

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Nutritional Programs

Here's my take on it. I call these principles, "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Nutritional Programs," a shameless and possibly illegal play on Steven Covey's book, "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People." (Great book, by the way—you should read it sometime.)

These aren't the newest techniques from the latest cutting-edge plan. Rather, they are simple, time-tested, no nonsense habits that you need to get into when designing a good eating program.

1. Eat every 2-3 hours, no matter what. You should eat between 5-8 meals per day.
2. Eat complete (containing all the essential amino acids), lean protein with each meal.
3. Eat fruits and/or vegetables with each food meal.
4. Ensure that your carbohydrate intake comes from fruits and vegetables. Exception: workout and post-workout drinks and meals.
5. Ensure that 25-35% of your energy intake comes from fat, with your fat intake split equally between saturates (e.g. animal fat), monounsaturates (e.g., olive oil), and polyunsaturates (e.g. flax oil, salmon oil).
6. Drink only non-calorie containing beverages, the best choices being water and green tea.
7. Eat mostly whole foods (except workout and post-workout drinks).
So what about calories, or macronutrient ratios, or any number of other things that I've covered in other articles? The short answer is that if you aren't already practicing the above-mentioned habits, and by practicing them I mean putting them to use over 90% of the time (i.e., no more than 4 meals out of an average 42 meals per week violate any of those rules), everything else is pretty pointless.

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