

Dance Nutrition

Myth Busting!

We understand that nutrition can be confusing, particularly when there are many misconceptions about what healthy eating is. So we have collected common myths to help you protect yourself from fads and confusion.

Myth:

Carbohydrates are fattening and should be avoided.

FACT:

No, carbohydrates are essential for dancers' health and performance. In fact, research shows that dancers with inadequate carbohydrate intake are more likely to suffer from injuries.

Myth:

Exercising on an empty stomach will lose more fat.

FACT:

Fasted exercise has not been shown to translate to body fat changes in the long term. When you exercise in a fasted state, your body may burn a higher percentage of fat. But because your body is low in fuel, you can only exercise at a lower intensity. This means that your performance quality does not necessarily improve. There is much better evidence showing that exercising in an adequately fuelled state optimises muscle gains, endurance, and performance quality.

Myth:

I need to take protein supplements.

FACT:

Getting enough protein from foods is quite easily possible. Meat, fish, milk, cheese, yoghurt, nuts and legumes are all great protein-rich foods. Some dancers may choose to use protein supplements as a back-up plan during busy times, such as during tours and show season. If you have higher-than-usual protein needs (e.g. starting a new strength program or going through injury recovery), then it is best to speak with an experienced dance or sport dietitian.



Myth:

Eating late at night is bad because it leads to weight gain.

FACT:

Eating late at night will not directly cause weight gain. Nor will eating earlier in the evening cause weight loss. Your body will not magically store all incoming foods as fats simply because it's 9pm. If your class, rehearsal, or show was on till late and you come home feeling hungry, you need to eat and replenish the nutrients lost. By doing so, you will enhance your overall recovery. If eating late in the evening, try and listen to your sensations of hunger and fullness. Eating to a comfortably-full state can enhance recovery AND facilitate quality sleep.

Myth:

You should detox to be healthy.

FACT:

There is no detox or a cleanse that will magically 'detoxify' your body. In fact, your body has its liver and kidneys which does this 'detox' activity for you daily. Instead of buying a program or a kit from such companies, you can take much simpler steps in everyday eating. These include eating enough; hydrating throughout the day; enjoying fruits, veggies and wholegrains to get enough dietary fibre; and getting enough sleep and rest.

Takeaway Tips:

1. Focus on eating enough and eating a variety of foods before considering anything else
2. Vitamin, mineral, protein, and other supplements can be a useful 'back-up plan' in certain situations, while it should not be the sole source of your nutrients
3. Always seek medical advice before self-diagnosing or self-treating intolerances or allergies



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