Overview

To build strength and lean muscle, you need to fuel your body properly before and after your training session. By eating the right foods at the right times, you'll have more energy to train, you'll recover better from intense workouts and you'll maximize the muscle building process.

Pre-Workout Fuel

Many people work out first thing in the morning on an empty stomach. While exercising is a great way to start the day, eating something is essential to maximizing results. Even if it's just half of an apple or a pre-workout shooter, which is something like a watered down glass of orange juice with a scoop of whey protein or simply a glass of water with a scoop of whey, the time it takes to whip up a quick snack will pay dividends in the results you see from training. Recent research has shown that the pre-workout shooter may produce an effect equal to a traditional post-workout recovery shake. Whey protein is great choice because it's digested fast so it gets to your muscles quickly. Here are a few sample snacks combos:

1. 1/2 cup orange juice + 1 cup water + 1 scoop whey protein
2. 1 scoop EAS Endurathon + 6 to 12 ounces water
3. 8 ounce smoothie – vanilla whey protein, berries, a little orange juice and ice
4. Yogurt with 1/2 cup cereal
5. Energy gel
6. 16-ounce sports drink
7. Slice of toast with natural peanut butter
8. 1/2 energy bar

Post-Workout Fuel

For active people, this may be the most important meal of the day. After a training session, your body craves nutrients to repair damaged muscle tissue. If you're not feeding your body these nutrients—whether you're working out or even sleeping—not only will you not optimize your training, but you also risk your body turning to lean muscle stores for a source of energy, an process known as catabolism.

Drinking a shake or sports drink or eating an energy bar after you train will help maximize the muscle building process and expedite your body's recovery process. Look for something with about 0.8 grams of carbohydrates per kilogram of body weight and 0.4 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight.