

7 FOOD COMPONENTS EVERYONE NEEDS TO BOOST STAMINA

Life can flourish and prosper if you have proactive mind, energized body and a youthful soul. Most of you must be going out of breath by just walking a mile. Well, ensuring a balanced diet will not only help you build up a strong stamina but also it will help you walk and run an extra mile. All these can be achieved by just adding these foods to your table.



Figure 1: Improved growth, active immune system and proper functioning of cells achieved eating healthy food

Let's begin with it!

But before that, one has to keep in mind that carbohydrate, fats and proteins are essentially required for our body and use of one over the other is determined by the use of fuel source.

1. CARBOHYDRATES:

Carbohydrates produce about 90% of energy being expended. Complex carbohydrates are a rich source of dietary fibers and these are digested slowly. It has the most nutrition value. Also it

helps to increase fluid storage. For average population, recommended daily dose is 3-5g/kg. For strength athlete, 5-7g/kg should be consumed and for endurance athlete, 7-10g/kg of carbohydrates are recommended. These include; white rice, cereals, granola bars, corn barn and nuts.

Simple carbohydrates are rich in sugars and must be taken in moderation. These are readily absorbed and lead to an increase in blood sugar levels. Simple sugars include white sugar, brown sugar, honey, maple syrup etc.

2. FATS:

Fats are used as a source of energy in endurance athlete. When there is low level of carbohydrates, the body switches over to fats as an energy source. It is burned when doing low-level activity such as walking. Consumption of fats helps in absorbing fat soluble vitamins such as Vitamins A, D, E and K. In a [recent research](#), it was suggested that fat consumption is recommended in those individuals who show intolerance to carbohydrates. Therefore, it is highly recommended, fats that are healthy and rich in omega-3 fatty acids must be consumed. Examples include unprocessed vegetable oils (olive oil and sunflower oil), seeds rich in omega oil, such as sesame oil, pumpkin oil), and nuts such as almonds, walnuts etc

3. PROTEIN:

Generally, proteins supply a little portion of energy. During endurance exercise, body consumes about 10% of the total energy. Protein consumption is important to build new proteins, repair of damaged muscle fibers and red cells, however it does not increase strength or muscle size. A high consumption of water is recommended following high intake of protein to utilize it as a fuel. The excess protein is stored as a fat. Proteins help in quick recovery in the relapse of intense exercise. The daily requirement for average population includes 0.8g/kg of proteins.. For endurance athlete, it is 1.2- 1.4g/kg. Proteins can be consumed from fish, poultry, eggs, cheese, milk and legumes.

4. HYDRATION:

Being in a state of dehydration or overly hydrated leads to a decrease in performance. Research suggests “[drink to thirst](#)” strategy, this is mainly because body requires an optimum amount of fluid to be taken and to balance the electrolytes required by the organs to function properly. This helps boost up the stamina by fighting against the heat stress and exhaustion. On an average, 8 glasses of water must be consumed by an individual to maintain hydration. It is better to consume water as carbohydrate- supplemented or sodium- supplemented beverage so as to maintain the energy loss.

5. VITAMINS:

Vitamins are needed to maintain the vitality of cells. Lack of vitamins leads to lethargy and low performances. Vitamins are required for proper functioning of heart and brain. Our body can develop certain serious condition if we lack in vitamins, such as anemia and Crohn's disease. Vitamin C helps strengthen the immune system and can be obtained from oranges, lemon, kiwi, cranberry, grapefruit, spinach, kale, tomato, cauliflower etc. Vitamin D is essential for bone strength and is synthesized from sunlight. However, for those who prefer indoor activities and training can take vitamin D supplement. The recommended supplementation is 1000-2000 IU/day. Vitamin E is suggested to be important for stamina and sexual health, as it performs good blood circulation. Vitamin E can be consumed from oily fish, eggs and dairy products. Vitamin B12 keeps nerves and blood cells healthy and prevent from developing anemia. Anemia is a serious condition that easily makes you weak and tired. Therefore, it is highly suggested to take vitamin C with iron supplement for better absorption in the blood. It can be obtained from animal meat, fish and dairy products.

6. MINERALS:

Minerals such as selenium, calcium, iron, zinc, magnesium play a vital role in gearing up the stamina. A decrease in minerals in the body is responsible for improper functioning of cells. Deficiency of calcium leads to decreased mineral bone density and leads to fractures. It can be supplemented as well as taken from the food source such as milk. Zinc is important for brain functions and affects performance. Zinc requirement is 40 mg/day and must exceed this limit otherwise it can lead to a decrease in HDL levels. Zinc can be obtained from green vegetables and seeds. Magnesium is important for brain and muscles.

7. ANTIOXIDANTS:

Doing heavy exercises and yourself mentally and physically can develop [free radicals](#). These free radicals are responsible for improper functioning of heart and blood vessels. This can also lead to brain damage. Vitamin C and E, selenium, beta carotene, poly-phenols and catechins have been proven to alleviate free radicals. Catechins obtained from green tea and cocoa have been proven to be fruitful in eradicating free radicals.