

Supplements for Athletes



Did You Know ...

- Manufacturers are **not** required to prove that a supplement is safe, or that it does what it claims to do, before putting it on the shelf.
- Be skeptical if a product claims that it is a quick and easy solution, that it works for everyone, or that it has a "secret formula." Do your research and consult a registered sports dietitian.
- Remember, good nutrition and proper training are the most important steps to improving athletic performance!

For More Information:

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: www.eatright.org

National Institutes of Health Office of Dietary Supplements: <https://ods.od.nih.gov>

Supplements that claim to make you better, faster, and stronger can be very appealing, but be wary when considering athletic supplements. Most are not effective. A few have some evidence that they work, but it is only very slight improvements. See the table below for information on some popular supplements.

Supplement	Claim to fame	Fact or fiction?
Antioxidants (C, E, CoQ10)	Reduce inflammation and soreness	Studies show they can actually hinder performance. May be because oxidation is an important part of exercise training. (<i>Caution: high doses of vit E can be harmful.</i>)
Beta-Alanine	Improve performance, build muscle mass	Studies show conflicting results. Some studies show a slight improvement in brief, high-intensity effort.
Branched-Chain Amino Acids (BCAA)	Reduce fatigue, increase muscle growth, enhance performance.	Not enough evidence, study results are conflicting.
Caffeine	Decrease soreness, enhance performance.	Study results are conflicting, but some studies show it can reduce subjective feelings of exertion and fatigue. (<i>Caution: high doses and long-term intake can lead to severe side effects.</i>)
L-carnitine	Increase fat burn	Not enough evidence. Studies are small and of short duration, with conflicting results.
Citrulline	Increase oxygen and nutrient delivery to muscle.	Not enough evidence. One study showed worse performance.
Creatine	Increase strength and performance.	Some studies show it may increase strength and endurance with exercise. Not effective for all individuals.
Chromium Picolinate	Increase weight loss, improve body composition.	Studies show it does not improve weight loss, body composition, or strength.
Medium-Chain Triglycerides (MCT)	Improve performance, decrease body fat.	Not proven to improve endurance or to decrease body fat.
Pyruvate	Improve endurance, decrease body fat for weight loss.	Majority of evidence shows that it does not improve athletic performance. Not enough evidence for weight loss.