NUTRITION. DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR ATHLETES

By Michelle Zitt, Nutrition Intern

The USOC Sport Dietitian team would like to give athletes a quick update on some new information resources and exciting changes that have occurred in the past few months.

First, we have two new staff members to introduce. In Chula Vista, Liz Fusco has successfully completed her dietetic registration and is now contracted part-time to support the team and endurance sports programs. We happily welcome Liz back – many athletes at CVOTC may remember her from her student days. In Colorado Springs, Rob Skinner has joined the team, replacing Jenn Gibson. We're excited to have him join our team!

Second, a wealth of information is available on the teamusa.org/nutrition website, including fact sheets, recipes, and athlete plate handouts for different training intensities. Beyond the main website, the Sports Dietitians also deliver nutrition tips, recipes, and news to keep you on top of your nutrition game via twitter and Instagram. Check out the links and sites listed below to follow us!

1. Team USA Nutrition Website: www.teamusa.org/nutrition
2. Team USA Nutrition Twitter: @Nutr4TeamUSA
3. Team USA Nutrition Instagram: @nutr4teamusa

Finally, since it's been in the news a lot lately, we thought it would be a great time for a national nutrition update! This year, experts reviewed the typical American diet for nutritional shortfalls and made recommendations for improvements. These updates will be reflected in the 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which will be published later this year. The guidelines outline optimal nutrition and lifestyle practices for all Americans. While they may not be written specifically for athletes, the emphasis on a whole foods approach and choosing high quality nutrients is critical for performance, recovery and overall health.

WHAT ARE THE SHORTFALLS OF THE AMERICAN DIET?

1. Not enough fruits, vegetables, whole grains or dairy foods
2. Too much red meat, processed meat, saturated fat, sodium and sugar

Due to these dietary patterns, the typical American diet is not providing enough vitamin A, D, E, C, folate, calcium, magnesium, potassium and fiber, which are critical for health maintenance and prevention of chronic diseases.

WHICH CONTROVERSIAL FOODS AND NUTRIENTS MAY HAVE HEALTH BENEFITS?

1. Coffee: Moderate intake may lower risk of diabetes and cardiovascular disease
2. Fat: Experts no longer recommend limiting intake to 35% of total calories
3. Cholesterol: Dietary cholesterol does not impact the blood cholesterol of most people

WHAT CHANGES CAN ATHLETES MAKE TO MEET RECOMMENDATIONS?

1. Include a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and dairy foods
2. Limit red and processed meat, refined grains, added sugars, saturated fat
3. Incorporate healthy fats, especially from vegetables, nuts, egg yolks and seafood
4. If consuming coffee, be aware that cream and sugar contribute calories without any real health benefits

A few clarifications about the guidelines are necessary. First, even though limits on dietary fat intake are more relaxed than in the past, fat should not take priority over carbohydrates and protein in an athlete's diet. Fat contributes more calories than protein and carbohydrates, and is less critical for immediate performance benefits. The most health benefits will come from incorporating healthy fat sources, such as plants, nuts, and seeds. Additionally, egg yolks not only contribute healthy fats, but also supply vitamins, minerals and protein. Regarding salt intake, unlike sedentary individuals who may benefit from reducing salt intake from processed foods, athletes that sweat heavily need to replace this electrolyte to optimize performance and health. For more ways to apply these guidelines to your diet, check out the online resources and recommendations made by the USOC Sport Dietitians.

NGB TRAINING PROGRAMS. NATIONAL TEAMS

The CVOTC currently hosts NGB resident athlete training programs for archery, BMX, field hockey (men), rugby 7s (men & women), track & field and Paralympic track & field in preparation for upcoming world cup and world championship events.

Archery --- BMX --- Field Hockey --- Rugby 7s --- Track & Field --- Paralympic Track & Field

GET INVOLVED. COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

BMX --- Chula Vista BMX allows athletes of all ages to practice and compete at one of the best venues in the country. For more information go to www.chulabmx.com

ARCHERY --- Roadrunner Archery Club makes it possible to practice and learn the sport of archery from the nation's best. For more information go to www.roadrunnerarchery.com or call 760-215-3930

NUTRITION. IRON AND ATHLETES

By Andrew Gehr, Sport Nutrition Intern

CHULA VISTA OLYMPIC TRAINING CENTER

WHAT IS IRON?

Iron is a mineral that plays a very important role in athletic performance. The main functions of iron are to transport oxygen throughout the body and aid in the production of red blood cells. Oxygen is transported throughout the body by way of a protein within red blood cells called hemoglobin. One of the crucial components of hemoglobin is iron; in order for oxygen to attach to hemoglobin, iron must be present. Since muscles require oxygen to perform exercise, it is critical that iron levels within the body are adequate or athletic performance will suffer.

SYMPTOMS OF IRON DEFICIENCY

- Breathlessness or early fatigue during training
- Reduced motivation to train and increased overall tiredness
- Increased rate of perceived exertion (RPE)
- Decreased aerobic capacity
- Decreased training adaptations

HOW DO YOU ENSURE ADEQUATE IRON INTAKE?

Luckily, many foods contain iron, such as meat, fish and poultry, fortified cereal, vegetables and even food cooked in cast iron cookware! Iron from animal sources is highly absorbed by the body and is called heme iron. Iron from sources such as dark leafy greens, fortified cereals, sports bars, fruits and vegetables is poorly absorbed by the body; this type of iron is known as non-heme iron. There are factors which increase absorption of non-heme iron - the simplest strategy to facilitate absorption is to consume a food rich in vitamin C with your meal. The vitamin C will help the body absorb the iron within food. For example, add strawberry slices to your cereal or lemon juice to your lentils to enhance absorption!

The table below lists the iron content of an assortment of both heme and non-heme iron sources, along with considerations for iron absorption.

Food Sources of Heme Iron	Iron (mg)
Oysters – 3 oz.	7.8
Lean beef steak – 3.5 oz.	3.8
Egg, whole	1.7
Lean pork/ham – 3.5 oz.	1.5
Tuna, cooked – 3.5 oz.	1.1
Salmon or chicken breast – 3.5 oz.	0.9 - 0.8
White fish – 3.5 oz.	0.4

Food Sources of Non-Heme Iron	Iron (mg)
Fortified cereal – 1 cup	4.5 – 18
Tofu, raw – ½ cup	6.7
Lentils – 1 cup	6.6
Oatmeal, instant (1 package); Sport Bar (1)	6.3
Kidney or garbanzo beans – 1 cup	5.2 - 4.8
Black beans – 1 cup	3.6
Spinach, cooked – ½ cup	3.2
White pasta or rice, cooked – 1 cup	1.9
Dried figs (4) or dried apricots (10 halves)	1.7
Raisins – ⅓ cup	1.0

Calcium rich foods, tea, coffee and cocoa can inhibit heme iron absorption.

Certain types of fiber (e.g. phytates and oxalates) found in spinach, kale, walnuts and almonds can inhibit absorption of non-heme iron.

Foods rich in vitamin C can increase iron absorption from non-heme iron containing foods. Combine with foods rich in vitamin C (e.g. pineapple, orange, grapefruit and their juices; strawberries, peppers, broccoli, tomato, kiwis) or heme iron food sources.

WHAT MIGHT CAUSE IRON DEFICIENCY?

- Low overall calorie consumption and/or chronically low carbohydrate intake
- Low animal protein intake
- Blood loss - menstruation, injury/disease, or gastrointestinal trauma
- Poor absorption of iron due to interactions with food or medication
- Losses through sweat, feces, and urine during periods of heavy training
- Overuse of anti-inflammatory drugs
- Foot strike hemolysis - repeated pounding of the feet on hard surfaces, causing damage to red blood cells and iron loss

HOW MUCH IRON DO YOU NEED?

For an athlete with adequate iron levels, the daily recommended intake (DRI) is:

- Females (18-50 years old) – 18mg/d
- Males (18-50 years old) – 8 mg/d

For athletes with iron deficiency (based on results from a blood draw), iron needs increase and often cannot be met with food alone. A sports medicine physician or dietitian can help advise and monitor iron supplementation.

Vegetarian athletes consume most, if not all, of their iron sources as the non-heme variety and therefore need to take extra care to ensure they optimize their iron intake and absorption. Below are some meal and snack suggestions that will ensure you eat and absorb enough iron.

- Include iron rich foods like meat, fish, poultry and tofu in two meals per day to meet recommendations
- Pair dried fruits like figs and apricots with hard boiled eggs for an iron rich snack
- Boost iron at breakfast by topping oatmeal with 1/3 cup of raisins plus a small glass of juice
- Make a vegetarian iron-rich brown rice bowl by combining black beans, tofu and veggies
- When possible, cook foods in a cast iron pan
- Whip up a batch of tuna salad for sandwiches throughout the week to ensure daily iron intake
- Choose the highest percentage iron fortified cereal (most Kellogg brands) – check labels
- Avoid drinking tea or coffee with meals containing rich sources of iron

Iron is a crucial element in any diet, but especially in an athlete's diet. By ensuring an adequate iron intake, you are allowing yourself to train and compete at your optimal level. Any questions or concerns should be addressed with your sport dietitian!

CHULA VISTA OLYMPIC TRAINING CENTER

NUTRITION. VITAMIN C: FACT VS. FICTION

VITAMIN C FOR IMMUNITY AND ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE

By Alison Resnick, USOC Nutrition intern

Vitamin C, the most popular antioxidant, is purported to boost immunity and fight off the common cold. Many people purchase vitamin C supplements including Emergen C and Airborne when they are feeling the beginnings of a cold, for protection against germs while traveling or for general daily prevention. Although vitamin C is an important nutrient in the human body, are these popular supplements going to fight off illness? How much do we actually need? What are the best sources of vitamin C to maximize health benefits? The answers may surprise you!

WHAT IS VITAMIN C?

Vitamin C (also known as "ascorbic acid") is an essential micronutrient, meaning that we are unable to synthesize it in our bodies and must acquire it from dietary sources. It is a water-soluble vitamin, which means that vitamin C intake beyond what the body needs will be excreted in urine. Vitamin C has multiple functions including important roles in wound healing and bone repair. Its primary function is to act as an antioxidant, reducing cell damage caused by things like intense exercise, environmental toxins, and aging. These factors increase the production of compounds called free radicals, which interfere with the ability of cells to function normally. In athletes, vitamin C aids in reducing free radicals and therefore reversing some of the cell damage caused by strenuous exercise.

Vitamin C's role in immunity has to do with its antioxidant properties; helping to keep immune cells healthy so they can eliminate bacteria and viruses. Inadequate intake of vitamin C can result in a compromised immune system, decreasing the body's ability to fight off infection and disease. Vitamin C deficiency (although rare) is called "scurvy." Symptoms include bleeding gums and tiny bruises caused by bleeding under the skin. Due to its function in collagen formation, low vitamin C levels can also slow down wound healing and bone repair. Consuming about 10 mg/day, which is equivalent to about ½ tomato or 2 medium orange slices, is enough to counteract low vitamin C levels. Deficiencies are rarely seen in developed countries, and it is highly unlikely for athletes to have low vitamin C levels unless they follow a very restrictive diet with no citrus fruits, juices or vegetables.

HOW MUCH VITAMIN C DO ATHLETES NEED ON A DAILY BASIS?

The RDA for vitamin C for adults over the age of 19 is 75 mg/day for women and 90 mg/day for men; the recommendations for athletes are the same.

To date, there is no scientific evidence to support any positive effect of vitamin C supplementation on sport performance. Contrary to popular belief, taking high doses of vitamin C does NOT prevent you from getting a cold. Some evidence suggests supplementing with 500mg/day in the first 2-3 days following the onset of cold may decrease the symptoms, severity and length. However, "mega-dosing" or consuming large quantities (>2000mg/day) is not beneficial and can actually increase the risk of adverse effects such as gastrointestinal issues like diarrhea. Mega-doses of vitamin C weakens training adaptations, since some inflammation is necessary for growth and recovery; it also causes vitamin C to act as a pro-oxidant, damaging tissues and cells. For this reason, it is recommended that those who take vitamin C supplements should not exceed 2000 mg/day, and that supplements should never be taken "just in case" or to try to prevent illness.

WHERE CAN WE GET VITAMIN C?

Vitamin C can be found in a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, namely bell peppers (which are highest in vitamin C), strawberries, citrus fruits, cantaloupe, tomatoes, potatoes, kale and broccoli. Additional sources of vitamin C can be found in cereals and other foods and beverages fortified with vitamin C such as orange or tomato juice. Fruits and vegetables are better choices than fortified foods or supplements because the body absorbs vitamins from food more efficiently and food sources also contain other beneficial nutrients like fiber.

Athletes also need to be aware that many sports nutrition supplements have vitamin C added to them. Hence, their vitamin C may not just come from one single supplement, but from a combination of many smaller doses.

Food Sources of Vitamin C	Vitamin C Content
Strawberries (1 cup sliced)	98 mg
Citrus Fruits – Orange (1 medium)	70 mg
Cantaloupe (1 medium wedge)	25 mg
Green Peppers (1 cup chopped)	120 mg
Kale (1 cup chopped)	80 mg
Broccoli (1 cup chopped)	78 mg
Tomatoes (1 cup chopped or sliced)	23 mg
Potato (1 medium boiled, no fat added)	12 mg
Orange Juice	45 mg
Tomato Juice	84 mg

THE BOTTOM LINE

If your primary goal is to stay healthy and maximize your training, the best way to do that is to eat a well-balanced diet. Acquiring vitamin C from food sources promotes a healthy immune system, eliminates the risk of mega-dosing (and it's negative side effects), and may even help counteract the lowered immune response that naturally occurs right after intense exercise. The best way to ensure you are getting just the right amount of vitamin C is to consume a wide variety of colorful fruits and vegetables in order to obtain different types of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. As you can see from the table above, you can easily consume several hundred milligrams of vitamin C by eating at least five servings of fruit and vegetables daily. Also be sure to stay hydrated, get enough sleep, and practice good hygiene habits to help build and maintain a healthy immune system.

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NUTRITION. BREAKING THE FAST

BREAKFAST: A SMART START TO THE DAY

By Nicole Miller, RD, USAV Sport Nutrition Intern & Jacque Scaramella, MS, RD, USOC Sport Nutrition Consultant

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO "BREAK THE FAST"?

You often hear that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Ever wonder why? After a night of sleep, your body has long digested and absorbed dinner. This is referred to as a semi-fasted state because your body is now using stored nutrients (carbohydrates, protein, fat) as fuel. Your gas tank, which is equivalent to the carbohydrates stored in your liver, is running low and it is time for a meal. Breakfast is an opportunity to refill your gas tank, get your engine running and start the day off right!

Research shows that those who eat a nutritious breakfast receive many performance-related benefits such as sustained energy levels, better weight management, decreased cravings and eating breakfast also contributes to a more nutritionally complete diet if chosen appropriately. For an athlete this means another opportunity to meet daily vitamin, mineral, antioxidant and macronutrient requirements – vital nutrients for performance and recovery. Perhaps most desirable to athletes, consuming breakfast has been shown to increase concentration, mood, motivation to train, and the ability to learn new skills and perform at higher intensities for longer durations.

When we skip breakfast or don't eat enough, we enter the day in a semi-depleted state and are likely to overeat later in the day. Early intake of carbohydrate and protein is critical to an athlete's success. Not only are carbohydrates the body's primary source of fuel during moderate to high intensity exercise, but unlike fat, the body can only store them in limited amounts (muscle and liver glycogen). As carbohydrate stores deplete, the body looks to muscle (protein) and fat stores as an energy source. Make sure to eat breakfast in order to top off your glycogen stores, preserve muscle mass and maintain energy throughout the day.

HOW SHOULD I ADJUST THE SIZE OF BREAKFAST IF TRAINING IS EARLIER IN THE MORNING?

If you only have 1-2 hours before training or competition, choose a small breakfast (see examples below) with easy-to-digest carbohydrate, lean protein and low fat foods to avoid any gastrointestinal discomfort. Be sure to include 1-2 cups of water with breakfast to optimize hydration status before training.

If you have more time (2-4 hours) before your first training session, eat a medium size breakfast (see examples below) and be sure to include protein and healthy fat sources to help sustain energy for a longer period of time. This may also be appropriate for a second breakfast if training is early and your first breakfast is smaller.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS WHEN CHOOSING HOW MUCH TO EAT AT BREAKFAST:

- *Body weight* – smaller athletes tend to need smaller meals and fewer calories
- *Type and goal of training session* – easier workouts, choose a smaller meal
- *Number of training sessions that day* – more training sessions, choose a larger breakfast to ensure adequate fuel before training begins
- *Prior meal or snack* – if dinner the previous night was early or light, choose a larger breakfast to restore nutrients prior to training

Breakfast Ideas		
Small (200-300 kcal)	**Medium (300-500 kcal)**	**Large (500-700 kcal)**
1 cup Kashi Go Lean ½ cup non-fat milk 1 medium pear	1 ½ cups Kashi cereal 1 cup 1 % milk 1 medium orange 1 hard-boiled egg	1 ½ cups Kashi cereal 1 cup 1 % milk 1 banana 8 fl oz orange juice 8 oz non-fat, fruit yogurt
Smoothie 1 ½ cups non-fat milk 1 medium banana 1 cup frozen strawberries	Smoothie 1 ½ cups non-fat milk 1 medium banana 1 cup frozen strawberries 1 slice whole wheat toast 1 Tbsp. honey	Smoothie 1 ½ cups non-fat milk 1 medium banana 1 cup frozen strawberries 1 slice whole wheat toast ½ Tbsp. honey and 1 Tbsp. nut butter 8 oz non-fat fruit yogurt
1 slice whole wheat toast ½ Tbsp. nut butter 1 cup diced cantaloupe 1 hard-boiled egg	1 slice whole wheat toast 1 Tbsp. nut butter 1 cup diced cantaloupe 1 hard-boiled egg 8 oz non-fat milk	1 slice whole wheat bread 1 Tbsp. nut butter 1 cup diced cantaloupe 2 hard-boiled eggs 8 oz non-fat milk
¼ cup low-fat granola 6 oz non-fat fruit yogurt ¼ cup blueberries	½ cup low-fat granola 8 oz low-fat fruit yogurt ½ cup blueberries	1 cup low-fat granola 8 oz low-fat fruit yogurt 1 cup blueberries 1 large banana
½ Sport Bar (8-10 g protein) 1 cup non-fat milk 1 medium apple	½ 1 Sport Bar (8-10 g protein) 1 ½ cups non-fat milk 1 medium apple	1 Sport Bar (8-10 g protein) 1 ½ cups non-fat milk 1 medium apple 1 Tbsp. peanut butter 1 packet oatmeal
1 pack oatmeal ¼ cup milk or kefir ½ cup berries	1 pack oatmeal 1 cup non-fat milk (or ½ cup kefir) ½ cup berries 1 hard-boiled egg 1 cup juice	2 packs oatmeal 1 ½ cups milk (or 1 cup kefir) 1 cup berries 2 hard-boiled eggs 1 cup juice

CHULA VISTA OLYMPIC TRAINING CENTER

NUTRITION. EATING TO OPTIMIZE BONE HEALTH

By Stephanie Nelson, Dietetic Intern

One of the most frustrating things that can happen to an athlete is suffering a serious injury that prevents them from training and competing. Optimizing bone density, which indicates the strength of the bones, is an important goal for all athletes in order to minimize their risk of bone-related injuries such as stress and complete fractures. Adolescent female athletes, especially those with a small body frame, are at a higher risk for bone injury, as are distance runners and athletes with a history of fractures (including stress fractures) and low bone density. Athletes competing in non-weight bearing sports, such as swimmers, cyclists, and spinal cord injured athletes also appear to have low bone density.

Bone growth occurs at the highest rate during adolescence, so it is important for athletes in this age range to optimize growth by eating adequate amounts of key nutrients that support bone health. Bones finish growing and reach their strongest between the ages of 24 and 30 years, which is called peak bone mass. After this stage, the goal is to prevent the natural decline in bone mass. Therefore, eating to optimize bone health and prevent bone injuries is important across a wide age range.

It is easy to make small dietary changes to improve bone strength, which will in turn decrease the risk for bone injuries and facilitate bone healing if a bone injury occurs. Most athletes are aware of the important roles vitamin D and calcium play in optimizing bone health and decreasing fractures. However, there are several other key nutrients such as vitamin K, magnesium, zinc, and boron that are important for building and maintaining bone strength.

NUTRIENTS IMPORTANT TO BONE HEALTH

Nutrient DRI	Function	Food Sources
Calcium 1,000 mg	Main nutrient for building bone. When calcium is low in the blood, it is released from bones to normalize blood calcium, and the amount of calcium in bone decreases. Calcium is also used for muscle contraction, which increases the need for calcium in an athlete's diet to meet the demands in blood, bone, and muscle.	Dairy, calcium-fortified orange juice and soy milk, leafy greens, nuts
Vitamin D 600 IU	Required for the absorption of calcium. Vitamin D also signals the body to stop taking calcium from bone when blood calcium levels are adequate.	Vitamin D fortified dairy and orange juice, fish, sunlight
Vitamin K 120 mcg	Ensures efficient bone building by stimulating the production of a bone-building protein called osteocalcin. Vitamin K is required for calcium and vitamin D to do their job.	Leafy greens, peas, prunes
Magnesium Females: 310 mg Males: 400 mg	While the exact role of magnesium for bone health is not understood, a relationship exists between magnesium intake and bone health. Sixty percent of the body's magnesium is stored in bone, and when levels are optimal, individuals are at lower risk for fractures and having low bone mineral density.	Leafy greens, prunes, nuts
Zinc Females: 8 mg Males: 11 mg	Increases the production of hormones important to bone formation.	Nuts, beef, oysters
Boron	Helps with the absorption of magnesium and calcium	Prunes, apples, bananas

FOODS RICH IN NUTRIENTS IMPORTANT TO BONE HEALTH

Food	Serving Size	Calcium	Vitamin D	Vitamin K	Magnesium	Zinc
Dairy	1 cup milk 1 cup yogurt 2 slices cheese 2 cups cottage cheese	300mg (30%)	100 IU (30%)	N/A	27mg (7%)	1mg (7%)
Calcium-Fortified Orange Juice	1 cup	500mg (50%)	140 IU (40%)	N/A	27 mg (7%)	N/A
Fortified Soy Milk	1 cup	300 mg (30%)	100 IU (30%)	7 mcg (9%)	36 mg (9%)	N/A
Leafy Greens*	1 cup uncooked	30 mg (3%)	N/A	145 mcg (181%)	24 mg (6%)	N/A
Nuts*	¼ cup	95 mg (9%)	N/A	N/A	96 mg (24%)	1mg (7%)
Salmon**	4 ounces	N/A	360-900 IU (60-150%)	N/A	34 mg (9%)	N/A
Prunes***	5-6 prunes	N/A	N/A	29 mcg (35%)	20 mg (6%)	N/A

**Greens and nuts contain oxalates and phytates which bind to calcium and decrease its absorption, so they should not be relied on as a main source of calcium.*

***Vitamin D content is higher in wild salmon than farmed salmon.*

****Dried plums, commonly known as prunes, are a very useful sources for bone-building nutrients. Prunes are also packed with antioxidants that have been shown to increase bone density by increasing the production of bone-building cells called osteoblasts. Keep in mind prunes are also a good source of insoluble fiber, which can have a laxative effect if eaten in larger doses (more than 6)!*

The formation and upkeep of bones is a complex process that involves the interaction between many nutrients. The foods listed above are important components to any healthy diet and can help promote strong bones as well as contribute positively to athletes in other ways. It is also important to eat enough energy and protein to help support your bones and prevent injury. Athletes who are unsure if they are eating enough foods rich in bone building nutrients should consult a sport dietitian.

CHULA VISTA OLYMPIC TRAINING CENTER

NUTRITION. MINDFUL EATING FOR ATHLETES

By Liz Broad, Senior Sports Dietitian, USOC Paralympics

Can you remember the last meal you ate – what it was, how it tasted, what the texture was like, how it smelled, whether you were satisfied or full at the end of it – or even whether or not you actually liked it? Many athletes eat for functional reasons and in a more automated way – "inhaling" their food in their haste to get from one activity to the next, keeping pace with their busy lives, always in a rush. Others skip meals and important snacking opportunities for an extra five minutes of sleep, because they're not organized, or in the mistaken belief that it will help them manage their body composition.

What few athletes realize is that food is important not just for its energy content or nutritional value, but also for psychological, emotional and physiological reasons. Being a mindful eater can give you a better understanding of your complex and important relationship with food, and help guide you in the right direction.

MINDFUL EATING involves allowing yourself to become aware of the positive and nurturing opportunities that are available through food selection. By using all of your senses, you consciously choose to eat food that is both satisfying to you and nourishing to your body.

Being a mindful eater means acknowledging your taste responses to food (likes, dislikes or neutral) without judgment, becoming aware of physical hunger and satiety cues, and allowing those cues to guide your decisions about when to begin and end eating. Sometimes hard training can dampen an athlete's appetite, or early morning sessions make it more difficult to eat. This means that for athletes, mindful eating is also about being aware of when you SHOULD be eating to optimize your recovery and training adaptations, and planning for the day's activities ahead of time.

All of these components can help athletes have a productive relationship with food that supports optimal training, helps drive training adaptations, manage body composition and adjust to challenging during challenging times.

7 EVERYDAY TIPS FOR MINDFUL EATING:

1. Before you eat something, stop and check in with your body and brain.
   a. Are you thirsty? Sometimes thirst can be misread as hunger. If you haven't had a drink for a while, try having a glass of water first before you decide whether to eat.
   b. Are you hungry? If so, how hungry? This should govern the amount you choose to eat.
   c. Are you eating simply because there's food in front of you, other people are eating, you're bored, or you're stressed or upset about something? Being aware of what drives you to eat will help you understand your own behaviors better. This can empower you to make sensible decisions about whether more productive food choices could be made.
2. Be PRESENT when you eat. If you're at home, eat at the table without the distraction of the TV, your phone or computer. If on the road, stop for a few minutes to eat your recovery snack BEFORE you jump in the car or head off to the next appointment rather than on the way.
3. Take the time to taste and smell your food and enjoy the look, texture and mouth feel.
4. Sip your fluids slowly, rather than gulping them down all in one hit.
5. Chew your food deliberately. Putting your utensils down between mouthfuls can help encourage this.
6. Stop eating when you feel satisfied, BEFORE you feel full. Put the rest of the food away – you can always get it out and reheat/eat more when you feel hungry again, or keep it for the next day. Better yet, adjust your portion sizes according to how much you actually consumed. There is no need to finish everything that's on your plate just because it's there!
7. Put some time aside to PLAN. Spend five minutes every night thinking through the next day's activities and timing. Consider when and what you can eat, pack the required snacks and meals, and make sure you have ingredients ready for the meals you want to prepare once you get home. If you cook for yourself, spend a bit of time on the weekend planning and shopping for the week's meals. This will save you time and money in the long run. You can save even more time (and possibly more money) by doing some "meal prep" – cooking batches of food in advance to eat throughout the week.