

6 Eating Habits to Increase Your STAMINA

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Endurance, staying power, tenacity, call it what you like but we all need some - and if our opponents have got more it generally means they will win!

If you follow football then Arsenal are one of these teams that seem to have the staying power, Manchester United in that European cup final is another example.

It can really make the difference to your team - you can turn that dull 0-0 to wins and just power your way to victory.

So how can we maximize our staying power and continue performing at our best for the full 70 minutes?

Increasing stamina involves a regular supply of good quality food with the emphasis being on correct balance of macro-nutrients (**protein, carbohydrates, and fats**) and eating nutrient dense foods, i.e. unrefined foods as close to nature as possible - and organic where possible. Nutrient dense foods include vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, and fish.

Adequate hydration and avoiding pollutants from both foods and the environment will increase sense of well being and help recovery. Pollutants interfere with cellular function leading to slower adaptation and recovery. Water on the other hand dilutes pollutants and helps detoxify/expel them from your body. A well-nourished body free from deficiencies will be more likely to excel in sport and exercise endeavors!

1. **Eat five to six small meals each day: this will ensure a steady supply of energy and nutrients to your tired muscles throughout the day. Eating large meals result in fluctuating energy levels and increasing fat storage.**
2. **Include some protein with each meal: this will ensure a constant supply of amino acids to your muscles increasing the rate of recovery between training sessions and matches. Good protein sources include lean meats (chicken, turkey, fish, game, and good cuts of red meat) as well as Soya, low fat dairy products (cottage cheese), beans, pulses, nuts and seeds.**
3. **Avoid all refined carbohydrates (white rice, white bread, and white pasta) except after high intensity exercise. Refined carbohydrates are bad for your blood sugar levels and tend to be low in essential nutrients. This causes fatigue, strips your body of essential nutrients, and makes you fat.**

4. **Cut down on anti-nutrients: alcohol, caffeine, processed foods and foods with artificial additives will do nothing to enhance your energy levels and should not be part of a healthy diet. Caffeine in particular, whilst providing a short term energy boost, will ultimately lead to lower energy levels if consumed in excess. Try not to consume more than 1 cup of coffee each day and beware of additional caffeine intake from sodas and colas. Drink herb teas instead, green tea in particular has antioxidant qualities, and moderate your alcohol intake. Use vegetables to add COLOUR to your plate of food, instead of eating ready-made meals.**
5. **Drink plenty of water: a dehydrated body will perform badly and performance will not be sustainable. Filtered water, or mineral water, contains less toxins and pollutants so this is always preferable.**
6. **Take time to chew food properly, think about digestion and preparing yourself to eat. The saying "you are what you eat" is true - but more accurately: we are what we digest and absorb. Chewing food will mean more nutrients will be available for absorption, and taking time to relax and enjoy your food will do wonders for your stress levels**