



When Should You Use Supplements?

Where do you start?

- Do you need supplements only if you have a nutritional deficiency?
- Or can a healthy person use supplements to take them from good to great?
- If some supplementation is good, is more better?
- Can we do just as well with just eating a well balanced diet?
- How can supplements make working out more effective?

When seeking a competitive physical edge either to beat an opponent or reach your own personal goals, it's understandable to look for any assistance to help you get there. This may include the latest equipment, using a qualified and registered personal trainer, or something to give you more energy.

Often this is where supplementation comes in, from taking vitamin and mineral tablets, protein powders, through to performance enhancing pharmaceuticals. If there's a result you want, there's a supplement promising to help get you there faster.

There are many studies that show benefits when safe products are used within recommended doses by appropriately screened consumers.

This is often where the problems begin. Anyone can source and consume supplementation without getting the right advice about whether it's the right option for them, and their health and nutritional needs. Advice can be varied as well, with those selling the products having a financial gain in showing remarkable results, and well-meaning but untrained people happy to offer their own personal views on what works.

Recently there have been suggestions that supplements containing creatine, which have always been assumed to be safe, and likely still is for most people, may have negative health impacts on those with pre existing conditions, such as kidney disease. The safety of a supplement cannot be guaranteed for all users.

There has also been concern about the volume of young athletes and exercisers taking a range of supplements to enhance their performance, with parents often not understanding that just because something is easily purchased, doesn't mean it's necessarily safe.

With such a massive quantity of supplements available in stores and online, it can be a challenge to sort out what is going to help you reach your goals without damaging your long term health. Or in many cases, what will simply be a waste of money with no results at all. It is important to remember that supplements are often not subject to the same rules and regulations as food or pharmaceuticals. While many over the counter supplements may help with results, with the steady stream of internet purchased products being made available, and dosage recommendations being interpreted, there can still be negative health effects from seemingly benign supplements.

For most of us, the right supplements will help with health and results.

The best way to check that the supplements you are planning to take are healthy for your specific circumstances is to speak with a professional who understands how the body works, and is not going to try and sell you an unproved quick fix.

It's simple really. Get advice from a REPs registered trainer, as they will be able to give you basic advice on nutrition and supplements, but they also understand that if your needs are outside their expertise, they won't just make something up, and will refer you on to another qualified health professional who can help.

Contact Details:

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Who is the NZ Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs)?

REPs is an independent non profit organisation administrating the New Zealand exercise professionals register to ensure that the public receive safe and effective exercise advice.

Using REPs Registered Exercise Professionals is the "Warrant of Fitness Check" that exercise professionals and facilities meet New Zealand and internationally benchmarked standards to deliver exercise advice and instruction. REPs is affiliated globally to other national exercise professional registers representing over 210,000 exercise professionals through the International Confederation of Registers for Exercise Professionals (ICREPs) - www.icreps.org

