

11 Ways



A Level 9 gymnast who placed second in the School Age National Weightlifting Championships last year, Jessi Butterfield displays the type of athletic figure possible with sensible eating habits. Jessi is from Salt Lake City and represents Team BFS.

(PHOTO BY BLAIR KUNZ)

A great example of the difference proper nutrition can make for an athlete is Ethan Brooks, a right tackle for the Dallas Cowboys. In April 2002 Brooks weighed 305 pounds and had 15.35 percent bodyfat. In only six weeks while working with strength coach Charles Poliquin, Brooks reduced his bodyfat to 8.69 percent while adding 20 pounds of muscle mass. He was able to achieve these amazing results by following a nutrition plan to dramatically change his eating habits, which had consisted of an excessive amount of carbohydrates and processed foods. Likewise, coaches who want to support their athletes in losing excess bodyfat and achieving maximum results from their nutrition program should be prepared with solid nutritional information.

to Help an Athlete Lose Bodyfat

Practical advice on bringing sports nutrition up to championship levels

Besides the numerous health problems associated with being overweight, a leaner athlete is generally a better athlete. Excessive fat makes athletes slower and impairs agility, jumping ability and endurance. Unfortunately, there is so much conflicting information about nutrition that it is easy to become overwhelmed. Just look at the diet section of any bookstore and you will see countless types of diet books, each one with a colorful jacket claiming that it is the best. There are diet books endorsed by prestigious universities and medical centers, books by dietitians and nutritionists with PhDs (and some without any formal education), books by successful personal trainers, books by gold-medal athletes and, of course, books by stick-thin celebrities.

At BFS we say that on a scale of 1 to 10, be an 11! With that in mind, before you attempt to wade through this information jungle, here are 11 tips from Coach Poliquin that coaches and athletes can use to help improve body composition, and consequently athletic performance, through proper nutrition.

TIP 1: Eat like a caveman

Research into the diet of our ancient human ancestors – who were hunter-gatherers, not farmers – combined with

various scientific studies demonstrates that our twenty-first-century diet of cereals and grain-fed meat is not what humans evolved to eat. We were hunter-gatherers for two million years, while agriculture has been around for only 10,000 years, and the effects of the modern-day diet on young people's health are obvious.

Obesity is generally defined as having a bodyfat percentage of more than 25 percent for males and 30 percent for females. Government reports estimate that 15.5 percent of adolescents (ages 12 to 19) are obese, compared to 5 percent in 1980 and 11 percent in 1994; and 15.3 percent of children (ages 6 to 11) are obese compared to 5 percent in 1980 and 11 percent in 1994. Although athletes are generally leaner than non-ath-

Brooks' remarkable success with proper exercise and diet in just 6 weeks.



Before (4-12-02)



After (5-27-02)

letes because of higher levels of physical activity, the modern-day diet is not helping any of us.

The simplest and most effective way to get lean is to stay away from the modern-day diet and follow a "Paleolithic diet"; that is, choosing foods that approximate what a caveman would have eaten, concentrating on the animal proteins and green vegetables available today. One favorite motto for the Paleolithic diet is "If it wasn't growing on the earth 10,000 years ago and you can't kill it with a stick, don't eat it!"

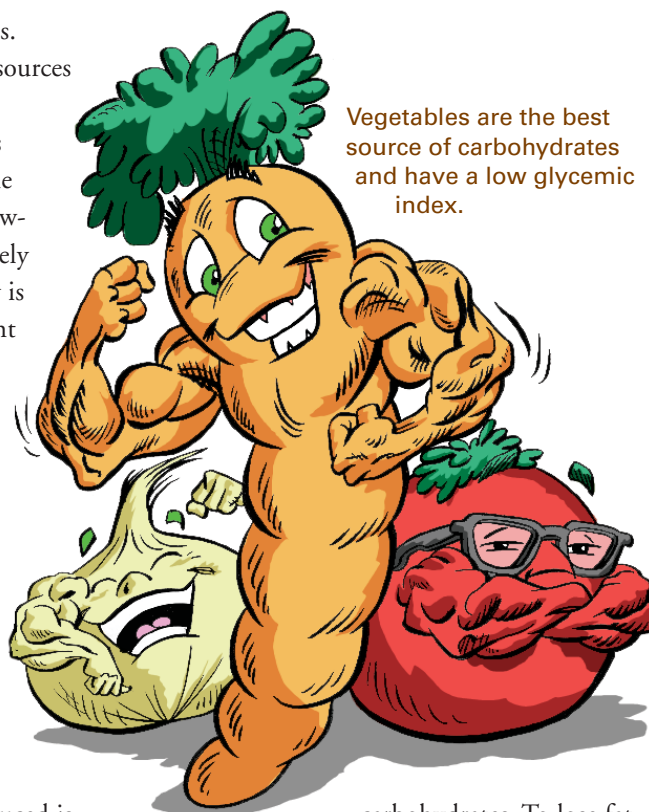
TIP 2: Avoid high-glycemic foods

The term glycemic index (GI) has been around since the early 1980s. It is a relative scale of carbohydrate's ability to

raise blood glucose levels. Vegetables and protein sources are relatively low on the glycemic index, whereas bagels, rice cakes and the low-fat scams such as low-fat ice cream are extremely high on the index. Why is this important for weight loss?

When glucose enters the bloodstream, the pancreas secretes the hormone insulin. Insulin's main function is to facilitate the transport of glucose into the cells for energy, storage and maintenance. At any given time, the amount of insulin produced is directly proportionate to the amount of glucose present.

High-glycemic-index foods will be broken down into glucose faster and therefore enter the bloodstream faster, a condition that causes more insulin to be produced. The rapid rise of insulin causes too much glucose to be taken up by the cells, which results in low blood sugar (hypoglycemia). This situation in turn stimulates the appetite for more



carbohydrates. To lose fat and live longer, eat fewer carbohydrates. The mass media, reinforced by the Surgeon General and the medical community, told us dogmatically for years that obesity is caused by the excessive consumption of fat, and that cutting out fat will make us lose weight and live longer. Nowadays, there is a total turnaround among the medical community. Pioneers such as Dr. Robert C. Atkins and Mauro Di Pasquale who

healthy because of their low fat content, such as soft drinks and fruit juices, now have been shown to undermine good nutrition.

TIP 4: Stay hydrated

For general good health and also to lose fat or gain muscle, it's vital to stay well hydrated. Unfortunately, water is often the most neglected nutrient. Dehydration leads to higher cortisol output, with negative repercussions ranging from increased oxidative stress to the brain to increased fat storage. The best indication that you are staying well hydrated is that your morning urine will be clear and odorless.

TIP 5: Never go hungry

Skipping meals leads to excessive hunger, which can result in overeating. Learn how to cook and prepare meals in advance so you avoid the temptation of fast food. Keeping a food diary will help with your meal planning. Often the reason we resort to fast food is that we haven't made the effort to plan what we are going to eat.

To achieve consistency in your meal planning, you must be disciplined. Too many trainees fail to achieve their goals because they lack discipline. Don't be one of them: Commit to your eating plan.

TIP 6: Eat more protein

Protein builds muscle; strive to include it every time you eat. Here are four other reasons to consume protein at every meal:

1. Protein prevents the yo-yo pattern in blood sugar levels so you won't experience the intense hunger pains associated with low blood sugar.
2. Protein prevents overeating when you finally eat.
3. Protein makes digestion much easier by keeping the flow of food

Skipping meals leads to excessive hunger, which can result in overeating.

food. The greater quantity of food will overload the digestive system, resulting in poorly digested food and weight gain.

TIP 3: Consume fewer carbohydrates

Contrary to popular belief, it's not the fat in food that makes us fat but the

used to be ridiculed by their peers are now applauded for their brilliance. More and more people are becoming better educated and realizing that the former staples of the famous Food Guide Pyramid (such as pasta, grains and rice) are actually the enemy. Foods that used to be considered intrinsically

throughout the digestive tract moving at an even pace.

4. Protein elevates the metabolism rate so that bodyfat levels remain low.

Americans tend to concentrate on only four solid protein sources: beef, eggs, poultry and tuna. The problem with relying solely on these protein foods is you could become allergic to them; among the most common allergens are beef, eggs, chicken and milk. Avoid eating the same protein source two days in a row; choose from a variety of other protein foods such as shrimp, scallops, turkey, buffalo, venison and ostrich.

TIP 7: Favor solid foods over liquid nutrition

Although there is no problem with an occasional protein shake, most meals should be solid instead of liquid. Here are four reasons why solid is better:

- Solid food burns fat more effectively than liquid food.
- Solid food, particularly low-glycemic choices, provides more even insulin levels throughout the day and regulates cortisol output more favorably.
- Solid food provides a wider variety of nutrients.
- Solid food satisfies the appetite.

TIP 8: Take a complete multivitamin/mineral nutritional aid

It's difficult to exercise to keep your weight under control if you're sick. The American Medical Association recommends a multivitamin/mineral nutritional aid to avoid nutrient deficiencies that may cause illness or disease. Use only pharmaceutical-grade products as one out of four nutritional aids are tainted with substances that may cause you to fail a drug test.



Fish oils are one of the most important nutritional aids for helping you achieve rapid physique transformation.

TIP 9: Take a fish oil nutritional aid

Fish oils are one of the most important nutritional aids for helping you achieve rapid physique transformation. Fish oils increase utilization of fat stores and decrease fat storage. One reason is that two components in fish oils (eicosapentaenoic acid, or EPA; and docosahexaenoic acid, or DHA) help maintain the flexibility of cell membranes and make the insulin receptors more sensitive to circulating levels of insulin.

There are numerous other benefits of taking fish oils. Fish oils can markedly reduce morning stiffness and reduce inflammation. They also help regulate the blood supply to the brain, which is essential in maintaining focus in weight training sessions.

TIP 10: Have your bodyfat accurately measured

Weight loss in terms of pounds lost on the scale doesn't always reflect progress in bodyfat reduction. For example, in a severely restricted diet you will at first lose glycogen and water, giving the illusion of rapid progress. However, trying to lose too fast can be quite detrimental to your health. For these reasons, you should use only bodyfat levels as your true measure of fat loss.

To accurately assess your bodyfat levels, go to a skilled exercise physiologist for a skin caliper test. It is largely agreed among body composition experts that the sum of 10 sites can accurately measure changes in bodyfat.

TIP 11: Don't count calories

Although diets that focus on counting calories are still popular, counting calories is largely a waste of time. When you count calories you tend to become obsessive about it or you get so bored with counting that you tend to eat the same bland diet so you don't have to count. Instead of focusing on calories, concentrate on good nutrition. **BFS**



Strength Coach Charles Poliquin performs a bodyfat test using skin calipers.