

## Dietary Supplements

Many people spend a lot of money on supplements that promise to burn fat and increase muscle mass, but are they really necessary? First of all, one must consider what a supplement is designed for – to supplement someone’s diet. A well-rounded diet will have a much greater effect on achieving one’s fitness goals than any supplement. Therefore, if you are missing food groups on your plate, the first step is to change your diet rather than supplement it with pills, liquids, or powders.

### Things to Consider:

- Supplements do not require approval by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).
- Purchase supplements tested by United States Pharmacopeia (USP), ConsumerLab.com, or NSF International for quality, purity, strength, and consistency.
- Know what supplements are legal; this is very important for athletes to avoid unintentional drug test failures, and for the health and safety of non-athlete consumers.

If you are interested in supplementing your diet, remember there are always food sources that contain the supplement. Therefore, you do not need to spend your money on expensive pills and powders to achieve the same effect. Common dietary supplements include:

- **Whey protein** is broken down quickly by the body allowing for best post-workout recovery.
  - Natural food sources include milk, yogurt, and cottage cheese.
- **Creatine** is a nitrogen-containing component that aids in small increases of lean body mass when completing high-intensity and quick (<30 seconds) exercise bouts.
  - Natural food sources include lean red meat, tuna, salmon, and milk.
- **Fish oil** helps keep your heart and joints healthy; it’s very important for someone who lifts weights.
  - Natural food sources include fatty fish, e.g., salmon, tuna, mackerel and trout.
- **Multivitamins** provide the minimum requirements of many necessary vitamins; this is helpful to those on a restricted diet or those individuals following a vegan or vegetarian diet.
  - Many foods, including cereals, pasta, and meal replacement bars are fortified with vitamins and minerals-- make sure you read the ingredient label.
- **Vitamin D** is attained through the absorption of sunlight; in the winter most of us face a deficiency of vitamin D, so supplementation during the winter months can help improve fatigue, joint, and bone health to keep you working hard.
  - Foods are fortified with Vitamin D, such as milk, orange juice and soy products.

