

## The Best Supplements to Transform Your Physique.

Easily one of the most frequent questions I get asked by clients, non clients, colleagues, friends or some random guy who heard you are a Personal Trainer is "What are the best supplements for...?" It is inevitable really. People are always looking for the quick fix solution. Most gym fanatics spend more time researching supplements than their actual training routine despite the fact their training routine is the actual stimulus for the physical change.

It is true that people look to supplements to provide them with results before they train well, eat well and sleep well (the three most commonly studied factors for transforming your physique). That being said, I am a huge advocate of nutritional supplements and given the choice would have everyone on them. A lot of the anti supplement clan claim that "you can get all you need through food" and that all nutrition worth consuming should be available in your diet already. Of course, this is an ideal scenario and truth be told, I wish this were the case! Anyone who has done vitamin and mineral profiling will know that this isn't how it works out. Health reasons like mineral deficiencies aside, many people can get results from supplements which food alone wouldn't provide to seek out an edge in the gym or in their athletic event.

Before I get into the juicy bit and give you my list it is important to clarify something. Any of my clients can tell you that I do not give out nutritional advice without assessments first and my diet recommendations change from person to person. Obviously that will also influence the supplements I use with each person. This is the list of supplements I am happy to recommend to anybody training in the gym. They can be male or female, young or old. Certain health conditions may put some of these on the contraindicated list so it would be down to you to check that out for yourself.

**Multivitamins-** As I said before, anyone who has done vitamin and mineral profiling will know that deficiencies are common. You can consume multiple servings of fruit, vegetables, meat, fish, eggs and nuts all day long and still lack in certain nutrients. Adipose tissue is where you store your toxins so fat loss missions can often speed up if you become more efficient at detoxifying. A multivitamin is like an insurance policy to help you get what you need. It is worth pointing out that it is still common for hard training athletes to have deficiencies even while taking these so it is not a sure fire solution but it certainly goes a way towards helping.

**Zinc-** It is estimated that close to 100% of hard training individuals are deficient in zinc (who don't supplement already). Deficiencies in zinc can alter your carbohydrate metabolism, decrease your immune function and lower your testosterone levels (to name a few of a very long list). Tests for zinc status are inexpensive and can range from a simple zinc tally test to getting your red blood cell zinc measured.

**Magnesium-** This is in the same category as zinc except it is even more common to have a deficiency in magnesium among the training population. If zinc levels are low in almost 100% of athletes, Mg levels are low in all of them who aren't supplementing. Magnesium is involved in over 300 different processes in the body. Deficiencies in magnesium can cause insomnia, constipation, decreased insulin sensitivity, memory loss and fatigue. I recommended zinc and magnesium to a colleague of mine who lost fat (after being static) without any other conscious changes in their training or nutrition. To get your magnesium levels checked you must choose a red blood cell test as serum levels of magnesium are a poor indicator of the quantity of magnesium retained in tissue.

**Fish Oil-** Omega 3 has taken off as the next big thing in the supplement industry and with very good reason. Fish oil is used to correct the ratio of Omega 3 to Omega 6 which should be around 1:1 but tends to be off due to the huge intake in omega 6. This is where the huge list of health benefits from taking fish oil originates from, not because fish oil is a sexy supplement on its own. Fish oil can turn on your lipolytic genes (utilising fat for energy) and turn off your lipogenic (fat storage) genes. Fish oil can also lower inflammation, increase serotonin levels and decrease high blood pressure. You can get your fatty acid profile tested to assess your omega 3:6 ratio.

**Vitamin D3-** If fish oil was the biggest supplement in the health industry then this is going to be the next one. Vitamin D influences more than 200 genes. Having low levels of vitamin D3 increases your risk of cancer, autoimmune diseases, multiple sclerosis and heart failure (to name a few). Higher levels of vitamin D3 are also shown to improve insulin sensitivity and increase weight loss.

**Branched Chain Amino Acids-** BCAAs (Leucine, Isoleucine and Valine) reduce fatigue, increase the rate of fat loss and improve the rate of muscle building when taken within a workout. Supplementing with BCAAs has also been shown to decrease the levels of inflammation post training as well as increasing strength during an overreaching protocol when those on a placebo lost strength. In short, BCAAs improve the result of your workout whether you want to build mass and lose fat or are a female just looking to tone up.

**Whey Protein-** Whey is derived from milk or cheese and is high in protein while being low in lactose and fat (the commercial supplement whey is at least). The goal of your post workout shake is to lower cortisol levels in favour of heightening testosterone. Prevent further muscle breakdown and replenish glycogen levels. Whey acts as your protein source to switch off catabolism (muscle breakdown) and switch on anabolism (muscle building). Whey digests faster than food so liquid nutrition is favoured to whole food after training. Whey is a complete protein source so is commonly used in between meals as an extra source of protein. While there is merit in this it is important to point out that good food is more thermogenic and anabolic than whey so it would be more favourable to eat where possible.

There you have it. This is the list of supplements that I am happy to recommend to 'almost' anyone!