

# **Nutrition for Physical Therapists**

*~ Natalia Kerkham ~*

## Assessing the patient's diet

Ask them to tell you what they ate yesterday. This is very specific. If you ask them about an 'average day's diet' you'll get the sanitised version of what they think you want to hear.

Before they start jot B L D on the left of your paper to structure your notes. (Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner). Leave a gap between them to allow for any snacks.

Look for:

- timing of food intake. Are they taking enough fuel early to on get them through the day?
- nutrients
  - enough protein?
  - enough fat? Very low fat diets can compromise mental health and predispose to osteoporosis – and many other problems
  - enough fibre?
  - enough fluid?
- quality
  - carbohydrates – the less refined sugar and starches the better
  - fats – the best are still in the food they came in (e.g. nuts, oily fish). The next best are minimally processed so look for cold pressed/extra virgin.
  - fruit and veg – enough, and more veg than fruit
- variety – are they getting 20 different foods every day?

# Nutrition for Physical Therapists

## Achieving change

Go cautiously. Your patient's diet (and yours, for that matter) has evolved gradually over time to suit their likes and dislikes and their lifestyle. Anything different has to work at least as well for them. Go for no more than one or two small changes at a time, for example:

- one extra portion of vegetables every day
- substituting a cup of herbal tea for one of their 6 coffees a day
- a couple of dried figs with their lunch instead of, or at least before, the chocolate bar

You're more likely to get compliance if you

- keep within the patient's comfort zone. If they 'don't like vegetables', for example, you need to start small.
- are aware of their food and cooking knowledge. Recommending foods your patient has never heard of may intimidate them and they'll give up before they've started
- know where they can buy any foods you recommend, including where to find them in the supermarket
- check whether they do the cooking at home. If it's someone else, they may have to be on board with any changes
- avoid absolutes, which set the patient up to fail. If they can stick to what you're recommending 80% of the time that's great.

See the next two pages for some nutrient dense snack ideas, and some protein shake recipes to get you started.

For more information, contact:

Natalia Kerkham Herbal Medicine and Nutrition

W: [herbal-nutritionist.co.uk](http://herbal-nutritionist.co.uk)

E: [herbsandnutrition@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:herbsandnutrition@yahoo.co.uk)

# Snack Ideas

Easily carried, good for keeping hunger pangs at bay

## Hard boiled egg and toasted sesame seeds

Hard boil an egg. Leave it in its shell (to protect it and so that it doesn't smell). Toast a dessertspoon (10ml) of sesame seeds by placing them in a dry frying pan over medium heat for a couple of minutes, stirring occasionally until they turn golden. Mix the seeds with a pinch of salt. Put the egg and seeds in a suitable container to carry (e.g. small Tupperware box). To eat, shell the egg, then dip into the salted seeds before each bite.



## Fruit - apple/kiwi/berries

With nuts or seeds



## Hummus and vegetable sticks

Carrot, celery, sweet pepper, whole radishes...



## Handful of nuts

Almonds, cashews, brazils, macadamias, pistachios, hazelnuts, walnuts, pecans, or a mixture.



## Soy-baked seeds

Tip some pumpkin and sunflower seeds onto a baking sheet. Add a few shakes of soy sauce and mix so all the seeds have some sauce on them. Spread out on the baking sheet and bake at 160°C for 15 minutes.



## 25g 70% chocolate

Break a 100g bar into 4 portions and just carry one with you to avoid the temptation to overindulge.



## An avocado

Cut round the avocado but leave it whole with the stone in. Wrap in foil and carry a spoon to eat it with when you're ready.



## Dried fruit

2 or 3 figs, 3 or 4 prunes or a few apricots.



## Protein Shakes

Getting enough protein is essential for health. A protein shake can provide as much as a steak, in a convenient, easily absorbed form. Adding extra ingredients increases the range of nutrients and improves the flavour.

I use unflavoured whey protein powder, which has a high protein content (around 75%) and a mildly creamy flavour and texture. Whey protein isolates are more expensive but have an even higher protein content. For those who are dairy intolerant, soy, pea and rice protein powders are good alternatives although the taste is different. Avoid flavoured products, which invariably contain artificial sweeteners.

Each recipe makes one serving. Put all the ingredients into a blender and blend till smooth.

### Fruit protein shake

1 banana, sliced  
100g frozen fruit (I use cherries and Sainsburys' strawberry and blueberry mix)  
1 scoop (25-30g) protein powder  
250ml milk - dairy or non dairy as liked

#### Nutrition (with skimmed milk)

310 calories	Over 30% of daily
34g protein	requirement for
3g fat	B2, B6, B12, Vitamin
40g carbs	C, Calcium, Iodine
365ml water	

Note:

Use any combination of frozen fruit you fancy – I like that one because there aren't too many seeds.

### Nut Butter Protein shake

1 banana, sliced  
1 tbsp nut butter (or mixture of nut butters) of choice  
1 scoop (25-30g) whey protein powder  
1 tsp maple syrup  
250ml milk - dairy or non dairy as liked

#### Nutrition (with semi-skimmed milk)

400 calories	Over 30% of daily
36g protein	requirement for
16g fat	B2, B3, B6, B12,
40g carbs	Vitamin C, Calcium,
260ml water	Magnesium, Iodine

### Chocolate banana protein shake

(Adapted from The Cancer Fighting Kitchen by Rebecca Katz)

1 frozen sliced banana  
2 tbsp unsweetened cocoa powder  
1 tbsp almond butter  
1 dsp finely ground flax seeds/linseeds (2 names for the same thing)  
½ tsp maple syrup  
¼ tsp vanilla extract  
Pinch of sea salt  
250ml milk - dairy or non dairy as liked

#### Nutrition (with skimmed milk)

465 calories	Over 30% of daily
41g protein	requirement for B1,
20g fat	B2, B3, B6, B12,
36g carbs	Vitamin E, Calcium,
285ml water	Magnesium, Iodine,
6g fibre	Copper, Zinc