



Pre-workout & Post-meals

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The two main components of having a healthy lifestyle are eating healthy and working out regularly. Although research has shown that diet is the key to weight control, the benefits of exercise cannot be overlooked.

Exercise helps to exhaust excess calories that otherwise would be stored as fat. It also helps to boost metabolism, improve insulin sensitivity, prevent many diseases and improve overall health.

Eating and exercise must work together for a healthier you. We need a healthy diet to support our exercise regime and we need exercise to maintain healthy cardiovascular fitness, tone up, maintain or gain lean muscle mass to accelerate metabolism to control weight, raise energy, and improve vitality.

Energy for physical activity

The most common advice to lose weight is “to control one’s diet to reduce calorie intake and increase physical activity to expend more calories”. Although it sounds simple and straightforward, the interaction between energy intake and physical activities is actually rather complex.

During physical activities, our body metabolises fuel such as carbohydrates and fat for the energy we need to overcome inertia and move our body. When intensity is low, a higher proportion of the energy comes from fat metabolism and as exercise intensity increases, a higher proportion of the required energy comes from carbohydrates than fat.

Since our body has limited storage of carbohydrates, and fat metabolism is too slow to replenish the expenditure, we get exhausted rather quickly when the intensity is high. The rate of exhaustion differs from every individual depending on his or her fitness level.

Although exercising in low intensity sounds more favourable, it expends fewer total calories and is not an effective way to improve fitness. To lose weight or fight diseases such as diabetes, an additional expenditure of about 2000 calories from exercise per week is suggested. Usually, if we stick to a healthy diet with enough calories to support our daily activities, we would not require any additional snacks before the additional 30 to 60 minutes of moderate intensity exercise.

Consuming sports drinks (carbohydrate drinks) and snacks during low to moderate intensity or short bouts of exercise sessions actually cancels out the calories we have expended. This makes losing weight through exercise more difficult.

Thus, careful planning of diet and exercise intensity is needed to achieve energy deficit for weight loss or improve athletic performance, and food selection becomes an essential skill to enhance the outcome of our workout and to reach our goal quickly. Check out some of my food ideas before and after a workout for best results.