

Nutrition for Dancers

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Agenda

- Optimal Nutrition for Dancers
- Benefits of Nutrient Timing
- Tips for Muscle Recovery and Regeneration
- Recommended Supplements

Your relationship with food matters!

Controlling our food intake to change our body shape is a losing battle

Obsessing about what we eat, when we eat, and how much we eat can be all-consuming and lead to burnout





Dancer Diet Culture

Compared to the average person, dancers are **3X** more likely to struggle with a clinical eating disorder

But... you don't have to be diagnosed with a clinical eating disorder to be negatively affected by diet culture

Some typical behaviors reinforced by diet culture

- Avoiding certain foods like bread, pasta, and dairy products
- Skipping meals
- Time restricted eating (or interval fasting)



Relative Energy
Deficiency in
Sport
REDS

- A syndrome of negative performance and health consequences
 - can happen when your body doesn't have enough energy to support its needs
- Eating too little – your body will reduce its metabolic rate in order to conserve energy
- How do we prevent this?
 - eat enough and stop worrying about calories

Food is the dancer's fuel that enhances performance and supports life-long health



Healthy Diet for Dancers

Fiber-rich Carbs

Should be around half of your overall calorie intake



@mysuperbodytransformation

Protein

- Helps to repair torn muscles
- Needed for growth and formation of new muscle tissue
- Available from plant and animal sources
- Should be evenly distributed throughout the day (3-4 meals)



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Where do vegetarians get their protein?

BEST PLANT-BASED PROTEIN SOURCES:



beans



lentils



oats



chickpeas



nuts



edamame



hemp seeds



quinoa



tofu

@healthy.little.tummies @healthyfrenchwife

- Important health benefits:
 - Supports bone health
 - Helps you absorb certain vitamins
 - Promotes hormonal functioning
 - Keeps you feeling satisfied

Omega 3 – can reduce inflammation
Found in salmon, trout and sardines as well as chia and flaxseeds



GETTY IMAGES

Healthy Fats

Dancer's Daily Intake

- Aim for 3 meals and 2 snacks per day.
- Most of your foods should be fiber-rich carbs
- Try not to go longer than 3 or 4 hours without food
- Focus on adding nuts, seeds, beans, lentils and dairy foods to diet.





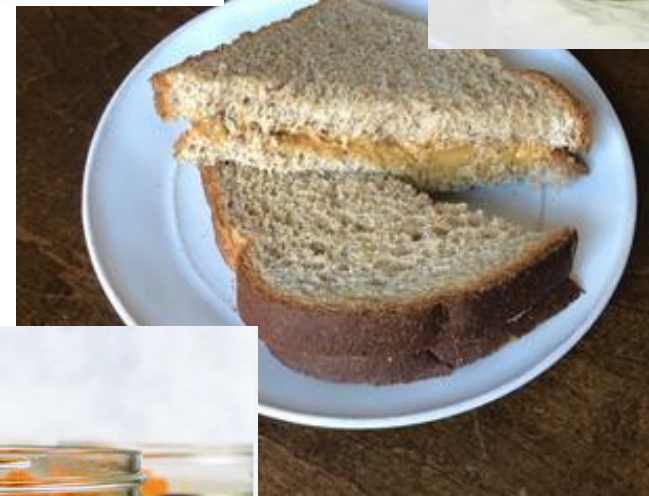
November 6, 2023

Fuel for breakfast

Choices that are high in fiber, protein and quality carbohydrates

Snacks on-the-go

- Cheese
- Nuts
- Eggs
- Dried and fresh fruit
- Cut veggies
- Whole grain crackers or bread
- Hummus or peanut butter



Lara Gigot



Nutrient Timing for Dancers

- Based on two principles:
 1. Carb replenishment builds up glycogen stores
 2. Protein intake stimulates muscle protein synthesis

30 – 60 minutes after training is the window of opportunity to benefit from workout nutrition



Snacks after training

- Handful of nuts, a mandarin, glass of water
- 1 Greek yogurt, müsli and a cup of herbal tea
- Smoothie with 1 cup strawberries, 1 banana, milk and 1 tablespoon almond butter
- Serving of hummus with Finncrisp crackers
- Hard-boiled egg with cherry tomatoes and cucumber
- Peanut butter and banana sandwich with a glass of milk



Top 3 Dancer Diet Mistakes

1. Following a low-carb diet
2. Eating too little
3. Ignoring timing of meals and snacks



Muscle recovery – what is happening?



- Muscle protein synthesis: this is what leads to muscle growth
- Rebuilding torn/ damaged muscle fibers
- Restoring fluid balance

Recovery formula: sleep, hydration, diet and supplements

Getting the right nutrition strategy will encourage quicker recovery, reduce soreness, build muscle and replenish glycogen

Increasing muscle protein synthesis (MPS)



Post-exercise ingestion of protein (immediately to 2-h post) stimulates MPS



Eating 20–40 g protein every 3-4 h increases MPS rates, improves body composition and boosts performance



Dancer's tip: A snack high in casein (all dairy foods including milk, cheese, cottage cheese, and especially Greek yogurt) prior to sleep can increase MPS throughout the night

Useful supplements

Injury prevention:

- Vitamin D, Calcium and Iron
 - Best to get through food sources when possible

Injury recovery:

- Vitamin C- enriched gelatin supplements
 - Tissue and bone repair
- Omega-3 fish oil
 - anti-inflammatory
- Magnesium??

Muscle protein synthesis

- Creatine



Creatine

- Safe, effective ergogenic aid for adult athletes
- effectively increases lean mass, strength, power, speed, and exercise capacity
- enhances post-exercise recovery, injury prevention, and muscle growth

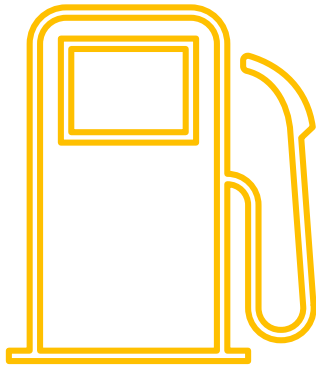
Dosage:

- 3-5 grams per day



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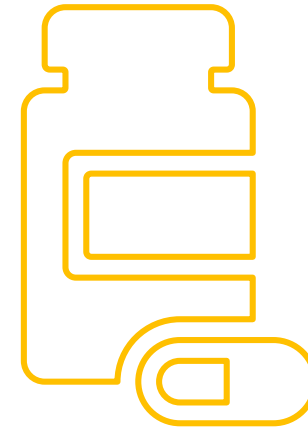
Take Home Messages



Food is fuel – focus on mini-meals every 3-4 hours



Fiber-rich carbs are your main energy source



The right supplements can prevent injury and help repair damaged tissue

Resources

- Nutrition consultation with Dora Meyer
 - www.mri.tum.de/ernaehrungsmedizin
 - dora.meyer@tum.de
- Websites and blogs
 - www.danceusa.org/dancerhealth
 - <https://health4performance.basem.co.uk>
 - www.dancenutrition.com
 - www.ausdancersoverseas.com
 - www.nickykeayfitness.com

Thank you for your
attention!

