

SPORTS NUTRITION FOR TABLE TENNIS



By Tara Fusco



Table of Contents

1. **[What is Sports Nutrition?](#)**
2. **[The History of Sports Nutrition](#)**
3. The Benefits of Sports Nutrition
4. Principles of Sports Nutrition
5. Macronutrients
6. Essential Micronutrients for Athletes
7. Nutrition for Table Tennis
8. Popular Diets and their Suitability for Athletes
9. **[About the Author](#)**



What is Sports Nutrition?

It was not that long ago that I realised how big an impact food and nutrition have on sports performance. I decided it was something I wanted to learn more about, not only so that I could pass my knowledge onto others but also so that I myself could become more aware of what I was eating and drinking and what impact it was having not only on my table tennis but also on my daily life and that of my family. I took up a Business Diploma Course in Sports Nutrition and more recently attended numerous webinars on the subject. This is an area of sport that is growing in popularity as athletes and coaches start to understand the massive role that nutrition plays on performance and the ability to enhance and recover from activity. But what exactly is sports nutrition and where did it all begin?

The first things that most people think of when they think of Sports Nutrition are body builders, protein shakes and supplements. A lot more people other than just body builders can benefit from sports nutrition in their daily lives however. Too many people are completely unaware of how much it could help them solve a lot of persistent problems such as fatigue, mental fog and bad digestion. This situation is changing however as more and more people look for nutritional guidance to enhance their performances.

Nutrition is a branch of science that deals with the relationship between the nutrients in food and the human body. The study of nutrition is essentially the study of ways a food item affects the body's health. Every cell in your body is constantly being repaired and replaced and the material needed to do this comes from your food so it is true when they say “you are what you eat”.



Not all nutrients are healthy – they can provide the body with energy to work but if consumed in excess they can damage the body. For the body to perform optimally, it is imperative to consume a well-balanced diet. This is where the nutritionist comes in – their main aim is to facilitate better health, growth and development and better maintenance of the human body through ensuring their clients are eating the right nutrients in the right amounts.

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

Sports nutrition specifically denotes the branch of nutrition that covers the dietary requirements of individuals for optimal performance in physical activity. Sports nutrition prepares the body not only for sport but any physical activity.

Nowadays sports nutrition is popular amongst athletes of all sorts from strength sports to those requiring perseverance and stamina to those requiring short bursts of speed and power, such as table tennis. The science of sports nutrition provides knowledge about fuelling and hydrating the body before, during and after exercise. If used correctly a balanced diet can lead to enhanced training and performance.

Not just athletes benefit but ordinary people who lead an active life also benefit from increased energy, strength and stamina.



[Back to Table of Contents](#)



The History of Sports Nutrition

The perception of sports nutrition ages back to the time of the ancient Greeks. During that era a famous wrestler who won 5 Olympics from 532 to 516BC used to eat almost 9kg of wheat and pure meat washed down with approx 12 litres of wine each day. This equates to about 60,000 kcal per day so even then athletes and warriors used to adapt diet to get sufficient energy to optimise performance.

During the Olympics of 1908 alcohol consumption before and during competition was common. German athletes claimed they performed better after consuming a litre of wine and 22 glasses of beer! Nowadays nutritionists would never consider recommending alcohol as an aid to increasing physical strength, performance and recovery. However, noticing the aftermath of such acts, athletes and coaches kept an eye out for any new additive or food item that could enhance performance. Nonetheless it was not until the 19th and 20th centuries that research into human muscle growth (anabolism) began.

Initially it was believed that proteins were the necessary fuel for the contraction of muscles. But in the late 19th century a German physiologist found out that it wasn't the proteins but the fats and carbohydrates that were utilised by the muscles. The first sports nutrition studies were of carbohydrate and fat growth and were conducted in Sweden during the early 1900s. During the mid 1900s Scandinavian scientists started studying glycogen and its use, storage procedures and synthesis that is linked to physical activity and exercise. By then technology was advanced enough to assist scientists to study human tissue and how it reacts to different exercises.

During the 1960s a team of researchers at the University of Florida made an essential discovery in which the researchers designed a supplement, known as Gatorade to delay fatigue and assist in performance. This is how the first nutrient product related to sports was developed and it grew into one of the biggest athletic drink industries.



A German called Sandow became renowned as the first person who claimed that in order to build good muscle mass, the intake of your diet is very important. In the early 20th century Sandow started working as a stage body builder in London and he published many body

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

building instruction manuals for amateurs and beginners promoting the utilization of beef extracts and beef juice in order to encourage muscle gain and restoration.

Then came the invention of dissolvable protein powders, which at first were developed with soy. However, soon after, the protein content in milk and eggs were used and protein products made from these were developed. In the 1980s, the supplement boom, the production and business of body building supplements crossed all horizons and sales boomed into a dietary and nutrition supplement market which eventually grew to £40 billion.

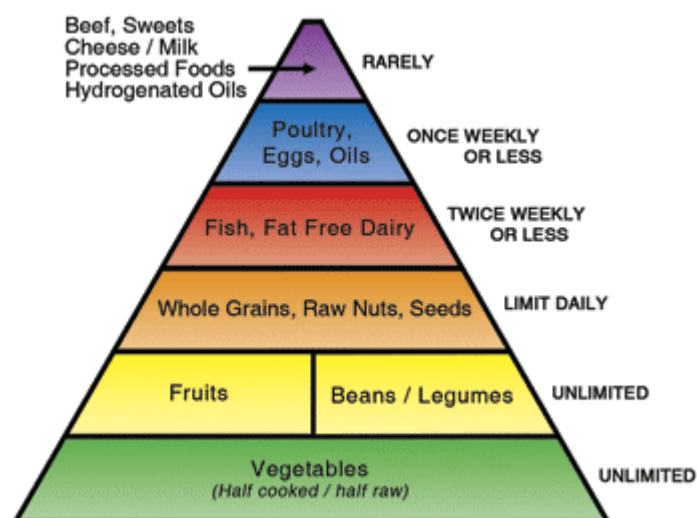
By the 1970s exercise trainers all over the world, but more especially in US started developing physiology labs all across the universities to encourage students to learn and study this field and to train athletes. Initially runners and cyclists were tested and studied as these athletes lost the most glycogen during exercise. Sports nutrition and physical activity research facilities were also established at army and NASA training institutes as the individuals working in these areas needed to be in their best physical health and condition.

Initially the research focused on carbohydrates. Research on protein was also conducted but this was more difficult. Body builders at the time were keen to know ways to acquire maximum protein synthesis for muscle growth but there was not enough research to fulfill their needs. Although research on protein is advanced these days, many of the important issues remain because of the difficulty in studying them due to their complexity.

In the 1980s the field now known as sports nutrition emerged. In the beginning the focal point of research was helping endurance athletes. Athletes were generally classified as strength or endurance. Endurance athletes were given a diet rich in carbohydrates and strength athletes were given a diet rich in protein.

Nowadays those who understand that they are at risk of a certain problem or disease and need treatment or preventive measures do tend to visit a nutritionist (5-6% of population). People usually think that sports nutritionist's only work is to make diet plans and weight loss programmes. However, they are there not only to do this but also to help people improve their lifestyle, physical fitness, health and well being and help them fight and prevent diseases.

Modern Food Pyramid



[Back to Table of Contents](#)



About the Author



Tara Fusco was born and lived all her young life in Dun Laoghaire Co. Dublin. She is now married with two children and lives with her family in Bray, Co. Wicklow. Tara is an ex Irish International table tennis player, who represented Ireland at 5 World Championships and 7 European Championships during her 13 year International career. She played in Germany on a semi-professional basis between 2006 and 2009. She has won every domestic tournament in Ireland and was National singles champion on two occasions.

Tara has been a Level 2 Table Tennis Coach for over 25 years and has many years of experience coaching in clubs, schools and at International level. Tara continues to play to a high level representing Dun Laoire Table Tennis Club in the Women's British League.

In recent times she has started focusing on the importance of fitness in table tennis and has also undertaken Business Diplomas in Sports Nutrition and Sports Psychology. She recently set up a website www.ttfans.ie, an online resource offering table tennis players of all standards expert advice on all aspects of table tennis from technique, fitness, tactical awareness, psychology and nutrition.

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

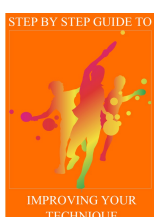
Her latest project is the creation of a Master Class series of E-Books, of which this one "Sports Nutrition for Table Tennis" is the third.

Coming soon in the series, E-Books focusing on fitness, psychology and much much more.

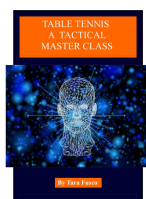
Enjoyed this sample?

[Buy the book to continue reading](#)

If you missed the first or second in the series? "A Step by Step Guide to Improving Your Technique" and "Table Tennis – A Tactical Master Class" they can be downloaded below:



[A Step by Step Guide to Improving Your Technique](#)



[Sports Nutrition for Table Tennis](#)

Logon to www.ttfans.ie or follow Tara on Social Media for further updates

Links to Social media pages below:



All rights reserved. Except for use in a review, the reproduction or utilization of this work in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means now known or hereafter invented including xerography, photocopying and recording and in any information storage and retrieval system, is forbidden without the written permission of the author.

Copyright © 2022 TTfans.ie

[Back to Table of Contents](#)