

SICK FOR TRAINING

Supplements won't prevent illness while you're training hard



Original Research

Moreira, A., et al.
Nutritional modulation of exercise-induced immunodepression in athletes: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 61:443-460, 2007.

ALTHOUGH TRAINING AND COMPETING MAY SUPPRESS YOUR IMMUNE FUNCTION, TURNING TO SUPPLEMENTS TO PROVIDE THE CURE CONSTITUTES THE PROVERBIAL WASTE OF MONEY.

If you've been an athlete or coach for any period of time, you have undoubtedly heard about research suggesting that training and competing suppress your body's immune function. Athletes often report getting sick after a tough competition, too. So both anecdotal evidence and research suggest a link. Of course, nutrition plays an important role in your athletic performance, so many nutritional supplement companies, recognizing that intense training and competition can suppress your immune function, claim that supplementing your diet with "functional foods" or attending to "immunonutrition" will prevent the onset of a cold. The problem is that there is a fair amount of research on the topic of nutrition and immune function, but it is hard to make sense of all the data. Researchers from Portugal and Finland collaborated in an interesting study that reviewed all the evidence in order to sum up the current state of knowledge concerning the ability, or lack thereof, of nutritional supplements to strengthen an athlete's immune system.

Power Key: infection, sport, illness, immune depression, supplements