

DHA: The New Sports Nutrition Kid on the Block

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While creatine, branched-chain amino acids and glutamine are well known and frequently utilized amongst fitness buffs and competitive athletes, there's another nutrient taking its turn in the spotlight – DHA. DHA, short for docosahexaenoic acid, is an essential omega-3 fatty acid that has made a name for itself for its role in both cardiovascular and brain health. More recently, the sports nutrition community has taken notice of DHA's ability to help speed recovery, increase gains and improve athletic performance.

DHA aids in the muscle recovery process as an anti-inflammatory agent and reduces DOMS (delayed onset muscle soreness), perceived pain and range of motion 48 hours post exercise. These qualities, along with boosting blood and oxygen flow to muscles, may also decrease incidence of injury.

Increasing the amount of DHA you consume may help decrease muscle breakdown and increase protein synthesis by increasing the body's muscle-building response to insulin and amino acids. Fatty acids like DHA not only increase muscle gains, but may also increase the body's level of calcium absorption, improving bone strength.

A vital component in nerve endings, neurons and muscle membranes – DHA has been shown to improve reaction time of athletes during competition. DHA also decreases heart rate, which can help improve oxygen utilization during competition or tough workouts.

References:

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