

## **Chapter 10 - NUTRITION FOR GOLF PERFORMANCE**

It is beyond the scope of this manual to provide an extensive coverage of the very important area of nutrition. The following will provide a brief overview. Golfers are encouraged to seek the advice of a qualified sports dietician for more detailed advice.

Nutrition plays a vital role in golf performance, as the food that the golfer eats provides the fuel and building blocks for performance and recovery.

### **Benefits of improved nutrition include:**

- ◆ Improved muscular strength
- ◆ Improved concentration and focus
- ◆ Higher energy levels
- ◆ Quicker recovery following training, practice or competition

Improved nutrition for golf performance not only means what the golfer eats immediately prior to or during competition, but includes what the golfer eats each and every day. Improved nutrition requires changing habits to make better nutrition part of the golfer's everyday routine.

### **Basic Principles of Nutrition for Performance**

- ◆ Eat a balanced diet high in fruits and vegetables
- ◆ Eat 5-6 small meals through the day to maintain energy levels and ease digestion
- ◆ Stay well hydrated
- ◆ Junk food, soft drinks, alcohol and caffeine have no role in an athlete's nutritional plan



### **Building Blocks of Nutrition**

#### **Carbohydrates**

- ◆ complex carbohydrates are important nutrient for athletes
- ◆ provide energy for muscles and brain
- ◆ examples include multi-grain bread, high fibre cereals, most fruits and vegetables

#### **Proteins**

- ◆ building blocks of the body
- ◆ important for repairing muscles and body tissues
- ◆ also important for immune system
- ◆ found in low fat milk and cheese, yoghurt, lean meat, egg whites, tuna and other fish

#### **Fats**

- ◆ essential for good health
- ◆ potentially limit performance therefore must be controlled in diet
- ◆ foods with high levels of fat that need to be avoided include margarine, potato chips, whole milk and regular cheese, fried foods

## Hydration

- ◆ most critical for athlete performance
- ◆ most processes in the body rely on adequate hydration, therefore important for basic health needs
- ◆ a 1% decrease in hydration may result in a 5% decrease in muscle function, as well as impacting focus and concentration
- ◆ thirst is a poor indicator of hydration levels, drink before thirst
- ◆ recommendations for hydration:
  - ➔ drink 2 litres of water per day in regular small amounts
  - ➔ the golfer should check the colour of their urine, it should be clear
  - ➔ avoid caffeine, sugar or carbonation in drinks
  - ➔ the golfer should sip water constantly through the round



## Practical Guidelines for Nutrition for Golf Performance

### Pre-Game Nutrition

- ➔ should be high in carbohydrate
- ➔ moderate in protein
- ➔ low in fat and fibre
- ➔ should avoid a large meal immediately prior to round
- ➔ very important to eat a good breakfast prior to morning rounds as the body's fuel stores are depleted overnight
- ➔ the night before a morning round the golfer should eat a meal high in good quality carbohydrates
- ➔ examples of foods that should be eaten prior to a round of golf:
  - ✓ whole grain cereal with skim milk
  - ✓ yoghurt and fruit
  - ✓ whole wheat toast with jam or peanut butter
  - ✓ wholemeal sandwiches with chicken and salad
  - ✓ stir fried rice and vegetables
  - ✓ baked jacket potato with filling

### Nutrition During the Round

- ➔ foods must be easy to digest
- ➔ should include mostly carbohydrates and water
- ➔ most convenient method is to eat small amounts regularly through the round
- ➔ fluid intake should be adequate to replace lost fluid due to sweat and will differ from golfer to golfer,

#### **FLUID INTAKE DURING A ROUND OF GOLF**

*As a guide, the golfer should take a small mouthful of water on the tee, then take another mouthful as they reach their tee shot, and finally a third mouthful as they reach the green..... on every hole!*

depending on their individual sweat rates and conditions

- ➡ examples of foods that should be eaten during a round:
  - ✓ fruit such as bananas, apples, pineapple
  - ✓ sandwiches with whole grain bread
  - ✓ jelly beans/snakes which will give a rapid energy boost
  - ✓ nuts, muffins, low-fat muesli bars, sports bars
  - ✓ sports drinks, water or diluted cordial

### **Recovery Nutrition**

- ➡ important to replace used up energy stores and to assist with repair of body structures
- ➡ should include a combination of protein and carbohydrates
- ➡ post exercise or competition meal should be consumed as soon as practically possible, ideally within 15 - 30 minutes

### **The Traveling Golfer**

The best nutritional plan can go wrong when the golfer is traveling and has less control over their meals. This can have a disastrous effect on performance at the most inconvenient time, during a tournament.

The following tips can be used while traveling to avoid this problem:

- ➡ where possible take your own food to the event
- ➡ if staying in a hotel with suitable storage facilities, purchase your own food
- ➡ when eating at buffets, have a clear plan about what you want to eat and avoid the temptation to over eat
- ➡ when dining out, keep the following in mind:
  - ✓ choose vegetables over chips
  - ✓ choose meals based on carbohydrates such as pasta or rice
  - ✓ avoid deep fried or battered dishes
  - ✓ for dessert choose fruit with ice-cream, gelato or yoghurt
  - ✓ look for meals with moderate amounts of lean meat with lots of vegetables
  - ✓ minimize alcohol intake, water is a much better option
  - ✓ avoid the temptation of fast foods, they are high in fat