

Fats – You need them too!

Not many sports people know that fats plays an important role in assisting physical performance. Fats are essential for manufacturing the muscle building hormone - testosterone. Without the contribution of fat from the diet muscle building and tissue repair would be retarded. There is evidence to show that if dietary fat is reduced a reduction in circulating testosterone concentrations can result (18,47) and the likelihood of what we call a negative nitrogen balance occurs.

You may be surprised by this but too much emphasis is placed on low fat foods nowadays. Our modern diet accentuates this low-fat approach to eating but yet this approach has produced a greater obesity rate than ever before! The type of fat that you consume is very pertinent here. When you eat foods rich in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats you will be ensuring that you are getting the building blocks for hormones including testosterone and also lowering the 'bad' cholesterol - the low density lipoproteins or LDL's. You will have heard of the Omega 3's and Omega 6's. They are actually polyunsaturated fats and the Omega 3's are found chiefly in FISH - salmon and tuna being excellent sources. Diets rich in Omega 3's typically imply lower LDL and lower blood fats (triglycerides) and higher good cholesterol - the HDL's.

One type of polyunsaturated fat that you should avoid is the fat called 'trans fat'. This is found in margarine and baked foods. This type of fat actually lowers the good cholesterol while rising the bad cholesterol or LDL's. Baked foods such as biscuits, doughnuts, cakes and confectionary in general are plentiful in this bad fat. Consuming lots of these foods does not do your testosterone building any good (47).