

Power Nutrition for Elite Focus and Fitness

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When you're setting out to improve your life, nutrition is one focal point where you have to make changes and take control over what is going into your body. That doesn't mean deprivation, either.

You want to keep in mind that food has cultural significance. We use it in celebrations and for comfort and as long as it's not a problem for you where the food controls you, you can continue enjoying meals and favorites.

But you *do* need to recognize food as more than a feel-good stimulus, too. It's fuel that contributes to both your physical and mental well-being. So, let's look at it from an Elite Power Fitness point of view.

Food Is Fuel for Your Body

The majority of your meals should be fuel for your body – energy that helps sustain you throughout your day. Experts vary on what kind of nutrition they feel works best, so you'll have some decisions to make.

But keep in mind the basic advice of pairing proteins and carbs at every meal. Your body uses the protein to help rebuild your muscles and to keep you feeling satiated until the next meal.

The carbs are necessary, too. You'll be using carbs as energy sources for your body. Carbs are usually things like fruit, but they can also be things like pastry.

You will obviously want to make more healthy choices now that you're working on a Warrior regimen, but if you have a craving or a sweet tooth, it's okay to indulge moderately once in awhile.

It's best to pair things like an apple or a whole grain cracker with a protein like turkey or chicken or peanut butter. Select your favorite high-quality proteins and carbs and have them available throughout the day.

Now that you're engaged in two-hour power workouts, it's imperative that you give your body enough energy to complete the challenges you're presenting to it. Look for raw foods to snack on that are healthy for you.

Make sure you are eating *enough* food, too. Some people get into a diet mindset when they start a fitness routine, but *this* program requires ample stores of food for fuel, so don't skimp or you'll suffer the consequences.

Nutrition That Fine Tunes Your Mental Abilities

There are several things you want to watch out for when it comes to nutrition and how it affects your mind on a day-to-day basis. In order to handle stress and feel better than you have in a long time, you want to choose foods that contribute to healthy brain function and mood stabilization.

Omega-3 foods like oily fish (think tuna or salmon) help your brain function better. It's also going to contribute to better heart health, which is important because you're going to be pushing your boundaries constantly.

Almonds and walnuts – as well as some other nuts and seeds - have the ability to stave off mental issues such as cognitive decline as you age. Buy the best raw, unsalted nuts and seeds you can afford.

Berries are a rich mixture of antioxidants, and although blueberries rank top of the list in what they can do for your health, you can also use strawberries, raspberries, blackberries and more to help with mental strength.

Vitamin D foods can pack a punch in terms of clearing mental fog and contributing to your overall physical health, too. You can find vitamin D in foods like milk, fish and oranges.

Leafy green vegetables are very important to your mental fortitude. You can eat raw salads, bake them (think spinach or kale chips), or put them in a pan and cook them al dente with a little fresh garlic.

Don't overcook your foods. Whether it's lean meats or green vegetables, cooking foods too long saps the nutrients out of them and in some cases (such as charred meats) – contributes to the development of cancer.

Fats are necessary for your brain health, too. But instead of a spoonful of frosting, choose half of an avocado. It's a monounsaturated fat, the kind that helps, not hurts your body.

Some people give up grains when they're dieting, but you can stick to whole grains to nourish your body and help your brain get more oxygen since the blood flow will be improved with this type of grain instead of white grains.

If you're in a career where you need to use your mind a lot – like creativity and strategic thinking – try adding plenty of zinc foods to your diet. Pumpkin seeds are a great snack for this purpose.

Don't get tricked by some foods that make you perceive them to be healthy or low calorie when they're not. Granted, your body will use more calories during intense training, but a bag of trail mix might have lots of sugar and calories when to you, it looks healthy because you see bits of granola in the bag.

Forget About Dieting

Now is not the time to diet or starve your body. You're embarking on a high-level intense workout, and top performers know that if you stop fueling your body with enough calories and proper nutrition, it won't be able to perform.

Your goal is strength and power. You can't restrict your body's intake of fuel and expect it to be able to provide you with strength and stamina – or even mental power.

You basically want to do two things when it comes to eating properly. The first is to listen to your body. Eat when you're hungry and stop when you're no longer hungry.

Don't allow yourself to become ravenous with hunger – and never stuff yourself to the point of feeling ill you're so full. You want to create a chart between 0 and 10 – with 0 being starved and 10 being stuffed, and stay somewhere in the middle.

This is a difficult habit to learn, but you're really just reverting back to what you acted like as a baby. You cried for nourishment when you were hungry and when you were fed, you used your tongue to push the bottle away when your stomach was satisfied.

In the beginning of your life, you probably ate every two hours – and then it lessened. You listened to your body. You need to train yourself to get back to that state.

Your hunger cues will tell you when you're in need of fuel. However, you also might want to work on revving up your metabolism if you're pursuing this training as a way of shedding fat and getting in shape.

Eating on a two-hour schedule (just like when you were an infant) is the best way to do that. Get up and eat breakfast, then have a snack two hours later. Eat lunch two hours after your snack, and another snack two hours after lunch.

You can then eat dinner two hours after your last snack – and that way you won't be going to bed with an overly full stomach, but you'll feel content and satisfied with what your body has consumed throughout the day, so you won't feel deprived.

If weight loss isn't your goal, but strength training is more of a focal point for you, then you might pursue a different option – one where you're loading up on food as fuel in three or more bulk meals per day.

Organized and Pre-Planned Nutrition

This routine is a big undertaking. It's something that will deliver a great deal of happiness to you in terms of physical strength and mental happiness. But if you're already a busy individual, then you might consider the nutritional portion of this plan overwhelming.

That's why it's a good idea to plan out your meals ahead of time – and stay organized with your foods so that they're quick, easy and convenient to access when you need them.

Start by planning your meals. You can do this online using technology and apps – or do it the old fashioned, offline way – whatever works for you. Don't just plan dinners, though.

Plan:

- Breakfasts
- Snacks
- Lunches
- Dinners

Shopping lists should be made ahead of time, too. Make sure you give yourself some options for days when something creeps up on you and you don't have time to cook, but need a convenient meal to go instead.

Containers that divvy up your snacks and lunches will be very handy in your household. You can get things like Bento boxes for your lunches that help you pack a healthful, variety-packed meal that will satisfy you.

Try not to rely solely on supplements or shakes to get your nutrition. While shakes can help with weight loss, the intense regimen you're pursuing requires substances, too. Your body will want to feel fulfilled – and a shake can rarely provide that kind of feeling compared to chewing food and swallowing it.

Supplements to Enhance Your Training

Supplements, in and of themselves, are not the bad guys when it comes to fueling your body. It's just that relying *solely* on them - or relying on them *more* than real food isn't a good idea.

Still, there are supplements that help you achieve the nutrients your body needs on a regular basis – especially under this kind of high-level training program. Supplements can come in pill form, but they can also come as drinks.

Earlier, we spoke about vitamin D as an important part of your mental and physical health. Although you spend some time in the sun and drink plenty of milk, you *still* might be deficient.

You want to get a complete blood panel taken for your vitamin levels. Find out what's low or lacking and then target foods and supplements to help you hit the recommended doses.

For example, if your vitamin D is low, then invest in a vitamin D3 supplement. Have your levels tested again 6 months later and adjust your intake as needed. You can also get supplements such as:

- Vitamin C to keep your immune system healthy
- Biotin to help process energy in your body
- Whey to help build muscle
- Fish oil (omega 3) to help with brain and physical health
- Zinc to help with insomnia and mental clarity
- Creatine to help recover from workouts
- Calcium to help with strength training

...and many more. When you conduct a thorough analysis of yourself in terms of mind and body, you'll discover where you're lacking and you can look into supplements that will help turn things around.

The foods you start eating during training will often help you stop cravings for sugary, low quality foods. You'll begin craving the right kinds of fuel for your body because you won't like the feeling of late day sugar crashes otherwise.

Try to shop for the best foods possible. That means going organic and leaving toxins and pesticides behind. Always shop for fresh foods over frozen or canned ones.



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