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# Post Workout Recovery Nutrition: It's Not What You Digest But What You Absorb That Counts

Many athletes and weekend warriors alike give it their all in the gym with dreams of building muscle and burning fat—yet, their naiveté leads to self-sabotage by neglecting the most vital component. Muscle is not built and fat is not lost in the gym; these changes are made when you leave the gym by applying proper nutritional choices. Many athletes ruin their program by poorly refueling. They either rationalize that exercise will allow them to eat whatever they want or they neglect one of the most important meals of the day—the post-workout recovery.

Within the first 30 minutes to an hour of working out, your body has an anabolic (muscle building) and anti-catabolic (muscle sparing) window where you can capitalize on optimal gains. In order to achieve the highest yield on your workout investment, your body requires many different nutrients but there are six that are especially important: quality protein, quality carbohydrates and dietary oils, quality water, electrolytes, and enzymes.

## Top 6 concerns in a post workout recovery drink:

### 1. Quality Protein

Biological Value (BV) refers to how well and how quickly your body can actually use the protein you consume.

It is becoming common knowledge that whey is superior to other proteins for post-workout recovery drinks. Yet not all whey protein is the same. The adage, “you are what you eat” needs to be modified to “you are what you eat, eats.” In the case of whey protein, grass-fed whey protein trumps commercial whey protein isolates and concentrates. Nearly all whey protein products are a processed,

isolated or concentrated byproduct from grain and soy-fed cows that are pumped full of hormones and antibiotics. Instead, choose a native whey protein from a grass-fed cow, as it will be more beneficial for rapid tissue repair, muscle building, and immune support. It is glutamine rich and high in Branch Chain Amino Acids (BCAAs) and fat-burning CLA (2).

### 2. Quality Carbohydrates

Your muscles are the most susceptible to storing glycogen during post-exercise. Yet still, any carbohydrates you ingest that are not burned as fuel or stored in the muscle cells will be stored as body fat. Small amounts of carbohydrates from fruit are the best choice and will also add more fiber to your shakes. On the other hand, standard recommendations like maltodextrin (grain-based starch) or 75 grams of dextrose are poor choices if you are trying to lose body fat while gaining muscle.

### 3. Quality Oils

Healthy dietary oils work better than carbohydrates for fuel and the cholesterol is needed as a precursor to all your natural anabolic hormones. Without cholesterol, we can't make many hormones including testosterone, estrogen, pregnenolone, or DHEA in our bodies. You need to have high enough levels of cholesterol in your body to manufacture optimal quantities of these fat and muscle-building hormones.

**4. Quality Water**

Proper hydration is essential for post-exercise recovery. The beauty of a post-workout recovery drink is that you are able to ingest quality nutrients and properly rehydrate simultaneously. You should drink roughly 1 quart for every 50 pounds of bodyweight and ideally that water should be alkaline.

**5. Electrolytes**

Vital minerals like potassium and sodium are essential for post-workout recovery as they are lost while sweating during prolonged workouts. Many sea salts are rich in minerals like sodium, potassium, calcium, magnesium, and more.

**6. Enzymes**

It is not what you digest but what you absorb that counts. Digestive enzymes will break down the ingredients into nutrients that your body can readily digest and more efficiently absorb. ■

**References**

1. Droge W, and Breitkreutz R. Glutathione and immune function. Proceedings of the Nutritional Society. 59(4): 595 – 600. 2000.



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