of Things: (for those of you who have a shorter attention span than me) Protein is essential for your workouts regardless of what type (even if you're a salsa dancer [or even an exotic dancer]). Eat lots of protein; there are a plethora of realistic benefits that outweigh the fallacies invented by outdated nutritionists! By eating a higher protein/lower carbohydrate diet you'll lose weight, compliment your physique, improve your immune system, improve your workouts and your heart health!

Protein is not just for athletes and bodybuilders. It is essential for all muscle repair, remodeling, and overall existence, period. I see too many women not consuming enough protein because of its calories and reach for fruit or something lame like that. Afraid of bulking up from extra protein? Don't flatter yourself, protein is not an anabolic steroid, if so then I'd be the size of Arnold Schwarzenegger, and that wouldn't be pretty! I'd have to resort to eHarmony to find "manly women" lovers. That one chicken breast per day is short-handing your workout! Consuming protein before and after your work out will compliment the hard work you put in; supplying your muscles and preparing them for the continuous repair they will undergo thereafter. [1-3] General recommendations for protein are .8g/kg of bodyweight. Now that's for your general population that lifts at most a pencil and a cup of coffee! If you're lifting weights, even if they're 5lb weights and/or running miles a week, you need that protein to repair damaged tissue (i.e. muscle, ligaments, tendons). So whether you're into marathon running (or even recreational running around your neighborhood making lazy people feel guilty) or hardcore in the gym with weights and cardio, protein is imperative to repair all tissues damaged in the process of exercise. [4-6]

Many doctors, nutritionists and dieticians will claim against such high protein intakes because they think too much protein will "overwork" your kidneys. They might as well recommend you quit working out because your heart has to work extra. Your kidneys have to filter more when you consume higher amounts of protein, as your heart has to pump more blood to working muscles when you exercise, so what's the problem doctors, dieticians and morons? You can even look at the research yourself; whenever protein has demonstrated a negative effect it has only been with individuals with renal malfunction with no original cause from high protein intake. In other words, if you have healthy kidneys a high protein diet will not make you susceptible to kidney problems so you can

throw that theory out the window! [7-12] Physicians may also tell you that high protein diets may put your bone density at risk. Now there is logic behind that but it still isn't true. As a matter of fact, low protein diets have a deleterious effect on bone formation. In addition, the phosphate found protein foods counteracts the potential of any sacrifice of bone strength. [13] Research has actually demonstrated higher protein intakes (even in the form of meat), as high as 1.55g/kg of bodyweight, to promote bone growth. [14] Higher protein compliments muscle tissue and insulin-like growth factor hormones, both promoting bone strength and growth. Needless to say, a high protein intake is safe for the bones of men *and* women. [15] You won't have to worry about turning into your hunch-backed grandmother with bones as thin as Kate Moss's!

Overall, protein will compliment your workouts and feed your muscles. Muscles increase your metabolism, hence, you'll lose weight faster and *no* you won't bulk up, unless you're training like a power lifter for several years and eating like a garbage disposal! In addition, adequate protein intake (pre- and post-workout and throughout the day) will attenuate exercise-induced damage. [16, 17] In other words, you'll potentially lessen the muscle soreness from your training session and recover much faster! Maybe you won't have to wake up walking like someone caned your ass too many mornings after your brutal leg workout.

So go out and buy some protein powder! And hurry up! Protein powders will make your pre- and post-workout supplementation much more convenient. Who wants to bring tuna or hard-boiled eggs to the gym? I certainly wouldn't like you very much for making my gym reek; it's bad enough the Michael Moore-ish type has bad B.O! (You know you all have one in your gym). Ideally, a whey protein powder with or without casein is your best bet. Whey protein provides a rapidly digested form of protein, perfect for efficient absorption right after your workout. Casein is a slower digested protein, so if your whey has some casein, that's great too, you'll have some protein digesting over the next few hours to keep your muscles in a positive nitrogen balance [18, 19] Keeping your muscles in positive nitrogen balance means you won't start breaking down valuable muscle tissue from inadequate protein intake, commonly associated with starvation and low-protein intake. Now I know what you're thinking. A higher protein diet probably means less carbs and Dr. Atkins is the devil! If you think you *need* carbs as much as you crave them, I have to give you a reality check. Latest research is showing us just how safe and effective lower carb/higher protein diets are for improving cholesterol profiles, dropping BMI levels (make you skinnier) and for decreasing risk for cardiovascular disease. [20-24] Great news for diabetics and great news for us who want to lean out and stay that way! Overall, it's the actual "heart-healthy" diet the ADA and AHA haven't been telling you about.

It gets *even* better! As aforementioned, low carb/high protein diets *do* make you skinnier. Yes, it's oh so very true. High protein diet regimens have been associated with significant weight loss and inhibition of weight re-gain. There are a few reasons for that. For one, protein has a superior satiety than that of carbs and fat. Protein will hold you over much better, great for people that are always on the go. Secondly, protein ingestion is accompanied by a naturally induced thermogenesis (you burn an increased amount of

calories just by digesting it!). And third, as previously mentioned, high protein diets ensure the attainment and maintenance of muscle tissue, practically putting your metabolism on autopilot. [25-30] You would still lose weight even if you didn't work out! But trust me, the two in combination (high protein and exercise) is a much more efficient route. And the icing on the cake: you don't have to restrict your calories as strictly as you would with other monotonous "calorie-counting, one food-only blah, blah" diets when you're on a lower carb/high protein regimen. [24]

You want a hard body, so you train hard. Well guess what? If you work hard, train hard *and* play hard, it may take a toll on your immune system. The good news about high protein diets is the branched chain amino acid (BCAA) content that will offset the immunosuppression of your physically demanding schedule. BCAA's consist of leucine, lysine and isoleucine and not only are they a primary contributor to protein's successful attributes of muscle recovery and synthesis [31, 32] but they also help your immune system. Research has demonstrated them as an important asset to lessen the chances of sickness frequenting the way of marathon runners and triathletes [33, 34] (they train like beasts!), so imagine what the BCAA's in your protein foods could do you for you!

On your weight training days consume 20 grams of whey protein before and *immediately* after your workouts. Trust me, that the importance of "immediately" after your workout makes a huge difference too. It promotes the recovery process much more efficiently than waiting till you get home [35] and it really makes a difference for getting your body into a lean composition! [36] I can't stress the importance enough of offsetting the breakdown of protein/amino acids during your workout and during recovery by keeping a higher protein intake ahead of the rate in which your body utilizes this valuable substrate (a.k.a keeping your body in positive nitrogen balance). Your body doesn't store protein like it does with fat and glycogen (stored carbohydrate); therefore, it's essential to keep your nitrogen balance in check on a daily basis. [37] In order to achieve this; aim your protein intake throughout your day at 1.2 to 2.0 grams per kilogram of bodyweight/per day in total. [38-41] Aim for the higher end if you're lifting pretty heavy and/or doing high intensity cardio aim for the lower end if you're incorporating lighter weights and low to moderate cardio in your regimen.

High protein intakes are the safe and effective route to getting the body you're working so hard for. Protein won't make you manly, it won't make you fat (unless you're an avid "whatever diet Oprah is on" follower) and it will be the ultimate compliment to your workout helping you achieve that irresistible body you desire!

References Available Upon Request

