



Nutrition Blog

In order to be vicious on the court and in the gym, you must be nutritious off of it to ensure you reach your full potential. We've discovered that many young athletes are at a loss when it comes to choosing the right food items to give them the healthy energy they crave. We want to enlighten our athletes on how to properly fuel their bodies to create a sharp mind! When body and mind are at their peak, you become virtually unstoppable!

To present this essential knowledge, we sat down with Youtube Star and health guru, Neha Uberoi and tennis professional Daniel Nguyen to get their insight on proper nutrition. Neha, a professional on the tennis circuit for six years, has completed her degree from Princeton University and has a unique story that she is proud to share with her followers. After overcoming an eating disorder herself, Uberoi has adopted an incredible passion for living a healthy lifestyle and has had her articles frequently featured in publications such as Sports Illustrated, The Huffington Post, and Mind Body Green.



Image from: WTA website

The vision of these two incredible people has aligned with the identity of Athletic DNA as they have set out on a mission to share their knowledge and experiences with young athletes around the world.

Based on your experience as a tennis professional, what are some foods that are essential for energy, recovery, and strength building?

Neha: A common myth to debunk is the need to carbo-load by eating tons of simple carbs (white pasta) the night before a match. This is not very accurate, balanced meals of complex carbs, lean protein, leafy greens and fiber are very effective fuel for tennis players. Also, energy drinks loaded with hydrogenated oil and fructose are not good for any athlete however, during a match or intense practice these drinks can be helpful in providing electrolytes and sugars.

D. Nguyen: “ In my opinion, it’s important to eat healthy foods before any type of physical activity. I’ll have some protein and carbohydrates before any type of work out. I usually eat brown rice, cooked vegetables, and chicken. Proteins such as chicken and fish, healthy carbohydrates- pasta, potatoes, rice, vegetables, and any types of fruit are good way to recover. It’s important to drink a protein shake and eat fruit 15-20 minutes after a workout or match.”

What are some recommendations on foods and beverages to consume during a match?

Neha: This really depends person to person. Some players love bananas but for others it makes them gag. Some even eat a candy bar on the changeover. You may have to test out what gives you quick energy without spikes and what doesn't making you feel nauseous. Either way players must be hydrating with water, electrolytes and something to nibble.

D.Nguyen: “I will eat a lean protein, usually chicken or fish before a match and incorporate healthy carbohydrates such as quinoa and vegetables. I usually drink water and an electrolyte drink. Like Neha mentioned, every athlete’s body is different, some people like to eat steak or beef the night before. I think it is important to find what foods give you the most energy and stick with it. On match days I will eat something similarly to what I had the night before. I will probably hydrate a little bit more with an electrolyte drink and water.”

Leading up to a tournament, how important is it to manage your diet?

Neha: It is vital to eat well a few days leading up to the tournament so you have a good base that takes you into the tournament. Its really important to eat a lot of fiber, complex carbs like whole grains, sweet potato and lean proteins. You don't want to overload your system with mass amounts of meat either. During the tournament, recovery protein shakes work very well for me to recover and not get sore. Best practices for not having cheat days is by giving yourself a cheat day after the tournament is over.

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- Neha Uberoi

When preparing to compete in intense heat, what advice do you have to properly prepare?

Neha: When in very hot climates it’s very important to drink fluids the day and night before a match and in the morning when you first wake up. You may want to warm up a bit faster than normal to conserve your energy. Its very important to stay dry so pack a complete change of clothes for after the



warm up. Stay inside in cool air until you need to be outside. Don't eat heavy foods or sandwiches with mayonnaise, I would also stay away from eggs for breakfast.

D.Nguyen: "It's vital to have a big nutritious breakfast and lunch before you get on the court on warmer days. Also to drink plenty of fluids the night before and throughout the day. On warmer days I will put more salt into my foods and electrolyte drinks. Eating bars, snacking on bananas, and power gels is a great way to sustain energy during a match."

On days where physical activity is at a minimum, what foods/beverages should be the main focus of daily meals?

Neha: On off days it's important to continue to stay hydrated, enjoy your food but try to eat a lot of anti-inflammatory nutrients and supplements like turmeric and leafy greens.

For those who are new to the fitness realm, experts have found that to become the best athlete possible, 80% of your focus should be what you eat and 20% of the activity you perform. So remember, it's not always about who lifts the most weights or who's in the gym the longest, but who's making a conscious effort to take care of their body by paying close attention to the things they consume.