

Podcast Script

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3/19/18

### **Title: Increasing lean protein for active individuals**

The most recent dietary guidelines recommend that the average healthy adult should participate in moderate exercise for at least 30 minutes, 5 days a week. So, what if you're meeting that, or if you get more than 30 minutes a day? Being active and exercising frequently comes with a myriad of health benefits. If you are exceeding the recommended amounts there are also some dietary considerations you may want to think about, to fully take advantage of being an active individual.

One key factor for active adults, is having adequate protein intake. Proteins are the building blocks of all the cells in our body and are necessary in most bodily functions from the cellular level, all the way up to major organs. Getting adequate protein, if you exercise frequently, allows your body to fully recover after exercise and helps prevent the breakdown of skeletal muscles for energy.

If you exercise frequently, but are not consuming enough protein, you may become tired more easily, experience muscle weakness, or have excessive muscle soreness after a workout. The best way to meet your protein needs is through a diet of protein rich foods. Dietary sources of protein are considered a healthier option compared to relying on protein supplements, which may have unwanted ingredients or additives.

So how much protein is enough? Protein needs are based off grams of protein per kilogram of bodyweight. The recommendation for a healthy adult is .8 grams/kg of body weight, but active individuals usually require 1.2-1.4g per kg of body weight. If you're an active individual (>150 minutes of exercise a week), an easier way to find your protein needs is to divide your weight in lbs by 2. That number should be the grams of protein you should aim for every day. Any days where you exercise 60 minutes or more, add 5-10 grams of protein to that number.

Now let's talk about what foods are good sources of protein. The best choices are lean or low-fat protein choices. The typical American has most their protein for lunch and dinner, but remember to add protein to your breakfast, and for snacks to meet your needs.

Some great animal based lean proteins, are chicken, turkey, and fish/shellfish. Animal proteins such as beef and pork are higher in fat, so you want to try to reduce your consumption of those meats. Any animal protein has about 7 grams of protein in one ounce of meat. Eggs are also a great source of lean protein. 1 egg has about 7 grams of protein.

Dairy products also can be good sources of dietary protein. If you choose low-fat options; milk, yogurt, and cheese all provide around 8-10 grams of protein per serving. Choose milk or yogurt that contain 2% fat or less, and choose cheeses such as cheddar, skim mozzarella, or low-fat ricotta.

If you are a vegetarian or vegan you still have many options for lean protein foods. Meat substitutes such as Tofu, tempeh, or seitan are all lean sources of protein and contain 3-5 grams of protein per ounce.

There are also several plant-based high protein foods. Many of these foods are great choices for side dishes or snacks between meals. Whole nuts or seeds and nut butters are usually high in protein, containing about 6-8 grams of protein per ounce. Good sources include almonds, peanuts, sunflower seeds, cashews, and pumpkin seeds.

Beans and legumes also contain decent amounts of protein. A half cup of beans, chickpeas, lentils, or soybeans contains about 8-10 grams of protein.

Try to incorporate some of these sources of protein into each meal and snack, especially after exercise.

Thanks for listening!

Sources:

<https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/appendix-1/>

<http://www.todaysdietitian.com/newarchives/060114p22.shtml>

<https://www.eatright.org/fitness/sports-and-performance/fueling-your-workout/protein-and-the-athlete>

<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/10-reasons-to-eat-more-protein>