



## Is Dietary Supplementation Necessary?

If you believed all the marketing hype about supplements and superfoods you would be forgiven for thinking food is not enough.

Whether it's to boost performance or simply to get the edge on everyday life, supplements and superfoods have an appeal, and the benefits are widely advertised, with are many success stories reported. It really does seem that health and happiness is within our grasps by just getting the right supplements.

It's understandable to look for any assistance there is to help you maintain your health and fitness and mental well being. This might be the latest equipment, using an appropriately qualified personal trainer, or something to give you more energy. And with our time poor lives popping a pill, or swigging back a drink is an easy addition. Often this is where supplementation comes in, from taking vitamin and mineral tablets, protein powders, through to superfood products. If there's a result you want there's a supplement promising to help get you there faster.

Chances are that there will be some benefits when safe and tested products are used within recommended doses by appropriately screened consumers. Which is often where the problems begin:

What is safe?

Who tested these products?

If some is good, is more better?

It's easy to source and consume supplementation, with supplements and superfoods being added to a range of products. Expert advice can help, but advice and experts can be varied in quality, with those selling the products having a financial gain in showing remarkable results. And also well-meaning but untrained people happy to offer their own personal views on what works.

With such a massive quantity of supplements either for sale on their own, or in enhanced foods available in stores and online, it can be a challenge to sort out what is going to help you be your healthiest self, without damaging your long term health, and what is a waste of money. It's worth remembering that supplements are often not subject to the same rules and regulations as food or pharmaceuticals, so it can be a case of 'buyer beware'.

It is true that you can't out exercise an unhealthy diet, but exercise is an important contributor to health. While the latest diet product may claim that you can lose weight effectively and maintain good health without exercise, the World Health Organisation reports that physical activity is fundamental to energy balance and health. The NZ Ministry of Health also recommends lifestyle approaches including exercise and good nutrition, rather than single factor approaches.

The best way to check in that the supplements you are planning to take are beneficial 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 a quick fix. It's simple really and that is by getting advice from a registered exercise professional. They will be able to give you basic advice on nutrition and supplements, but importantly they also understand that if your needs are outside their expertise they won't just make something up, and will refer you on to a health professional who is appropriately qualified to help.

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### Contact details for further information about the exercise industry:

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**NZ Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs)** - Independent not for profit quality mark of exercise professionals and facilities. 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 safe 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](http://www.icreps.org)

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**Exercise Association of New Zealand** - Not for profit exercise industry representative organisation. Its *mission is to proactively support a sustainable exercise and fitness industry in New Zealand by growing participation in structured exercise through advocacy, information and industry standards.*

