

WHOLE FOOD NUTRITION FOR ATHLETES



BY JOSH HEWETT

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Nutrition and exercise are essential components of a healthy lifestyle yet few people consider how strongly they relate.

Proper nutrition can enhance physical performance and maximize benefits derived from exercise. Conversely, poor nutrition can undermine exercise programs and athletic endeavors leading to sub-optimal performance, injuries, premature aging and even serious disease.

Whether you are a world class athlete or a weekend warrior, whether you are already working out regularly or just thinking about starting a fitness program, you need to question whether your body is getting the nutrition it needs to support the demands you are placing on it.

The food we eat is vitally important to our wellbeing. Modern diets are woefully inadequate to maintain optimal health, especially for the athlete. Over time, a poor diet not only diminishes physical performance but may also increase the risk of developing degenerative conditions like heart disease and cancer.

It doesn't have to be that way. Hippocrates once famously said, "Let food be your medicine, and medicine be your food." Good advice then and still good advice today.

Exercise is obviously beneficial for many reasons but it does impose nutritional demands on the body as we burn more fuel and push our physical limits. Anyone engaged in physical activity of any kind and at any level should be aware of these additional nutritional demands.

- Physical activity increases the body's production of harmful free radicals and may lead to oxidative stress. Proper nutrition can help minimize oxidative stress by providing greater amounts and a greater variety of antioxidants capable of neutralizing those free radicals.
- While exercise is an important part of getting in shape and keeping in shape, it also places new physical demands on your body. Proper nutrition can help to maximize lean muscle mass and reduce body fat for optimal health and performance at any age.
- Exercise and physical activity place variable 'stop and go' stresses and demands on the body. Proper nutrition can help the body store energy in the form of carbohydrate and fat releasing it appropriately under widely differing conditions including rest, sustained activity, peak performance and recovery.
- Muscles, tendons and ligaments are only be as healthy as the materials they are made of. These tissues, along with the fascial system of the body, act as shock absorbers that help dissipate stress away from the bones and joints. Every time we exercise some tissue damage occurs. If the body does not have the optimal nutrition to repair itself it will rebuild new tissue with weaker materials.

The bottom line is that **optimum performance** in sport is achieved by **professional training and good nutrition**.

I often see athletes who are “physically” fit, but not “nutritionally” fit. The more serious the athlete the more important proper nutrition becomes. Signs of inadequate nutrition may include: chronically stiff muscles and joints; insomnia; poor digestion; poor recovery from training; frequent injuries; poor flexibility; lack of energy. One of the most important measures one can take to meet these nutritional needs is to consume a **wide variety of fresh, raw, fruits and vegetables every day**. Fruits and vegetables are excellent, nutrient dense foods that provide a whole range of antioxidants that will minimize oxidative stress and protect us from free radical damage.



These antioxidants are much less effective and can even have adverse effects if taken in an isolated supplement form, separate from the other antioxidants, plant enzymes, and micronutrients that are naturally present in whole food. To be effective we need to eat a variety of different fruits and vegetables, not consume isolated nutrients. In fact, current research (including a recent Harvard Study) indicates that not only do antioxidant *supplements* **not** protect against cancer or heart disease, but may actually **cause harm** in some cases.

[\(Natural Foods Mechandiser March 4, 2008\)](#)

[\(Harvard Men's Health Watch March 2008\)](#)

The obvious solution is to make sure that you are eating the recommended 7 to 10 servings of fresh raw fruits and vegetables every day. However, it is often difficult for many people to consume this many daily servings, not to mention getting them fresh and free of pesticides. [Whole food concentrates](#) can bridge the nutritional gap between what we must eat to stay healthy and what most of us eat in reality.

Juice Plus+ is a **whole food** based product providing concentrated nutrition from 17 different fruits, vegetables and grains. It is not a vitamin supplement. It is considered a whole food, containing virtually all the substance from the fruits and vegetables from which it is made. This is important because as I explained, man-made ‘vitamins’ are not in their natural form, and are therefore not very well absorbed into your system. The vitamins and nutrients in Juice Plus+ are virtually all absorbed.

It is also one of the most well researched whole food supplements on the market today, with studies being done by several established universities and science journals demonstrating its bio-availability and numerous health benefits. For more information on these studies, check out this [website](#) at: [Clinical Research](#).

The fresh fruits and vegetables are juiced, reduced to powder form using a proprietary process, and then concentrated with additional enzymes. It's carefully tested to ensure no pesticides or other contaminants are present in the product. It is never exposed to high temperatures that would destroy the nutritional value of the fruits and vegetables. Most of the vitamins, minerals,

active plant enzymes, phytonutrients, antioxidants, and fiber are preserved in the final capsules. When re-hydrated with water, the nutrients are absorbed into our bodies as if we had eaten the fruits and vegetables whole.

There's no complete substitute for eating the real thing. But because so few people actually eat such a wide variety of raw fruits, vegetables and grains every single day, a whole food concentrate is a convenient way to ensure you get these important nutritional benefits. These benefits include disease prevention, stronger immune system, improved performance, slower aging, healthier heart and lower cholesterol.

This just makes sense to me, which is why I take fruit and vegetable extracts. I suggest you consider doing the same. If you want more information go to the website:
www.StayFitwithJuicePlus.com

In health,

Josh Hewett



About The Author:



Josh Hewett, BA Kin, CSCS, is a certified trainer, coach, competitive strength athlete, and the author of "[Get Lean](#)". He is the owner of www.Top-Form-Fitness.com and the founder of Team Barbarian Strength Athletics (OPA affiliated). His articles have been featured on several popular websites, including Elite FTS, The Diesel Crew, Straight To The Bar, QFAC, and many others. Josh has been working in the fitness and physical conditioning industry for over 20 years, and has helped hundreds of people reach their fitness and performance goals using his proven training system.

Take advantage of his free Fitness and Performance Newsletter by signing up at www.StrongerAndLeaner.com. All subscribers receive **three comprehensive Fat Loss and Muscle Building** bonuses.

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