

# BACK IN THE GAME

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Rehabilitation information for those who enjoy the sporting life

## New Year's Fitness Resolutions

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Many of us go into the new year with a plan to increase our health and fitness. We come up with wonderful ideas or find exercises in magazines that will be the ultimate save-all for our bodies. Although the ideas and the exercises may be good, in many cases expectations are set too high and when preconceived results aren't achieved, frustration sets in.

It's important to start with achievable goals. If motivation is an issue with you, you may want to consider exercising with a friend who has similar goals. When you workout in pairs, the time will pass by quickly.

Staying fit allows us to continue to perform our favorite recreational activities, regardless of our age. I have met 70-year-old men who still play hockey and 70-year-old women who still enjoy a round of golf. Without a good history of fitness and exercise, these people would find it very difficult to maintain this level of satisfaction with their sports.

Here are some suggestions to consider for manageable fitness resolutions.

1. **Invest in a fitness center membership.** The first step of exercising is allowing oneself to do it. When you purchase your membership, ask questions that will enable you to get comfortable with the facility. Ask how to use the equipment. You won't look foolish asking how to



use equipment; you will, however, look foolish doing a chest press with your lower leg.

2. **Increase your exercise to at least 3 days per week.** Schedule your fitness days at the beginning of the week. Write down your workout days in a planner or visible calendar. Make time for yourself to maintain good health.

3. **Stick to an exercise program for at least two months.** Fitness takes

time and energy. Do not throw in the towel after one month because the perfect curve or bulging muscle has not arrived. Instead, reevaluate how you feel after that month of consistency in the gym. You should feel better physically and mentally.

4. **Drink more water.** Substitute water for soft drinks and juices throughout the day. A person can subtract as much as 500 calories out of their daily diet just by substituting water (0 calories) for the majority of fluid consumption. Remember to drink water while exercising as well.

5. **Try not to eat after 8 PM.** Calories taken in after this time have a higher chance of being stored as fat due to the fact that the body is coming to a resting state. If you absolutely need to eat, have something low in calories and carbohydrates.

6. **Increase your cardio training intensity.** If you are walking 2 miles in 25 minutes, try to achieve 2.2 miles in 25 minutes. It is not just the length of time that is important in cardio training - it is also the vigor. Try scheduling your cardio training 3-5 times per week with a 20-minute minimum. Keep pushing to get in the last mile before the time is up.

For more information, to schedule a personal training session, or to learn about our Fitness for Less classes, call the Marquette General Sports Rehab department at 906-225-3186.

# Carbohydrate Controversy

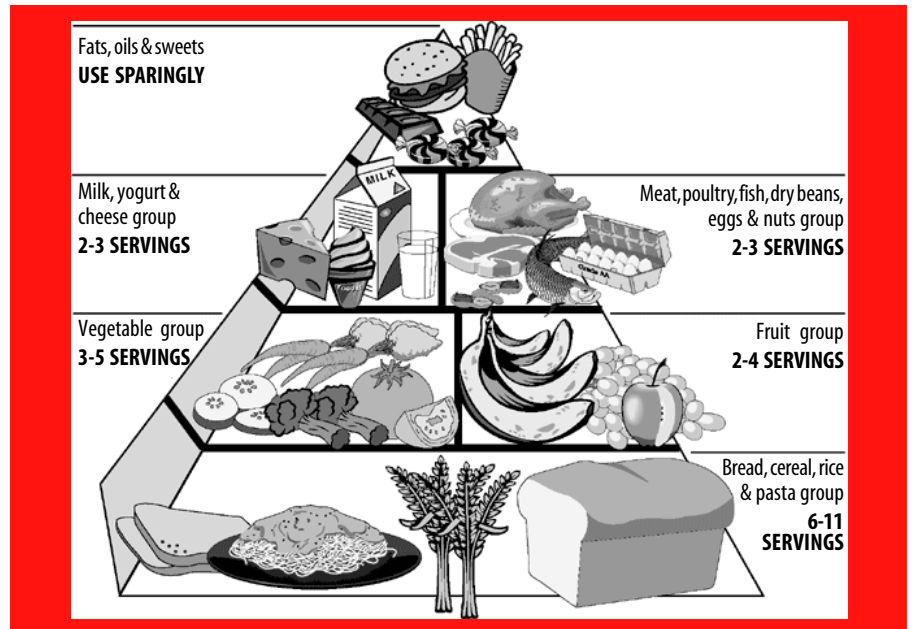
By: Sarah Balko, Registered Dietician

According to many of the popular diet books, carbohydrates are the enemy. They are said to cause everything from diabetes to weight gain. There is not accurate research to support these claims and now some of these diet recommendations are even being used for athletes. There are many opinions on what the ratio of carbohydrates in the athlete's diet should be, ranging from 10 to 70 percent of total calories.

Proponents of low carbohydrate diets suggest athletes need more protein to facilitate the building of muscle and less carbohydrate. Other health professionals recommend a higher carbohydrate diet to fuel the athlete, so who is right?

Unfortunately, there is no single diet for athletes, nor should there be. Requirements are different based on the athlete's age, sex, height, weight, sport and amount of activity. But there are nutrition guidelines that can be followed to maximize the athlete's potential. All of the food groups are important for good health and drastically decreasing calories from any one group is not beneficial. The foods we eat contain three macronutrients: protein, carbohydrates and fat. It is important to understand the role of each of these nutrients when planning a specific meal plan for your sport.

**Protein** is the building blocks of muscle. Athletes, specifically those interested in weight training, do have higher protein needs. This can easily be met through a well-balanced diet that also contains adequate amounts of carbohydrate. It's recommended that athletes get 15 to 20 percent of their calories from protein. Protein supplements are not necessary if meals are planned appropriately and in some cases



protein supplements can be harmful.

Protein alone can't build muscle. The body needs enough of all nutrients and adequate calories to facilitate production of lean body mass.

**Carbohydrates** are the most readily available energy source. Carbohydrates are broken down into glucose which is stored right in the muscles as glycogen. This is the primary fuel for the muscles during activity. A diet containing 60 to 70 percent of calories from carbohydrates are necessary to maintain muscle glycogen which will greatly benefit performance. Inadequate carbohydrate intake can lead to reduced speed, impaired endurance and difficulty concentrating.

**Fat** in moderation also has a place in the athlete's diet. It is important in the digestion and absorption of fat-soluble vitamins and provides a concentrated source of calories which is key to production of lean body mass. Because the athlete often requires very high calories to maintain body weight, fat is needed to reach this level. Fat should make up about 20 to 25 percent of total calories.

Using the food guide pyramid is an easy way to have a well-balanced diet, with the

right combination of nutrients for your athletic potential. The pyramid is designed for the general population so the serving requirements for athletes are at the higher end of the ranges given. Some athletes may even require more food than the pyramid suggests. Emphasize whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, lean meat and low fat dairy. Foods that contain calories but little nutritional value should be used sparingly.

For an individualized meal plan, contact the Marquette General Health System's outpatient dieticians at 225-3221 or 1-800-562-9753 ext. 3221.

## Recommendations:

**Calorie needs:** 2,000-6,000 depending on age, sex, height, weight, amount and type of activity  
**Carbohydrate needs:** 60-70% total calories or 6-10g/kg body weight

**Protein needs:** 15-20% total calories or 1.2-1.4g/kg body weight for endurance athletes and 1.2-1.7g/kg body weight for strength athletes

**Fat needs:** 20-25% total calories