



MIND YOURSELF **WITH** **MELBOURNE**

NUTRITION **EATING FOR HEALTH AND PERFORMANCE**

One of the main aims of the nutrition program at Melbourne Football Club is to ensure that players focus on their diet quality. Diet quality essentially means consuming food that is a quality source of nutrients, and minimally processed. This is the element of your diet that helps to prevent you from getting sick, by boosting the immune system, and can even protect against injury, by contributing to the development of strong tissues, maintaining their integrity, and optimising their adaptation to training stimulus. Further, consuming a quality, varied diet is also supportive to the bacteria that resides within your gut, known as your “gut microbiome”. A diverse gut microbiome has been linked to mental health and wellbeing, whilst a poor gut microbiome, has been linked to negative mental health outcomes.

TIPS FOR EATING FOR HEALTH AND PERFORMANCE

Some practical tips for eating for health and performance

- Good “diet quality” can easily be achieved by consuming the recommended serves of all five food groups (lean meats, and/or alternatives, dairy, and/or alternatives, minimally processed grains, and of course vegetables, and fruit) daily. Refer to <https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/food-essentials/five-food-groups> for more information.
- Make your diet “plant-based”. This does not mean that you need to exclude animal products from your diet, as they are a rich source of protein and minerals, such as iron, however it does mean making vegetables, fruit, and wholegrains the central focus of your diet. Include them in all meals and snacks wherever possible.
- Eat the rainbow. Different coloured vegetables and fruit contain varying levels of essential nutrients that support health and wellbeing. It has also been shown that eating a variety of vegetables and fruit leads to improved gut biodiversity.
- Consume Omega-3 fatty acids at least three times per week. These are found predominantly in seafood, however, are also present in non-animal foods, such as chia seeds and walnuts. Omega-3 fatty acids play a role in reducing inflammation within the body and have also been shown to support mental health.
- Consume yoghurt daily as a snack between lunch and dinner. Yoghurt is a great source of protein, which supports the development of strong muscles, and minerals, such as calcium which helps to support bone health. Yoghurt also contains probiotics which feeds your gut microbiome, keeping it healthy and happy.



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RECIPES **PERFORMANCE SMOOTHIE**

Smoothies are a great option as you can easily adapt them to meet your performance goals (i.e., adding in complex carbohydrates for fuelling, and whole protein sources for muscle recovery and repair). Smoothies are nutrient dense, and therefore can also play a role in supporting your health and preventing illness.

INGREDIENTS (SERVES ONE)

- 1 banana [the greener, the higher the source of pre-biotics (food for your gut microbiome)]
- Handful of baby spinach
- 1-2 tbsp of high protein yoghurt (i.e., Chobani or YoPro)
- ¼ cup of oats
- 1 tbsp chia seeds
- Squeeze of honey
- ½ tsp of cinnamon

METHOD

Add all ingredients into your blender, and blend until smooth. Drink straight away.



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RECIPES **POWER SALAD**

Like our players, you may be time poor. Instead of opting for an unhealthy, and expensive takeaway option, make sure you keep a stock of healthy convenience options on hand, such as tinned tuna and/or legumes. By doing this (in addition to always having fresh vegetables and fruit in the fridge), you can easily make up a healthy salad, packed with Omega 3 fatty acids. Better still, make extra, and package it up for your lunch the next day (meal prep does not have to be time consuming).

INGREDIENTS (MAKES ONE LARGE SALAD)

- 70-gram bag of baby spinach (or other salad leaf of your choice)
- Half punnet of cherry or grape tomatoes (cut in half or kept whole)
- One small cucumber, sliced
- 125-gram tin of legumes of choice (i.e., chickpeas, lentils, 4-bean mix, kidney beans)
- 95-gram tin of tuna in olive oil
- 125 grams of brown rice (half a bag of ready cooked rice, heated)
- 30 grams of walnuts
- Juice of half a lemon
- 1 tbsp of olive oil

METHOD

1. Combine baby spinach, tomato, and cucumber
2. Add warmed rice, mix
3. Drain and rinse legumes, and add to salad mix
4. Drain tuna and add to salad mix
5. Sprinkle with walnuts
6. Toss all ingredients together
7. When ready to eat, dress with lemon and olive oil

NB. If you are using half for lunch the next day, put your dressing into a separate container, and dress when you're ready to eat so as not to make the salad soggy.