



DO I NEED A PRE-WORKOUT?

I know the feeling... when you have a planned training session and just feel so tired and unmotivated that you have no idea how you will get through it. So, it makes sense why a supplement, like a pre-workout, that can help with energy levels and focus is so appealing. But, before you decide whether a pre-workout is the right supplement to complement your training program and goals, and the potential risks.

WHAT ACTUALLY IS A PRE-WORKOUT?

A pre-workout is designed to provide energy and focus, plus assist with fatigue that may occur before training sessions, essentially helping you to train harder and for longer. Pre-workouts can come in powders or pills and there are a variety of different formulas, but the common aim of this supplement is to boost energy levels.

WHAT'S IN A PRE-WORKOUT?

Great question, and not one that is easy to answer! Pre-workout formulas can vary quite a bit from brand to brand. If you have read some of the ingredient lists on these supplements, you will see just how extensive the list can be. The reality is, not all these ingredients will be useful or have any scientific evidence to justify the inclusion. But there are a few key ingredients that most pre-workouts will have, including:

CAFFEINE

It makes sense why caffeine would be a key ingredient,

given the purpose of a pre-workout is to boost energy levels. However, the amounts of caffeine can vary quite significantly between products, with some having quite large amounts. If excess amounts of caffeine is consumed or you are not used to caffeine, possible side effects can include difficulty sleeping, anxiety, jitters, shakiness and increased heart rate. Caffeine in high doses is toxic and can lead to fatal consequences, therefore check with your Accredited Sports Dietitian or Nutritionist regarding the amount provided in your product.

CREATINE

This is a popular supplement among athletes and gym-goers due to the potential to increase muscle power, enhance strength and improve exercise performance.

BCAAS

Branched chain amino acids, in particular leucine, can support protein syntheses and therefore assist with an increase in strength. Note – many other factors contribute to supporting muscle growth.

B-VITAMINS

These vitamins play an important role in energy production.

Other ingredients may also include beta-alanine, taurine, NO2 boosters... (and the list can go on.)

WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO TAKE A PRE-WORKOUT?

Again, an interesting question without a clear answer. Just because it is called a pre-

workout, it does not mean it has to necessarily be consumed before the session. Some people will take it 20-30 min before a session, while others like to have it during the session, which can be beneficial if the session is going to be a long one. It is important to seek advice from an Accredited Sports Nutritionist or Dietitian, regarding ingredient use and dosage recommendations, as each supplement can be different.

WHAT ARE THE CONS OF USING A PRE-WORKOUT?

Like any caffeine source, if you take a pre-workout regularly you can build tolerance to the effects, to chat to your nutrition specialist about dosage and planning for sessions that may be of higher duration or intensity. Ideally, they should not be used for every session, but instead saved for those sessions that may be of higher intensity or duration.

So, in summary to the original question, whether you should use a pre-workout or not can depend on many factors. There are many different types of pre-workout supplements and so choosing the best formula is essential. A final important question to ask yourself is, 'why are you considering a pre-workout in the first place?' If it is because you are feeling fatigued, then it will be important to first look at your dietary intake and ensure you are fuelling and recovering adequately, before trying to supplement with a pre-workout.