

Self Analysis Part Two - Nutrition & Supplementation

Researched and Composed by Jacob Wilson, BSc. (Hons), MSc. CSCS

Introduction

I will break down the essence of nutrition for bodybuilding in this article! This article goes hand and hand with the self assessment sheet that is in the magazine.

It all boils down to this: if you have run into a plateau, or are not seeing the gains you would like to see, then it is probably your diet that is holding you back! I will break down nutrition into 9 different categories. And for each category I describe, I want you to ask yourself this question: " am I doing currently doing this? " If you are not, then you need to be, that is, if you want optimal gains!

1. Meal Frequency

You need to understand that the more frequently you eat, the more muscle you will gain and the leaner you will be. This is for several reasons, three of which are:

A. High meal frequency allows you to consume smaller meals throughout the day, rather than larger meals in only a few sittings. Your body can absorb smaller meals with a greater proficiency than it can larger ones. For example a 600 calorie meal can be digested, and used to build muscle much easier than a 1200 calorie meal. That being said, if a person is bulking and eats six, 600 calorie meals, then he will get a total of 3, 600 calories. If he had however ate 3, 1200 calorie meals then he would have been more likely to store fat. You see, the more overloaded our digestive system becomes, the more fat we will store. In addition, as I stated, smaller meals will be absorbed and used with much greater efficiency. The more your body can use the nutrients you feed it, the more muscle you will gain. Period!

B. Food is the most anabolic substance known to man! It is literally more powerful than the most potent steroid! Anytime you eat a well balanced, nutritious meal, you place your body into a state of anabolism. Anytime your body runs out of food, it turns on itself for energy, this is called catabolism. Which is why meal frequency is so vital, the more consistent you eat, the longer you will keep your body in a state in which it can optimally build muscle!

C. Meal frequency induces thermogenesis. Every time you eat, your bodies temperature rises and you burn more calories. In other words, it keeps your metabolism extremely high, which can benefit you, by keeping you leaner on a bulk and also burning fat at a much higher rate on a cut.

rating:

3 meals a day = horrible day!
4-5 meals a day = average
6 meals a day = very good
anything above 6 = fantastic!!

2. Water Consumption: Water = Anabolic (Muscle Building)

A little known fact about water consumption is that the less you drink, the more likely you are to become over trained. I have literally seen whole bulks ruined because of a lack of hydration! Without proper hydration, you can kiss optimal gains goodbye! Water lubricates us, keeps us from injury, allows our muscles to contract harder, speeds recovery, and is involved with millions of other actions in the body.

3. Protein Intake

In order to stimulate muscle growth, you have to shock your muscles with weight resistance. Then, amino acids have to be at hand in order to aid in the tissue repair. If you don't get enough protein, you can train as hard and intensely as you want, and spend as many days pounding the weights as is possible, and I guarantee you won't see any growth. All you'll end up doing is over training! I recommend 1 to 1.5 grams of protein a day per pound of bodyweight. If you weigh 150 pounds, you should eat 150 to 225 grams a day of this anabolic macronutrient! And when dieting, lower other macronutrients, never lower your protein intake! **Note:** Look for an upcoming article on nitrogen balance, this will further explain the significance of protein intake.

4. Carbohydrate Intake

The important thing to understand about carbs is that they have a " protein sparing " effect. Which means when your body has enough carbs to fuel itself, it will be able to more fully utilize amino acids for the maintenance, repair and growth of muscle tissues. This is why carbs are so vital to a bodybuilder who is trying to gain mass. In addition, eating too few carbohydrates can leave your muscles feeling and looking flat. Muscle fullness depends, to a large extent, on the glycogen stores within them. Likewise, your vascularity also depends on your carbohydrate intake. A prime example of this can perhaps be traced to your last cutting or dieting cycle. When dieting your veins disappear between meals and appear after meals. Top bodybuilders note that ingesting some simple sugars before a competition brings out their vascularity.

Carbohydrates are also chiefly responsible for inducing the release one of our bodies most anabolic hormones, Insulin! As I have stated many times before, insulin literally shuttles amino acids and other vital nutrients into our muscles for growth. However, insulin is also the chief hormone responsible for fat storage. My suggestion is to stay as clean as possible with your carbohydrate intake. Eat clean starchy carbs such as sweet potatoes and oatmeal. Also eat fibrous green carbs such as lettuce, spinach, and any other green veggie. Stay far away from anything that is bleached or processed such as white bread, candy, white rice and other carbs along those lines. Cleaner, fibrous carbs digest slowly and do not induce an overproduction of insulin. Hence, you get a steady even stream of this hormone, reaping the anabolic effects of it, while suppressing the fat storing side of it. Remember, processed foods usually always induce an overproduction of insulin.

5. Essential Fatty Acid Intake

Efa's help us with countless areas in our bodybuilding lifestyle. For more information on this vital aspect of nutrition, refer to, [Essential Fatty Acids - An In Depth Analysis](#).

6. Meal Balance

An optimal meal should be divided into four parts.

- a. You should have a starchy, clean carb: To optimally replenish your glycogen stores
- b. You should have a fibrous vegetable: To slow digestion/insulin release and to increase digestion by providing your body with vital digestive enzymes.
- c. You should have an excellent protein source: As mentioned above, to maintain, repair and support muscle mass.
- d. You should have a tall glass or two of water: Or kiss your gains goodbye

An example of this would be a tossed, leafy green salad with safflower oil-vinegar dressing. Followed by a large baked sweet potato, a big fat juicy steak and 2 cups of water. MMMM....If you will excuse me, I have to go get my grub on!

Yes, that is just one of the perks of bodybuilding, we eat so good! Of course, the ratios will change according to whether you are dieting to burn fat or to gain mass. I will discuss these differences below.

7. Nutrition For Gaining Mass

The way I see it, there are only two types of people who have trouble gaining mass.

A. The first person is the pretty boy, who doesn't want to lose his abs. Look I have news for you, you will never gain mass if you are not willing to put on a little fat--period! My suggestion to a person like this is to suck it up and do what it takes to gain weight. Your abs will still be there when you cut up!

B. The second person, is the guy who tells himself over and over again that he cannot gain weight. My answer to him would be this:

" You are lying to yourself!!!! "

Every healthy human being can gain weight. End of discussion! You actually have several advantages.

1. You are naturally lean, which means all you essentially have to concentrate on is mass. Don't feel sorry for yourself. Do you realize how many people wish they had your metabolic rate? Use it to your advantage, complaining will do you no good!

Here are the steps you will need to take:

- a. Use the calorie counter on the food you eat.
- b. Count each of the calories that you consume or start reading the labels on the food you eat.

- c. Add up your daily caloric intake.
- d. Add exactly 200 calories to your menu
- e. If you do not gain weight then add 200 more
- f. If you still do not gain weight, then add 200 more to that, etc. etc.
- g. Stop making the excuse that you have tried everything. You obviously have not tried eating enough!!!!

Mass Rules: Below I will list rules for gaining mass

Rule 1 - If you consume more calories in a day then you burn off, then you will gain weight. Its that simple!

Rule 2 - The slower the weight gain, the less likely you will store fat, 1-2 pounds a week would be optimal.

Rule 3 - If you have a metabolism that easily stores fat, then try and stay as clean as possible!

Rule 4 - Up Your Calories Slowly so that your metabolism has time to adapt.

Rule 5 - Follow all the nutritional guidelines in this section, i.e. meal balance, protein intake, frequency, etc.

Rule 6 - If you need more info, go to the nutrition section and read the mass diets. They are completely customizable and go into greater detail.

8. Burning Fat

Burning fat is a much more difficult equation. Below are some quick rules for burning fat:

Fat Burning Nutritional Rules

Rule 1 - Never Starve Yourself! 1, 000 calories diets do not work!

Rule 2 - Change Your diet like you change your workout routine. In other words change it up every 2-3 weeks. And always tweak it if you hit a plateau. For example, lets say that I am burning fat by consuming 6 starchy carb/protein meals a day. If I were to plateau, the first thing I would do is manipulate my carbohydrate intake. I would cut out all starchy carbs for my last 2 meals. During these meals I would only consume leafy green veggies and proteins/fats.

Rule 3 - Try calorie cycling. If I have been dieting for a long time and have hit a major plateau, I will raise my calories slowly up to maintenance for 2 weeks. This will re-set my metabolism. Following this I will resume my dieting.

Rule 4 - You must have discipline. Dieting can really suck, but the reward at the end of the tunnel is well worth it!

Rule 5 - Read my [Take Fat Burning To A Whole New Level!!](#) article if you have not already!

Rule 6 - If your thyroid gland starts to shut down, then take 25 grams of soy protein twice a day. This will revitalize your t-3 levels. In addition, if you are worried about soy being estrogenic you need not be. 25 grams of Soy, twice a day is way too small an amount to effect this.

Rule 7 - Keep meal frequency high

Rule 8 - Never lower Your protein intake! Unless you want to see your muscle vanish as fast as your fat does!

Rule 9 - Only eat clean foods! If you hit a plateau, stay away from fructose (avoid fruits).

9. Supplementation

The word supplementation literally means to enhance or compliment. This is not the meat and potatoes of nutrition, but if and only if the above requirements are met, then supplementation can increase your gains big time! I will not cover every supplement that I feel is valid, but I will cover those that I feel most athletes in this sport should take, after their nutritional regimen is in place.

Essentials - These are the supplements that I feel every Bodybuilder should be taking!

1. Multi-Vitamin/ Multi-Mineral - Vitamins and minerals can become quite a confusing subject. They perform thousands of biochemical functions in our bodies. However if you understand the basics of vitamins and minerals, you shouldn't be overwhelmed by the subject. You want to know what the basics are? Ok, here it is: You need to be taking a Multivitamin and a Multi Mineral supplement! If you supplement your diet with this every day consistently, I guarantee you'll see and feel the results! You won't get sick as often and you'll recover quicker. Who knows, the last plateau you were in may have been directly attributed to this essential factor!

Important Observation! Many old-school nutritionists and dietitians will tell you that you can get all these important micronutrients from simply consuming a balanced diet. The reality of the situation is that they are clueless! No athlete can get an efficient amount of these every single day, by simply eating a balanced diet. You need to understand that your needs are extremely higher than your average Joe, and you need to factor that in to everything that you do.

2. Vitamin C - If you are sick than you cannot gain muscle mass. Your body must be in a perfectly peaked state to accomplish this. Vitamin C, is the ultimate antioxidant and is a must for every athlete across the board! Take 3 grams a day and 6-9 when you feel a cold coming on.

3. Chromium - This is in direct correlation with insulin resistance. If you are deficient, you will be more insulin resistant and the opposite is also in effect (Insulin Sensitivity). There is no RDA for chromium; however, most experts agree you need at least 200 mcg/day. A recent study which showed positive results used 1,000 mcg/day. Hard-working athletes may want to make sure they get at least 300 mcg/day.

Note: Insulin sensitivity simply means that your cells are more responsive and that your body does not need to release as much to get an anabolic effect.

Helpful Supplements

Protein Supplements - In this sport, our protein needs are extremely high for reasons stated above. For optimal gains you should take in 1.5 grams of protein a day. Without a protein supplement you would have to consume a tremendous amount of meat. Considering that these supplements are both cost effective and convenient I would suggest purchasing one. So the question is this. Can you get enough protein from solid food alone? If the answer is yes, then you are fine, if the answer is no, then get a protein supplement to fill in this gap.

Creatine: This giant has stood the test of time! It has proven to do everything from enhancing recovery to buffering lactic acid. If you can afford creatine, you will not be disappointed with its tremendous applications to this sport! (See article in nutritional section)

Glutamine: Take as much as you can afford. For more info on this, read [Glutamine—The Conditionally Essential Amino Acid](#). Suffice it to say, you will notice increased recovery, less soreness and a better pump in the gym while supplementing with this amino acid.

Flax Seed Oil - I explained the importance of essential fatty acids above. Flax is the best supplement for getting enough of these in your diet. If you lack in this area, pick some up. A few spoonfuls a day will go a long way!

ZMA - Do not be deficient in these minerals! [Click here to see why!](#)

Supplementation Rules:

1. If you can't get enough from your diet, supplement so that you do get it.
2. Take the essentials I discussed above!
3. After the top two rules, and once you get your nutrition in check, you may consider the other supplements I mentioned above. However, make sure that your diet is in order first and foremost!

Conclusion

Most people do not realize what a key role self analysis plays in our sport. As I have stated above you must be your most devout critique. I guarantee that your gains will absolutely explode after implementing this into your program! (Use The self analysis sheet in the magazine section that goes along with this!)

Sincerely

Jacob Wilson jwilson@abcbodybuilding.com
President, Abcbodybuilding