**Proper Protein Intake**

One of the largest and one of the most glaring issues I see people bring up ,either in person or online, tends to relate to when and how much protein they should be consuming. The lovely supplement industry loves to push protein literally down people’s throats, suggesting outrageous amounts are needed for muscle growth and to reach that cut, ripped look that every person under 50 seems to desire! So this lovely little rant will cover how the body actually utilizes protein, how much protein you need, and ways to tell you are taking too much protein; onto the first rant!

**Misconception #1: When protein should be consumed**

Often I have seen people post on Facebook about their pre workout protein that they decided to consume in an effort to increase the amount of energy they have, to increase the efficacy of their workout and to expedite the process of reaching their respective goals. Unfortunately, protein only addresses one of these desires (helps expedite the process when consumed at the right time). The human body uses protein to repair and facilitate muscle growth; it is NOT a primary fuel source that the body will use during a workout and it will NOT increase the amount of energy you have prior to a workout. Pre workouts that contain a solid amount of protein(less than 15g per serving) actually divert and reduce the amount of energy present in the body as your body will be forced to address the protein now present in your stomach. So if you would like to be more tired, have an upset stomach, then by all means continue to consume that supplement prior to your workout! The best time to consume protein is within 15 to 45 minutes post workout (some studies extend the upper limit of this range to several hours) preferably in its natural form: MEAT. Our bodies absorb the nutrients it needs best when the sources are processed as little as possible. The more the “food” is processed, the less efficient our body is at absorbing the nutrients. Protein supplements tend to extract the whey isolate from the original, healthier source of protein and add a few extra chemicals to maintain shelf life and prevent the protein from breaking down. Please, avoid these supplements! PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE get your protein from natural sources that didn’t undergo chemical manipulation. Chicken (eggs too!) and fish are your friends! Red meat is fantastic as well, but in moderation as the cholesterol can be an issue for many. The more natural the protein source, the greater the absorption and the greater the benefit.

TLDR: protein won’t provide more energy for a workout and will reduce the amount of energy you have available. Consume protein in its natural form (eggs, chicken, fish, red meat!)

**Misconception #2: How are body utilizes protein**

Let’s briefly cover what protein actually does within the body. Our body runs off two fuel sources: carbohydrates and fat. Through numerous energy systems (Phosphagen, Krebs cycle, Glycogen) the body breaks down these macronutrients into ATP, which the cells in our body use as a fuel source. Protein primarily facilitates muscle growth and helps repair muscle and other damaged tissue through the use of BCAAS, the amino acids that form the various forms of protein. The body can be forced into using this protein as a power source, which is called ketosis; however, this is extremely dangerous and detrimental to your health and can lead to severe liver and kidney issues later in life.

TLDR: carbs and fat are the real fuel sources for the body, protein should only be consumed for muscle growth and repair.

**Misconception #3 – How much is needed**

 The last time I graced the lovely interweb looking at supplements, I noticed people spouting consumption rates between 1.2g of protein per pound to upward limits of 2g of protein per pound to gain mass. These values are abysmally higher than what the human body requires. Scientific research has shown that a mere 0.6 to 0.8g of protein per your SPECIFIC LEAN BODY MASS to be more than adequate to facilitate and promote muscle growth, increase in strength, as well as a performance increase. So let’s examine the delineation between these two sets of values.

The industry standard bases your protein intake off your TOTAL bodyweight, which includes organs, bones, and everything in between, when in reality you want to base your protein intake off how much muscle (in pounds) that you actually have on your body. Now to deal with the elephant in the room: the improper protein recommendations. Numerous studies (some links to these studies will be provided below) have shown that intakes ranging from 0.6 to 0.8g are all that is necessary to produce the desired changes in our muscle mass and physique. So let’s run some numbers highlighting the improper ratios and the glaring difference in how much protein is necessary.

**Example**

**Industry**

150lb male with 20% body fat

Protein intake would need to be **180g to 300g**

**Reality:**

To calculate lean body mass:

Weight \* (100 – body fat percentage) = lean mass

150lb male, 20% body fat, 120lb lean body mass

Protein intake would need to be **72g to 96g**

That’s a monstrous difference! The industry “recommends” that you consume almost THREE times the amount of protein you actually need. What does your body do with all that extra protein? The body get rids of it via waste. If you have ever consumed a protein shake and very soon after needed to go to the bathroom, pat yourself on the back because you have consumed too much protein! This is by far the easiest and most effective way of recognizing that you have consumed too much protein supplement.

So why does this matter to **YOU**? For those of you taking supplements it means you are literally flushing money down the toilet; unlike carbohydrates and fat, the body cannot store the extra protein to utilize later and instead gets rid of it as excrement. So please, stop consuming so much protein! Your rectum will thank you!

Again, why do this matter to ME? Even if you ignore the fact that protein is best when in its natural form, at the least reduce the amount of protein you are consuming. The industry wants you to consume prodigious amounts because they want you to buy more of their product. The supplement industry is a billion dollar a year market that continually grows because more and more believe the information they spew. Get smart, reduce your intake!

TLDR: Stop shitting away your money on protein supplements!