



FOODS TO SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH

Psychological, physical and performance benefits

Life has certainly changed since the arrival of COVID-19. Significant lifestyle change often triggers a range of thoughts and feelings, which can lead to increased symptoms of anxiety and depression for many people. Even prior to COVID-19, the awareness of mental health amongst sports people has increased, largely a result of athletes speaking out about their own personal experiences.

Many factors contribute to a person's mental health, and for athletes who may now have limitations on their training, and uncertainty about their competitive future, the current climate can be challenging.

Mental health is an important aspect of wellness and performance and nutrition can have a significant, and often underestimated, positive impact. Research increasingly shows that the foods you eat can play an important role in psychological, as well as physical, health and performance.



FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Several studies have shown a link between fruit and vegetable intake and improved mood and feelings of depression. Although difficult to isolate particular nutrients or antioxidants as the main contributors, there is evidence for polyphenols (rich in fruit and veg like berries, olives and onions). The best strategy remains to focus on a wide variety of different fruit and vegetables, some cooked, some raw, every week.

OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS

Omega-3 fatty acids are a prominent component of neuronal membranes – essential for normal brain function. The best way to