



# On Fruit, Proteins, and Post Workout?

By Stu Yellin, WNBF Pro Bodybuilder and Nutrition Coach

## **I heard that eating fruit is bad when dieting because it contains a lot of sugar. Really?**

This is really one of those pieces of gym lore where I can only assume someone didn't really understand what they read, and then proceeded to repeat it to everyone anyway. First off, you have to realize that sugar isn't always a bad thing. Your body wants it. It actually *needs* it! If you don't provide enough (from various sources), your body will actually make its own from protein/amino acids in muscle tissue.

Now, let's look at the poor victim of these horrible rumors. Understand that fruit juice are going to have very different responses in the body compared to a piece of fruit. The primary reasoning for that is related to their corresponding *fiber content*. Fiber is an indigestible portion of food that has a profound effect on feelings of fullness, digestion rates of nutrients, and importantly, blood sugar levels. When you drink fruit juice, there is a noticeable absence of fiber, and thus the naturally-occurring sugars of the four or five oranges it takes to make a glass of orange juice will hit your system very quickly. Conversely, had you actually eaten four oranges instead of just juicing them, the fiber of the fruit itself essentially blunts evil blood sugar spikes. (And, as you can imagine, you'd obviously feel *much* fuller afterwards).

Another unwarranted concern some people have with fruit, is that, due to its sugar content from *fructose*, it is automatically a 'bad' source of carbohydrates and is more likely to be stored as fat. This is simply untrue. Yes, the body has to first convert fracture into glucose before it can be used by muscle tissue, but all that really does is add one extra step in its digestive process, essentially slowing its availability. After that process, your body sees it as essentially the same thing.

As to whether ingested carbohydrates will get turned to fat or not doesn't depends on whether they're from fructose or not, but solely on if you are in a situation of caloric deficit, or have depleted glycogen (carbohydrate) stores.

Basically, it is *just* as possible to gain fat by eating too many apples as it is from eating too many cupcakes. It's certainly a whole lot less probable, but still possible. Once you understand these few facts about fruit, you can definitely work it into your daily fat loss nutrition plans. Just be sure to take note of the rest of your diet as well.



## Is there really any difference between the sources of protein I have in my diet? Some guys at the gym keep going on about 'fast' and 'slow' proteins for different times of the day.

It is true that different protein sources - whey, casein, soy, beef, fish etc. - have different digestion rates, but this is really only a concern when you make use of these sources completely independently of other nutrients, like having a meal of *only* protein. Remember, adding different nutrients together will slow



the absorption rate of everything in the mix. So if you're in the habit of having a protein shake with a Pop Tart as an afternoon snack, it's really not going to make a huge difference if your shake is comprised of whey or casein because of the carb content in the Pop Tart (and thus, the carb content of the entire "meal").

Most supplement companies these days market "blended formulas" as opposed to using just one type of protein. The simple reasoning is that so many studies have shown the greater benefits of ingesting a combination of both a "fast protein" with a "slow protein" instead of solely one or the other.

With this taken into account it's best to focus your nutrition efforts just on getting enough total protein each day, instead of splitting hairs about which protein source might be usable by your muscle cells a few minutes before another.

## Do I really need to force down protein and carbohydrates immediately after training if I want to see results? Sometimes I'm just not hungry after a hard workout. Am I hurting my progress?

This is an older approach, where the rationale is to try utilizing the increased uptake of nutrients following an intense exercise session in order to improve your recovery and progress by utilizing this "magic window."

Now, just because it's an older approach, doesn't mean it doesn't still work! For a lot of people it is an excellent practice, but it does depend on what the rest of your nutrition plan looks like.

Here's the deal: Any food you ingest is going to take a while to actually get broken down and circulated through your body. So the premise that you may *not* want to eat right after training isn't always a bad thing. Suppose that you ingested nutrients shortly *before* training. There's a very good chance they'll still be in your gut digesting even a couple of hours later. The actual timespan will vary a bit based on the breakdown of macronutrients in your specific food choices.

The bigger point is, assuming you're addressing your nutrition needs before, or even *during* your session, you're really not going to set yourself back significantly if you don't knock people out of your way and race home to get your post workout feeding in as soon as humanly possible. Sure, you can still take advantage of the accelerated uptake of carbs post workout if you'd like, but never think it's an absolute necessity.

Interestingly, there has been a shift in recent years to focusing more on *pre* workout nutrition, as well as even providing certain nutrients during training. For the average person, such issues of nutrient timing may not create much of a noticeable effect, but for the more advanced lifter who's more conscious of each minor variable, anything that improves performance in the slightest will always contribute to better results in terms of physique progress.

The change from eating to recover *after* an "ok" workout to trying to ensure an awesome one through regular daily nutritional support has been very widely embraced, and with very good reason! As long as you guarantee that you're feeling well-fed enough to get the most out of your training, and as long as the rest of your day's diet adequately addresses your needs, you really don't need to kill yourself forcing anything down immediately post workout.



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