

Eating for Golf

Do I go complex or just simple?

When talking carbohydrates go both:-

Simple carbohydrates: sugars, fruit juices, syrups, honey, chocolate, sticky stuff and stuff that melts. This is easily digestible, quick burning “rocket fuel”, giving a rapid kick of energy. Walking to the 17th with a chance but feeling jaded and nervous...go for these and a big slug of fluid.

Complex carbohydrates: potatoes, bread, rice, pasta, cereals. Slow burning fuels that release tons of energy, but over a long period of time. On the evening before your next medal lash down the biggest pasta bake possible, heavy on the pasta. For breakfast go porridge...a bucket full. You'll be buzzin for 18 holes and it will make a difference.

The Magic Mix: get down the “pound shop” and buy a small air-tight container and a large one. Next it's to the local “weigh and save” and buy a few ounces each of your favourite nuts, sultanas, currants, dried apricots, dried prunes, honeyed oat clusters, a few cornflakes. Mix them in the big container, and carry just enough for a couple of rounds in the small one. Chomp on reasonable handfuls of this as a matter of habit during the round. It'll top up the simple/complex fuelling equation, become a psychological reward and diversion strategy, make you wash it down with the essential fluids that you always carry....and it doesn't go off or melt, even if you leave it hanging around in the bag.

Eat smart...eat to win.

Golfing from the heart

On a recent round of golf I wore a heart rate monitor and recorded the activity of my heart during the whole round. The heart beat at rest for a healthy individual should be close to 72 beats per minute; your maximum heart rate during peak physical activity can be approximated by subtracting your age from 220, so as a 35 year old man my maximum should be 185 beats per minute. The highest heart rates during the recorded round were 120 bpm, and these were always during fairway walking carrying my bag; at one stage I peaked to 135 ascending a ridge on what is a links course. On teeing off with a driver, after one practice swing my heart rate was a consistent 100bpm, but I feel that with the pressure of a competitive game, adrenaline fuelled “nerves” would push this to 115bpm. At no stage during the round did my heart rate drop beneath 74 bpm, and my own resting rate is 65 bpm....I even tried some relaxation and breathing techniques whilst putting, but still did not drop below 74. Clearly golf requires a degree of cardiac demand, but for the average healthy individual this demand is within a comfortable range of cardiac stress, and therefore can almost certainly contribute to maintaining cardio-vascular fitness.

Put your heart into it....

Eating for joint health

Fish oil not only helps lower blood fat, thinning the blood, but also dampens down the inflammatory process that can be associated with joint pain . A very good reason therefore to eat oily fish eg, fresh tuna (not tinned as the good oil is leached out in the canning process), mackerel, sardines, pilchards, trout and herrings.

Copper also has an important role in the control of inflammation. Calves liver, lobster, crab, oysters, mushrooms, wholemeal, prunes, sunflower seeds and peanuts contain copper. Even though it is thought their effect is a short term treatment only, they are worth a place at the dinner table particularly if they are a favourite!

Ginger too has the ability to reduce an inflammatory hormone - like substance called prostaglandin. Use ginger root in cooking, or as a drink infusion.

So it's tuna steak in a ginger and prune sauce every Friday night!

Kick-start the immune system and eat for recovery

Vit A helps to fight bacterial, viral and parasitic infections - we are more prone to contracting such problems if the immune system is low, this can happen with strenuous exercise in addition to a poor diet... your average long weekend tour with your mates! Therefore, foods high in vit A are calves liver, butter/margarine, cream cheese, oily fish, milk

Vit C also helps the white blood cells to fight infection and helps to neutralise potential damage from free radicals, chemicals in the body which can trigger damaging processes in cells. Good sources of vit C are vibrant coloured fruit and veg, eg papaya, blackcurrants, green peppers, broccoli, strawberries, kiwi, oranges, cabbage and cauliflower.

Vit E also works as an antioxidant again neutralising these free radicals but additionally helps keep cell walls in good condition and improves the activity of vit A...so eat sweet potatoes, avocado, spinach, muesli, sunflower seeds, pine nuts, almonds, hazelnuts.

So for sparking eyes, shiny hair, hard nails, strong healthy bones, glowing skin, and the mental and physical vibrancy to destroy 36 holes, eat the "ACE".

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