

Female Nutrition (Part 2)

Dr. Beth Westie

So when we talk about protein and increasing that, my favorite way to have people increase protein they get throughout the day is protein pacing. Have you guys credit heard of protein pacing? No? This is a super fancy way of saying you're eating more protein. What are you doing? Oh, protein pacing. It sound like a thing, right? It's just eating more protein.

So again, that minimum of 20 grams of protein per serving. That's that threshold, and you're going to do that four to six times a day. So it's going to be different for each person. This is more personalized especially the female body. We want to make sure you're supporting that lean muscle tissue and everything that the body is doing.

So again, I do an example of five meals, mini meals, snacks, whatever it is throughout the day. Breakfast, snack, lunch snack, dinner and if you're getting at least 25 grams of protein at each one, at the end of the day you're getting 125 grams of protein. Now there's is a lot of different formulas for how much protein should you get throughout the day. I always talk about at least getting enough protein in grams to support your muscle tissue. But at least you're maintaining. At least you're at a point where you can maintain that lean muscle tissue.


Again, the female body, especially with stress or other hormonal issues, is going to react and respond differently, so week to week that can be different, but if you're being at least pretty consistent with protein pacing you're going to notice an overall increase in energy and performance results just because we're getting more protein throughout the day.

It's not hard to do. It's just a different shift in your focus on your meals. Like for lunch, oh what are you having for lunch? Salad, and a whole thing of lettuce. Great. You got to put the big chicken breast on top. Perfect. Things like that. And it can go for body size too. For me, I'm 6'2", pretty big gal. And for football, right. [INAUDIBLE].

So I actually hit anywhere between 170 and 180 grams of protein a day, on a regular basis. If I start missing that mark, if I'm only getting 100 to 120 grams of protein, within a few days I don't feel good. I don't have the same energy, it's tougher to go through the workouts, I definitely don't recover as well, it's really a struggle, so the body is just changes pretty quickly when you start protein pacing.

I have people that notice an increase even within two to three days of getting more protein they're like, oh my god, this is amazing. I did better at my workout than I've ever done before. I was able to lift more weights, and I did another set, and it was incredible, and blah, blah, blah. Because again, you're getting more gas in that tank of the car.

Yeah so this is really fun. There's just starting to be some new articles and research out there on protein pacing. So if you like research, start diving into protein pacing. It's super fun. OK.



Athletes and estrogen. Yay. So this is where specific things about the female body, and training, and nutrition can come into play.

Again, because estrogen is going to give you that boost of energy, everything else, and you are able to build muscle easier. This is also a great time if you're trying to adding a new skill or shift technique. Or create a new habit even, doing it during this phase, right, that first couple of weeks of the cycle it's easier to upload it into your nervous system and to have that muscle memory happen. Just because everything is moving faster in the body.

It's really amazing the difference here in the estrogen phase for people. Again, you might be in more of a mental focus, mental alert, sometimes the memory is even better during this point. But in terms of nutrition, again, how to complete nutrients is important. So protein, fat, carb-- I'm always a big proponent of that. Including complete nutrients throughout the day at those, again, you're protein pacing throughout the day having those five meals. Great.


Make sure you're having some carb and fat in all of them as well. Again, just increasing the fuel that would be in the body. There's so many people that don't eat correctly, or they're like, oh I want to do-- oops. Sorry. Good vibrations [INAUDIBLE]. And they want to increase their energy, but they're thinking, ugh, I don't eat breakfast or I'm not feeling correctly, right, or they're saying, I don't do carbs. Cutting out all my carbs is going to be the thing for me.

Well really, one, carbohydrates are necessary to have maximum protein absorption, right. And two, you're not fueling your body with the necessary energy that it's going to need to sustain. So carbohydrates being burned in an hour or so, or less, proteins being burned in two to three hours, fats up to four hours. So having that complete nutrition really does consistently give your body the energy that it needs all day long, especially for an athlete. They're going to need to have their body primed so that they do perform, they have this energy store available.

I know for years, I did this for years, because as an athlete you're like, oh we have a game tomorrow. We're going to have our spaghetti dinner the night before, right? You carb load and you just eat a pound of pasta, right? Everybody did that. Years I did that. And really how is that helpful for having a game the next night at 7:00 PM?

You're not focused on really building your body with energy in the right way. It should be more about consistently, evenly giving it that fuel, so that all day long you have this energy not focused on pasta the night before. Estrogen is also carb burning. So naturally, again, if people want to be-- there's a female athlete looking to lean out for a certain thing or performance or something often times they'll thrown carb cycling at this point too.

Layer that are on top of the protein pacing and some other things. It's amazing how quickly the female body then can start to burn carbs once you tie in carb cycling. Also with gals that have done really bad nutrition programs in the past, their body tends to not process carbs well, and if you talk to 95% of women they will admit to yep, I've done a terrible diet at some point in my



past. I mean I've done countless now. Some of them self-inflicted, some of them inflicted by coaches.

We would get in trouble. If we got caught cheese on our plate at lunch when come around, we'd have to run in the gym. So that's going to affect how well your body can process these food, but carb cycling I like to just layer in on top, too. Again, not all the time. Not permanently but just as an additional tool to get the body to burn more carbs at certain point.

It gets the system functioning better, nutrient absorption is easier, so you can also, because the metabolism's working a little bit better at this point too, it can replenish the nutrients that it needs after a workout. So pretty versus post training nutrition. I didn't put any of this info in here, but a lot of times-- especially for gals, again, there's so much misinformation out there, but I really like to have a good complete nutrient, maybe a little carb heavy before training, before a workout, before a run or something.


That gives you enough fuel going into it-- going into that training period that you're going to perform really well. Again, during the training period, the digestive system shuts down. Blood is diverted out to your extremities and everywhere else to have that function well. So the digestive system really isn't waking up and doing things, but after you're done training, and you're done with your run, or whatever that is then your body wants to rebuild and refuel. So getting that either protein or [INAUDIBLE] after a workout anywhere between 15, 20 minutes for it to refuel.

At this point too, oftentimes for the estrogen phase I find that it's helpful to maybe add in little bit of carb there as well, instead of just focusing on the protein piece of it. And then, again, later on really refueling with a complete nutrient again. Making sure you're getting all that protein pacing in there. Yes.

Any of you guys have any experience with this? Pre and post workout nutrition? Yeah? OK. Because it's going to be different for estrogen. It almost seems easier for estrogen. Just because the body's moving better, it's doing different things. Progesterone, so after ovulation, and really shift to change. The decreased recovery time. Lower energy overall. It could be tougher to really get going. It can take longer for the body to warm up even and just have that different response happen.

Muscle memory slower, mental focus is lower, and you're going to need more rest time. Again, feeling like you're sore for days after leg day, versus just one day, which is what would happen before. One of the biggest things for women is that oftentimes they don't realize that during the phase, that on a day to day basis, your body may need an additional 300 to 500 calories.

And that's just regular. Not even if you're really training for something. So say you have a half marathon, or marathon coming up that you're really putting more miles for. You may need to



increase that amount even more, based on where your body is [? handling ?] in training. But it's very normal for the progesterone phase that your body needs more calories overall.

What those calories are coming from, like what your nutrient base are they coming from? I always like to do an even spread, but maybe a little bit heavier in the healthy fats. Again, your body temperature is higher. And getting that thermogenic component in there, so increasing the healthy fats a little bit is a great way to-- I mean, provided that you're getting all the protein and everything you need-- is a great way to add more-- bless you-- more calorie in during the day that your body's needing without having to become dependent more on carbohydrates. Which is what happens a lot for women at this phase, especially when we're in training mode.

The slower digestive system also can really affect how well the body functions at this point. Again, a lot of bloating, digestive discomfort, some women get heartburn, all these other things. So with protein pacing, and protein being a nutrient that can be really tough to break down, always recommending that they're increasing whatever it is that they need around that to break down [INAUDIBLE].


So apple cider vinegar is fantastic, right. The probiotics, the digestive enzymes, all these things. And sometimes spacing it out throughout the day is helpful for women. Like, oh I'm going to have this in the morning, and then maybe mid afternoon or right before my last meal, so I know my body can break it down and digest and absorb all these nutrients as well as they can.

Just because you should do things you want to give it as good a chance as it has to absorb. Slower metabolism, the timing around training is really, really important for this. Sometimes with estrogen, I always say you can almost get away with somethings, maybe not feeling like you need to exactly be precise on some of your nutrition timing. But for progesterone, progesterone is not necessarily as forgiving. You really need to be tighten up on getting more fuel in before training.

The other thing too, especially pre workouts, for athletes that use any type of pre workout, especially if it's a stimulant based workout. They talk about it your body acclimating to it and everything else, so I recommend if women like to use a good workout, they actually shift the amount they're doing on a monthly basis. So when their body is higher in estrogen, they probably won't need as much.

But then increasing it, they feel like they need it during the progesterone phase, which can be very normal. Just again, because it could take a little bit for the body to really get going. And [INAUDIBLE] really getting enough protein and healthy fats. Just a little bit more healthy fat after working out. Again, that body really needs as much fuel as it can get after exercise.

So if you replenish and rebuild as quickly it's going to happen a slower, so you want to have it available right away. A lot of times gals you get busy, get caught up with something you're just not as diligent about oh, yep. I'm done working out. 15 minutes later I've done my cool down,



my body is now ready to start rebuilding, repairing. That they're just like, uh, maybe I'll just wait, or I'll just go chat with my friend for a little while. I've done that. That's why I'm saying that.

Where you're not getting that fuel in right away. And getting that fuel in right away really does make a big, big difference in terms of how well your body can recover, and again, how fast you can push it. That's really the name of the game when you're talking about female athletes and training for performance and everything else, is that how hard and fast can you push the body? How fast can you get your [INAUDIBLE] to recover to do that all over again? So that's a really big component that I find was really helpful is that I'm really being specific and precise at this point.


My other favorite thing to add in for women right here is actually I do some daily intermittent fasting. How many of you guys have done daily intermittent fasting? Yes? You do? OK. So daily intermittent fasting is having a feed and a fast time during the day. I like doing it here because the fasting time it allows you're digestive system just to rest and repair, right? It just gets to calm down for a little bit and let things that need to happen happen. It just all marinates in there. It's really nice.

So a lot of times, on a regular basis, doing even a 12 hour daily intermittent fast window is good. For this I like to tighten it up if you can. [INAUDIBLE] even eight to 10 hours. Having that be your feed time. And then having your fast time being longer, that way, again, the body gets a little extra time to regenerate and start over in the digestive system. It's really amazing the difference that that makes and how that can just help refresh and then absorb more nutrients and everything else that day.

So again, depending on the age group. If you're working with female athletes, depending on the to age group. From being a student athlete to now an athlete now, and training now, it can be tough. Student athletes, they're up early in the morning, sometimes you had morning workout, right. When I was in college, I would have to wake up at 4:30 in the morning to get the gym to lift before I started classes. You'd have classes, we'd have afternoon practice, right. We had study sessions at night we could sit in the library and eat gummy bears, great.

So all of these things, right. But then my feeding window was 4:30 in the morning until 9:30 at night. That doesn't give your body a chance to really rest or repair. So in stripping that down, depending on when you're training time is, it's just working with that as much as possible. So yes, it's great to do like a 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM feed time, but if you can shorten that up a little bit. Like an eight to six. That's even better, especially during this phase here. Letting that body repair overnight makes a huge, huge impact.

There's other stuff. Doing 18 to 24 hour intermittent fast. That tends to be a little different though when you're training. Especially for women, I recommend doing it with snacks and things like that in there so you're not [INAUDIBLE]. But again, the digestive is really having a hard time



breaking down and repairing, again, that has a huge result on how well you can absorb nutrients and the energy that your body is able to have.

And then the other factors that come into play here. Stress, sleep, and illness, and injury. So stress, how the female body reacts to stress, and the increased cortisol. Nutrient timing for working out anyway if there's any exercising for longer than 30 minutes to 45 minutes, the cortisol will rise. So having some type of glucose at that 30 to 40 minute mark can really mute that cortisol response.

And that's how a lot of athletes train all the time they have some type of glucose when they're working out. So making sure you're fueling it to really decrease stress on a day to day basis with training is important. But also the stress overall in life. Increased cortisol actually impacts hormones. All those hormones function, everything else. So my favorite thing to use for this is actually adaptogens. Yes, adaptogens? Yes. [INAUDIBLE].

So one of my favorites are ashwagandha. Those really work with the hormones well. Things for performance are [INAUDIBLE] just fantastic for endurance and performance, just to keep the body going. But again, helping the body mitigate stress so it doesn't impact negatively with cortisol and then also decreased recovery time.

Sleep. Sleep is really important of course for recovery. But also if somebody is not getting enough sleep naturally, for whatever reason that is, whether it be they have a puppy that keeps them up all night, or they're stressed or worried, or whatever that is. Or they just feel like they can't get to sleep. They have sleep issues. That's going to affect their hormones and it's going to affect their performance and recovery.

Illness and injury. This is one of the things where a lot of people I feel like miss the boat on continuing to fuel their body correctly. I'm injured so I'm not working out so I'm not going to eat like I normally eat. No. You need to consistently fuel your body. Even if you're injured, and you're not out there lifting heavy weights anymore, you still need to eat consistently to keep your body fueled properly.

So when you do get back out there again, it has that pattern in place. Same thing with illness. People just taking it out, this is aside from having a cold or something, but if you really, really get sick with something. Letting the body rest and recover, again, that impact on the body and how that can affect hormones going forward. Again, for gals sometimes they'll notice, yeah, things are thrown off. It can throw off your cycle. There's a lot of things that impact that. You can go down any rabbit hole now on [INAUDIBLE] or thyroid issues, or other things like that that affect the hormones and how your body can perform also.

But just some other factors to think of. When you're working with people, they're chatting about this, when you're really trying to help people with their nutritional performance. A lot of these things have a big, big part in how well they're going to perform and how they're feeling in their body.