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Food Intake Timing and Body Fat Percentage

Its spring time and with that body fat is on many people's minds. A newer study shows some interesting information about the timing of food intake in athletes and body fat.

The study looked at exercisers and their daily timing of caloric intake. The people who ate less during the morning and daytime, but then 'backloaded' their calories at night (eating the majority of their calories in the evening) end up with higher body fat levels than those who ate the same amount of calories each day, but more evenly distributed through morning, midday and night. Both groups weighed the same at the end of the study.

Quite simply, eating smaller, more frequent meals throughout the entire day leads to a lower body fat percentage. Keep that in mind especially during your work day when it may be difficult to get breakfast or even lunch in.

Other ways to loose some body fat:

- Eating every 3-4 hours is ideal.
- Loss of body fat should be based on 200-300 calorie deficit during the day. This has been shown to be the most efficient and healthy way to loose weight.
- Skipping meals will lead to protein stripping from the muscles, and this is metabolically expensive. This also leads to the increase in body fat mentioned previously.
- Ideally the majority of weight loss occurs during base training where heart rates are in the low to low-moderate range. This is the most optimal way to drive fat burning,

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although fats, carbs and proteins are all burned – the body uses all 3 sources all the time. Fat is designed to be the slow burning fuel.

-Watch your intake of sports drinks for exercise sessions under an hour. They really aren't necessary and will not improve performance for 'shorter' exercise bouts. Stick with water unless you go over an hour. The simple carbs in sports drinks will immediately replace any 'storage' you just burned!

Cocoa Compounds Boost Blood Flow to Muscles

A large and steadily growing set of studies supports the cardiovascular benefits of consuming cocoa flavanols.

Researchers studied 21 overweight men and women, ages 54 to 59 years, BMI 31 to 36 kg/m², each of whom was assigned to consume single servings of either a high-flavanol (701 mg) or a low-flavanol (22 mg) cocoa beverage.

Two hours after cocoa consumption, followed by 10 minutes of cycling at 75% of age-predicted maximum heart rate, the team measured Blood flow and blood pressure to in muscles. In those subjects who consumed the high-flavanol beverage, blood pressure was 14% lower, as compared to those who consumed the low flavanol drink.

The researchers conclude that: "By facilitating vasodilation and limiting exercise-induced increases in blood pressure, cocoa flavanols may decrease cardiovascular risk and enhance the cardiovascular benefits of moderate intensity exercise in at-risk individuals."

So what does this mean? Two words: Eat Chocolate!

P.S. make it a healthier type of chocolate, rather than something you would find in a gas station...

Multivitamins Linked to Breast Cancer??

Call me biased, but I always find it so interesting when the news loves to highlight how unsafe natural medicines are, all the while ignoring the very real dangers of prescription

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drugs.

This latest study has been repeated with fervor over the news the last several days..."vitamins cause breast cancer!" And sadly this is the take home message from a very preliminary study that showed an association between taking vitamins and breast cancer.

What does that mean? It means almost nothing. When a study reports "an association" (and by the way this study even said that it could not 'establish cause and effect'), it merely shows a relationship between two events. This is like saying "clouds are associated with rain" - yes, rain comes from clouds but we all know that the presence of clouds does not mean it is going to rain.

Is there a link? maybe. But A LOT more research would need to be done, and there are MANY variables that would need to be examined as well. Additionally, there are thousands of studies that show the benefits of individual vitamins and minerals and their positive effects on health.

This recent headline is no reason to stop taking a multivitamin!

Tis The Season For Injuries

After the relative winter dormancy, and warmer weather giving way to increased exercise, overuse injuries are common this time of year. "What?" you say, "How can I be overusing something when I've just begun to exercise regularly?". It's actually quite easy when the muscles and connective tissues are adjusting to more activity, but they aren't yet fully adapted. Tendonitis is the most common type of overuse injury and getting that fire put out rapidly is important in order to stay healthy for the rest of the season. Tendonitis that isn't treated properly, and early, will hang around for a long time. If you suspect you have tendonitis, get in and get it taken care of!