

Module 10 Lesson 10

Transcript

I couldn't do a lesson on athletes and exercisers today without talking about carb cycling. Enough people are chatting about carb cycling and it's trendy-ish, so it'd be silly if I didn't include it. Today's lesson is going to be fairly short, mainly because carb cycling is a relatively new practice among athletes and while you all know I love anecdotes and clients' stories, you also know that I'm all about science. More than 90% of what I preach is science based and all of it is peer reviewed. And right now, there just isn't a whole lot to speak to on carb cycling research. To give you an outline of what we're going to cover today, we're going to discuss what carb cycling is and what it claims to do, which clients might benefit from carb cycling, and how to introduce carb cycling with clients who are interested. As I already mentioned, carb cycling is relatively new to the dieting scene.

There isn't a lot of science to speak to how well it works and it hasn't crossed my path in a flood like Whole30. But it's still kind of popular. Carb cycling is just what it sounds like. People restrict their carbohydrates in various amounts over days, weeks or months to meet their weight loss or athletic performance goals. Usually, people eat more carbs on the days before or on the days when they're training heavily for readily available fuel, and fewer carbs on the in between days when they don't need the immediate availability of energy. There's a handout attached to this lesson where I give you a more detailed example of what this looks like. This kind of diet claims and aims to help lose fat and build muscle or to help get over the hump of a weight loss plateau. The idea behind carb cycling is that energy is available for the muscles during training or performance and recovery.

There are claims that cycling helps promote muscle growth, reduces insulin sensitivity, and aids with recovery. But again, the science isn't conclusive there. There's adjusting for the cycling with more or less protein and fat to compensate for the lack of carbohydrate on the low carbohydrate days. And this diet is more complex than counting macros, which was more complex than counting calories. So carb cycling is not so straight forward. Or maybe I should say it doesn't lend itself to boredom because you really have to have a training plan and know how the cycling works to pull it off and get it right. Carb cycling really takes more time to understand than most diets. If you have a client who is headstrong about trying it, expect that you'll need to know your research and do a fair share of trial and error until it's mastered for that client. I know that was super quick, but my point was really to set the stage on carb cycling in case this is something your clients are asking about.

So let's just do a quick recap here. Carb cycling is restricting carbohydrates over a period of time, typically with more carbohydrates on training days to fuel muscles during workouts and fewer carbs on off days. The goal is to promote muscle growth, reduce insulin sensitivity, and aid recovery.

The science on carb cycling isn't conclusive, but it may be helpful for your athletic clients on an individual basis. This way of eating can be super complicated. Make sure interested clients know this upfront and are willing to put in the work if it's something they really want to give a go. That's all for now. I am so excited to see you in the next lesson.