

Example of dietary considerations of endurance athlete research paper

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The relationship between adequate nutrition and endurance amongst athletes has been well documented. Precisely, the nutrients requirements for athletes vary from those of normal individuals because they engage in highly strenuous athletic activities that require significant amounts of energy. On a similar note, athletic activities results in an increase in the utilization of various energy sources. Carbohydrates in the form of glycogen stored in the muscles are broken down during periods of intense exercise to provide energy. Similarly, fats stores in the adipose tissues are broken down to provide the energy needed to sustain athletic activities. In a nutshell, athletics requires optimal amount of energy, which can only be attained through the provision of elevated amounts of nutrients (Williams, 2012). While it is true that peak performance amongst athletes can be achieved by training, it is imperative to note that adequate dietary practices plays a colossal role in enhancing performance and endurance.

Discussion

Important dietary considerations of the endurance athlete

Notably, there exists a wider array of crucial dietary consideration for endurance athletes. Above all, endurance athletes should consume adequate diets. Speaking of adequate diets, this connotes to diets that provide all the nutrient in the right proportions; not too much nor too small. In addition, diets for endurance athletes should be sufficient enough to offer adequate energy that meets the training and exercise demands. On a similar note, diets for endurance athletes should offer a viable platform that enhances recovery and adaptation during training sessions. Finally, the diets for endurance athletes should be derived from various sources inclusive but not

limited to green leafy vegetable, cereals, lean meats, fruits, as well as dairy products that have lower fat contents (Williams, 2012). Overall, diets for endurance athletes should be streamlined in such a way that it facilitates the endurance athletes to attain optimal weight for performance.

What to eat and how much to eat to enhance endurance sports performance

The Recommended Dietary Allowances for endurance athletes are relatively similar to those of a normal individual, but are often altered to offer additional nutrients. With regards to carbohydrates, the Recommended Dietary Allowance for endurance athletes should be 60-70%. This is contrary to the recommended intakes for a normal individual which is 55-60% (Williams, 2012). The additional carbohydrates in an endurance athlete's diet assures that the athletes performance is not compromised since glucose derived from carbohydrate is the primary source of energy during periods of exercise. Endurance athletes can derive carbohydrates from various sources including oatmeal, whole wheat toast, hams and spaghetti, which should be spread out across various meals.

With regards to proteins, endurance athletes should also consume more proteins than normal individuals. To be precise, the Recommended Dietary Allowance for normal individuals is 0.8 grams per kilogram body weight. For endurance athletes, the recommended daily intake is almost double that of normal individual. In fact endurance athletes should consume 1.5 grams per kilogram body weight in a day. For example, an athlete whose weight is sixty kilograms is required to consume ninety grams of proteins in a day (60×1.5). The additional proteins allow endurance athletes to replenish proteins that is

broken down by the body during periods of intense activity (Williams, 2012). Some of the sources that endurance athletes can draw proteins from include lean meats, soy based products, and milk.

It is of immense significance to note that fats are a crucial source of energy for endurance athletes. As such, dietary fat requirements for endurance athletes should be elevated. Notably, the recommended dietary fat intake for athletes should be 30% of the total energy intake. Endurance athletes can meet this by consuming foods rich in nourishing fats such as wild salmon, which provides highly beneficial omega three fatty acids (Williams, 2012).

Water is another crucial nutrient of immense significance to athletes. As such, athletes should consume varied amounts of water at various occasions. Before participating in an athletic event, an athlete should consume close to 3 cups of water. During an athletic event, athletes should consume half a cup of cold water and 2 cup of fluid after an event. This minimizes the occurrence of dehydration since endurance athletes lose a lot of water while participating in athletic events (Williams, 2012).

When to eat to enhance endurance sports performance

Eating times in the context of endurance sports play a critical role on enhancing the performance of athletes. As such eating times should be divided into various occasions. More importantly, endurance athlete, should consume a pre-event meal as a preparation for impending athletics event. This meal should be served three or four hours prior the athletic event. Carbohydrate dense foods and snacks are some of the meals that can be utilized as pre-event meals by endurance athletes (Williams, 2012).

Endurance athletes should also have a meal while carrying out exercise.

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Meals that can be consumed at such times include low fat muesli, sports gels and lollies, and white bread. This meal valuable because it replenishes glucose lost during exercise. Finally, endurance athletes should have meals after exercise. Such meals allow athletes to replenish energy lost during exercise.

Reference

Williams, M. H. (2012) Nutrition for health, fitness, & sport (10th Ed.) New York: McGraw-Hill.