

# How To Use Creatine: When, How Much & With What

When wanting to [build muscle fast](#), creatine is one of the few supplements that actually delivers on its promise to help you see more gains. Moreover, [Study](#) after [study](#) has proven that creatine is safe and so far no side effects could be found in healthy adults. Before we go over how to use creatine properly, let's summarize what it actually does to improve your workout results.

## The Benefits Of Using Creatine

Creatine is an organic acid that helps supply the muscle cells with energy for muscle cells during high-intensity, short-duration exercise. Even though it is a non-essential nutrient, because our body can produce creatine naturally, supplementation makes sense as it will further improve performance (mostly through increased strength).

Without going into too much detail here, creatine helps produce ATP (adenosine tri-phosphate) more quickly, which is the primary energy molecule used during weight training. Faster ATP availability translates to more strength, which in turn means more lean muscle gains over time. Along with increased strength creatine will cause more water retention in the muscles, which makes them appear bigger and fuller.

## How To Use Creatine: The Step-By-Step Guide

### 1. Which Form Of Creatine Should You Use?

The research is clear on this one. Creatine monohydrate is still the most effective form of creatine. While its variations like Kre Alkalyn (= buffered creatine) or creatine ethyl ester are often sold for more than double the normal creatine price, [scientific](#)

[studies](#) showed no additional benefits.

If you want to save money without sacrificing results, go with a traditional creatine monohydrate supplement. To make sure you are getting 100% monohydrate, look for the Creapure trademark, one of the most well-known suppliers of creatine monohydrate in the world.

## **2. When Should I Take Creatine?**

Creatine doesn't have immediate effects, so its timing really doesn't matter. This also means taking it before your exercise won't lead to increase strength (right away). Every now and then you will hear someone telling you that you should take it after your workout, because it has been shown to lead to better results. Usually they will cite [this study](#), which supposedly proves that taking it post workout leads to better absorption.

However, the researchers themselves admitted that the difference was so small that their findings weren't statistically relevant. In practice, this means you can take creatine whenever it fits you best. I personally like drink it along with my [post workout shake](#), simply because that way I have to worry about one less supplement throughout the day. On rest days, I usually take it in the morning after I get out of bed.

## **3. How Much Creatine Should I Take?**

3 - 5 grams per day, which is about a teaspoon. This is enough to saturate the muscle within 2 - 4 weeks and enough for maintenance afterwards. Taking in more won't lead to better results as you will pee out the excess creatine.

## **4. With What Should I Mix Creatine?**

Whatever drink you prefer. It used to be common practice to mix creatine with a high sugar drink or some kind of juice, but research has again shown that this leads to no increase in creatine uptake. The spike in insulin levels triggered by the sugar might lead to faster absorption, but as explained above, this doesn't lead to better performance.

### **5. Do I Need A "Loading Phase"?**

No. Some people like to do a “loading phase”, which involves taking 20 grams per day for 5 - 7 days before switching to the recommended dose of 3 - 5 grams per day. Whether or not you want to do this is up to you. The higher initial dose will lead to a faster saturation of the muscle cells, but only by a few days and the normal dose will also get you there.

### **6. Do I Have To Cycle Creatine?**

No. There are no studies that linked continued creatine use with health risks or a decrease in the body's natural production of creatine. If for some reason you want or have to stop taking creatine, your body won't undergo any withdrawal symptoms (besides the decrease in strength).

## **How To Use Creatine Correctly - Summary:**

- 1 Take 3 - 5 grams (a tablespoon) of pure creatine monohydrate per day.
- Timing and choice of drink won't make any noticeable difference.
- Loading phase and cycling are optional but usually not necessary.