

## *Module 10 Lesson 1*

### **Transcript**

Today's lesson is on athletes and exercisers. I thought it would make sense to start with a lesson defining what I mean by those terms. There's a very fine line between the two, so I'm tackling the differences today.

The purpose of this lesson is to recognize that not everyone who hits the gym on a regular basis is going to have the same nutrition needs. So many of our clients think that since they're training for a marathon they should eat like a world record holder. They look for nutrition advice from Serena Williams because they're looking to improve their tennis game perhaps. Or they google Tom Brady's fitness routine to see if they can get a body like his. The reality is there's going to be a big difference in the fuel each of us needs.

It takes time and practice, but figuring out how to best fuel each client to meet his or her goals is individual to the individual. So let me lay out my game plan for this lesson. Today we're going to discuss the difference between being an athlete and an exerciser. How you can help your client base, and provide perspective on this topic, and how to personalize nutrition recommendations based on your clients unique needs.

So let's get started.

What is an athlete? Well, according to the American College of Cardiology, athletes are the sport and fitness equivalent to movie stars or rock stars. Their goal is not to prioritize health or fitness, but to win the race, competition, or game. They are paid to perform, and devote their days and lives to maximizing their performance. Most athletes don't have day jobs like the rest of us. Their way of living centers around their sport.

But it's confusing, isn't it? I mean, you read blog headlines telling you that you're an athlete if you can run a 10K. I mean, I like to think of myself as an athlete. Other media makes you wonder what the difference is between an elite and a recreational athlete, and what the difference is between a recreational athlete and an exerciser. It's probably enough to make your head spin.

I'm going to tell you that in my humble opinion, I don't think the terminology is super important. I listen and ask tons of questions for each and every client, and focus intensely on fitness goals for people who have them. So if someone tells me they play tennis a few times a week, I want to know why they're playing. Were they on a tennis team in high school and play because they love

it? Are they playing because it is social time with friends? Are they trying to make it to the US Open? These answers matter.

I'm going to go on and on, and ask more questions, the more the client engages. I want to know all the why's behind why they're doing what they're doing. In my mind if someone is exercising an hour or an hour and a half a day, I'm going to focus their plan on timing foods and snacks so that they can have good energy. You want to allow enough time for digestion, and provide enough nutrition so they're not hungry during the workout. Rarely do I add extra calories, or snacks, or electrolyte replacements for people who fall into this category. I'll tell you, this is almost 100% of my population.

That being said, I've seen hundreds of clients take their exercise and build on it with real fitness goals that require extra nutrition. I had a client who did a 12 hour fundraising marathon, and we needed to adjust his fuel not just for the fundraiser day, but also for his training. I had a client who did an Ironman, who definitely seemed like more of an athlete than a weekend warrior to me. He was meticulous about his pre and post training meals, as he of course had to be.

What I'm saying is that I don't personally think you're an athlete only if you're getting paid, dedicating your life to your sport, and formally competing. I think there are every day athletes out there. I'm thinking of the people who put in over 2,000 miles a year training to break a three hour marathon time, for example. Athletes have performance goals, aspirations, and ambition to improve in their activity, and put in significantly more time than the average Jane and Joe. They're the exception though, not the norm.

To further clarify recreational exercisers are those of us who put an hour or so in each day at the gym, or in a sport, or on a bike, and move for the sake of wellness, and fitness, and fun. For recreational exercisers a good, healthy diet will do you just fine. For those in the more intense training, goal driven, and performance improvement category, customize each meal plan based on the type of sport. Whether it's cardiovascular verse strength work. Take into consideration their amount of training. Consider the seasons. Is there an off season? Are they in a conditioning phase? Acknowledge individual tolerance for things like hydrating during exercise.

As a rule of thumb, for athletes, here are the main things to look at. Carbohydrates are going to vary, and you can look to your handout for the varied specifics. There is a lot of tailoring you may need to consider when it comes to carbs, on and off season training, duration and intensity of workouts, and rest days all impact your carb needs.

Protein is the next nutrient we look at, but I rarely spend too much time on it. We all know people eat too much protein in their diets. So even though the athletes protein requirements are slightly higher at 1.0 to 1.2 grams per kilogram, as compared to non-athletes at .8 to 1.0 grams per kilogram requirements, we're more than meeting the needs. So, I spend more time recommending real rather than supplemented protein sources, and don't often prescribe extra.

Replacing fluid is really important. The research says, for every pound lost from sweating, you need to add 16 ounces water. I actually have my clients weigh themselves, without clothing, before and after exercise to get an idea of their losses. It's really important not to just hydrate during exercise or after, but to go into training or a competition well hydrated, to maximize performance. Electrolytes are also a thing. Here I'm talking about sodium, potassium, calcium, and magnesium. For intense exercisers who are at it for two hours or more, especially in the heat, I recommend adding salt to the pre workout meal, and absolutely using GUs or sports drinks if they are helpful in preventing bonking, hitting the wall, or cramps.

Post workout research says chocolate milk, of all things, is an amazing recovery tool for, one, the carbohydrate to protein ratio, but also for electrolyte losses. I'm also comfortable here with real fruit, or dye-free sports drinks, and will work with my client's preferences. Fueling during and after exercise is a really personal thing. Athletes who train for more than 90 minutes may want to play with a little snack, versus a gel, versus a sports drink, once those glucose stores are depleted. The recovery is a little personal, too. Some people like to eat right away after they finish their intense workout, but it is okay to wait a little bit longer. But I do like people to get their fuel in within 60 minutes of their workout.

An athlete by definition is someone whose goal is to win, and their way of living centers around their sport. When a client tells me about their exercise routine, I always ask them why this is important to them. With most clients, the goal will be to focus on timing foods and snack around their workouts. You'll rarely need to add extra calories, or electrolyte replacements when working with the general population. With athletes, focus on carbohydrates, protein, fluids, and electrolytes. Most everyone is getting enough protein. With athletes, recommend 1.0 to 1.2 grams per kilogram of body weight. Recommend that athletes weigh themselves before and after exercise, to assess fluid losses and replenish as needed.

Especially with athletes who workout in the heat, or for more than two hours, recommend electrolyte replacements such as chocolate milk, fruit, natural sports drinks or gels. When workouts go 90 minutes or more, an athlete may need to snack during exercise. Recommend gels, or whole

foods like raisins. Also, look back on TNF level one for your sports handout. That's got lots of great guidelines in there as well. I'll see you in the next lesson.