EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PROTEIN

The key nutrient to achieving your goals

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Now that you know that protein helps suppress our appetite, increase our metabolism, and increase our lean body mass I hope you have been thinking of the positive impact of increasing your protein consumption.
Knowing that you should pay more attention to the amount of protein you are consuming is important but what does this look like in your life?

In this article, I'm going to answer the following questions

1. What is protein and why is it essential to our health?
2. What protein sources are the best quality?
3. How much protein should you be consuming?
4. What time should we be eating our protein?

What is protein and why is it essential to our health?

Protein is the building block for the structure and function of our bodies. Protein is made of twenty different amino acids that we acquire from our diet. Nine of these amino acids are essential (EAA's) and must be consumed through the diet while the others can be made within our body.
Without adequate protein consumption, our body has a reduced ability to focus on growth. Instead, our body will focus on survival and spare most of the protein we consume for essential functions related to our organs. This makes it much harder to build and recover our skin, hair, teeth, bones, muscles, tendons, ligaments, and cartilage.

"*To make the human body flourish we must supply it with the fuel it desires. Low-quality food will lead to low-quality performance and health.*"

What protein sources are the best quality?

While there is some controversy you may see online regarding which protein sources are the best for our health, the scientific literature has been clear for years. For most humans getting the majority of your daily protein from animal-based sources will be optimal.

Animal sources of protein offer a greater bioavailability of nutrients than plant-based sources with a reduced caloric cost. Bioavailability is the number of nutrients that will enter our bloodstream during digestion. Our digestive tract is great at digesting animal products, however, we lack the fermentation process of ruminants (deer, elk, cows, etc.) to fully break down plants into usable nutrients. Not to say that plants don't have a place in our diet but rather that they shouldn't be our main source of protein. Plants also contain a high ratio of carbohydrates to their protein content which increases the number of calories we consume.

For example, 4 ounces of beef is 280 calories with 29g of protein. One cup of quinoa (a popular plant-based source of protein) is 220 calories with only 8g of protein. Therefore, you'd have to consume 3 1/2 cups of quinoa to match the amount of protein in 4 ounces of beef. This would come out to 770 calories for the same quantity of protein and this doesn't account for the fact that there are fewer bioavailable EAA's in quinoa compared to beef.

Here is how I rank order my protein sources:

1. Wild Game
2. Beef, Bison, Buffalo
3. Salmon
4. Eggs
5. Chicken/Poultry
6. Pork
7. Dairy

How much protein should you be consuming?

The recommended daily allowance (RDA) for protein is .36 grams/lb of body weight. For a 200lb person that would be 72g of protein. However, the RDA is based on the amount needed to survive and as stated earlier we don't want to be in survival mode.

A better recommendation for protein consumption is .8-1.2g/lb of body weight. This will have most people fall comfortably around 1g/lb of desired body weight. The same 200lb person would now be consuming 200g of protein/day.

Let's say someone is 200lbs but would like to be 170lbs then this person should aim to consume 170g of protein/day rather than 200g.

Another way to track your protein consumption is by the percentage of your total caloric intake. If you choose this route aim for 30% of your calories to come by the way of protein!

What time should we be eating our protein?

For years we have been marketed to start our day with cereals, bread, pastries, and other low-quality food choices.

My challenge to you is to include 30-50g of protein into your FIRST meal of the day.

This will help provide you with stable energy and reduced cravings for the rest of the day.

If you find that you are eating your first meal and within a couple of hours after eating you are already hungry again or you start to crash from brain fog then take a second to look back at what your breakfast looks like. Are you consuming mostly sugar or other carbohydrates?

One last point I want to mention quickly is the role of resistance training in changing your body composition.

Eating more protein is essential, however, consuming more protein will only get you so far. Resistance training is the stimulus your body needs to know how to properly utilize the extra nutrients you are consuming. Resistance training is the construction crew and protein (along with other nutrients) is the materials used to do the building!

Take home message

Prioritizing protein is essential for our health

Eat most of your protein from animal sources

Aim for 1g/lb of desired body weight

30-50g of protein at your first meal

THANK YOU FOR READING!

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