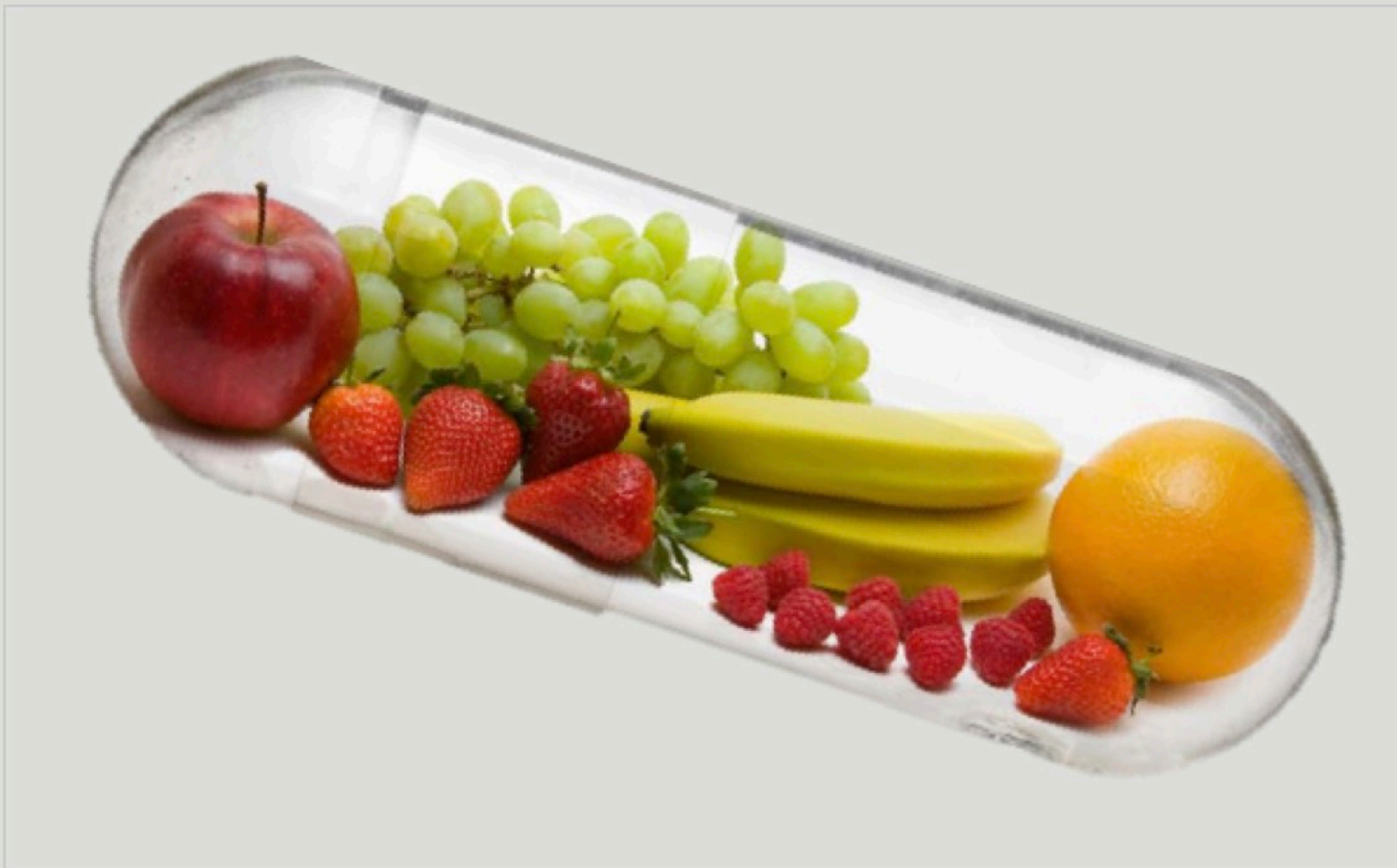




Supplements 101

Beginner's Guide to Supplements

Introduction



CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Listen to one guru, and they'll tell you supplements are overrated. Ask another, and he'll tell you they are critical for your health. The media is no better, constantly sensationalizing studies to generate more page-views. [So who can you trust?](#)

As it happens, we've spent the years researching supplementation. We're an independent organization - we don't sell any supplements ourselves and we don't review any products. All we do is look at all of the [scientific research](#) around supplementation, and then make evidence-based recommendations. There's a reason why over 20,000 people visit us every day and over 2 million a month!

Before we continue, please remember - supplements are exactly that - an addition to your diet. Supplements should be taken in a targeted manner: they will help cover the gaps in your existing diet.

This guide will break down the most popular supplements and categories so you can make educated decisions about your health.

Dr. Spencer Nadolsky

Common Deficiencies



CHAPTER 2

Common Deficiencies

Multivitamins are the most popular supplement, and really one of the most overrated. They're a good idea, "one pill to x all your dietary problems!"...

but multivitamins have three major flaws:

1. A multivitamin usually contains the bare minimum of a supplement, not the optimal amount. For example, the Recommended Daily Intake (RDI) of vitamin D is 400-800 IU, but the optimal dosage is about 2000 IU. Most multivitamins will aim for the low end of the RDI.
2. Taking a multivitamin might provide you with more than enough of certain vitamins. For example, vitamins A and C are plentiful in everyone's diet, yet multivitamins are packed full of them. Vitamins and minerals that people actually need (like vitamin D and magnesium) are usually under-dosed.
3. There's only so much room in that pill. Covering all of your daily requirements in one pill isn't physically possible.

We don't recommend multivitamins. Instead, evaluate your diet and figure out your deficiencies. The following pages tackle multivitamin deficiencies. We're going to cover the vitamins and minerals you are likely not getting enough of via your diet. There's a common theme to them - they tend to be inexpensive.

In general, you should be getting a full vitamin and mineral testing every six months. Is it time for a checkup?

COMMON DEFICIENCIES

Vitamin D



A popular and common supplement. [Vitamin D](#) is involved in a whole lot of functions inside your body, and the RDI (400-800 IU) is just

enough to prevent rickets (just like vitamin C keeps you from getting scurvy).

The actual optimal dose depends on how much sun exposure you get. A good general rule is to aim for roughly 2000 IU per day. Unless you live within the tropics and are exposing your bare skin to the sun. Just wearing shorts and a t-shirt doesn't cut it. You are likely deficient!

There's been a bit of pushback lately because a few studies claimed that vitamin D did not help with cardiovascular disease or some cases of cancer. That's not why you should be taking vitamin D anyway.

Vitamin D is an essential hormone in your body, and it helps your general health. There's a good chance you need supplementation, but your doctor can tell for sure after taking a blood test.

-- > [Recommended Brand](#) of [Vitamin D](#)

If you want more information on Vitamin D, follow this link...

[Vitamin D, an essential vitamin.](#)

COMMON DEFICIENCIES

Vitamin K

The RDI for vitamin K is roughly 100 mcg, but the optimal dosage is ten times that (1000 mcg).

Vitamin K is involved in both bone health and arterial health. While many foods claim to have vitamin K, they come with a catch, your body is unable to actually utilize the vitamin K! The only two foods that will provide you with enough vitamin K are crushed or blended kale (breaking the cellulose is essential to help your body absorb the vitamin K) and natto.

[Natto](#) is not a very popular food outside of Asia, so unless you enjoy the taste, consider [vitamin K supplementation](#).

If you want more information on Vitamin K, follow this link...

[Vitamin K, an essential vitamin.](#)



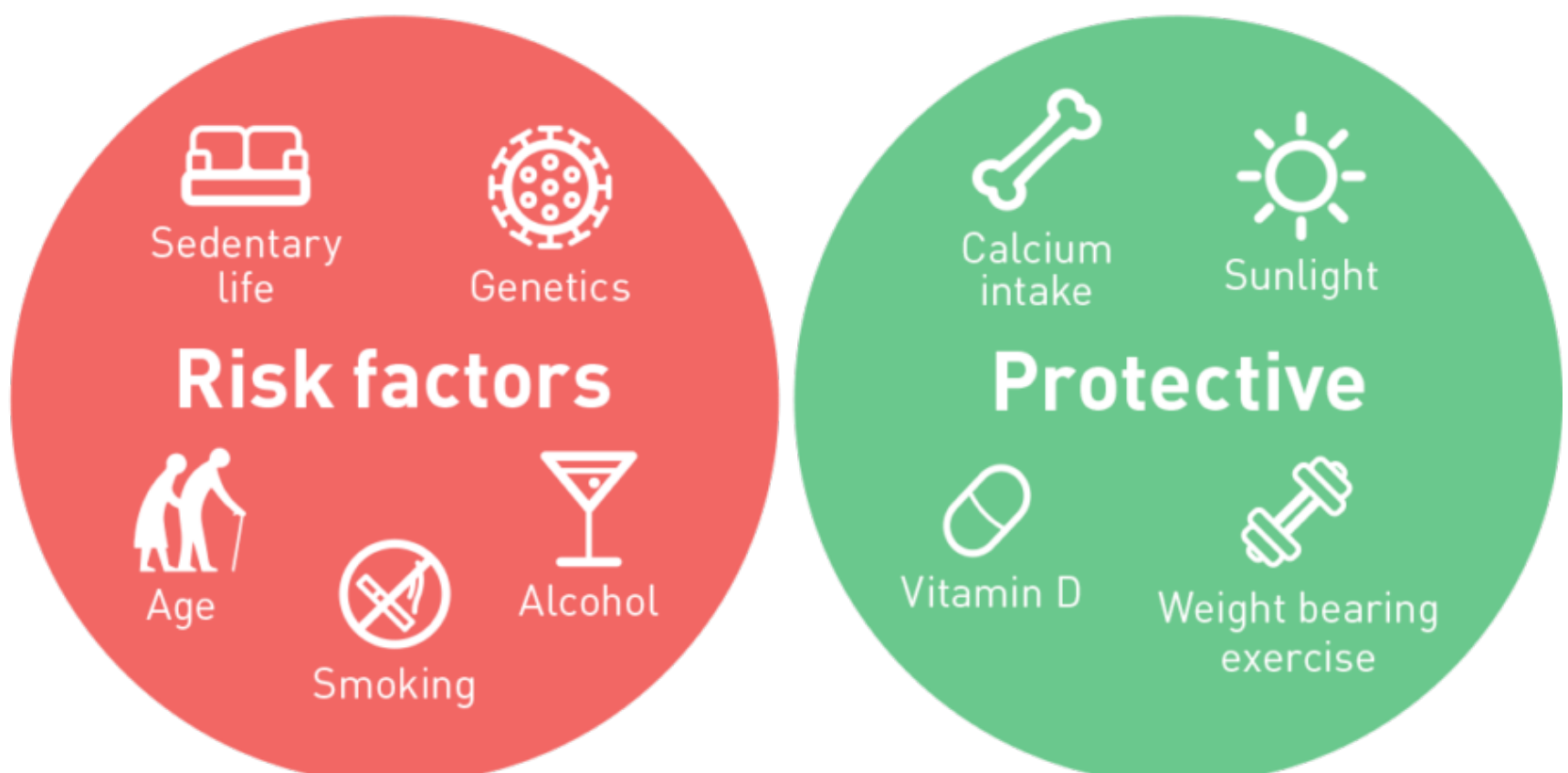
COMMON DEFICIENCIES

Calcium

Calcium deficiency is common in older people and anyone that doesn't consume dairy. Calcium is well-known for being involved with bone health. Being derived from dairy themselves, whey protein and especially casein protein, are both rich sources of calcium.

Calcium is best absorbed when supplemented with magnesium. Magnesium is the second most deficient mineral. Consider taking a [magnesium calcium combination supplement](#).

If you want more information on Calcium, follow the link below...
[Calcium, a dietary macromineral.](#)



COMMON DEFICIENCIES

Iron



Iron has an essential role in the body, mostly as an enzymatic cofactor.

What does that mean? For the enzymes in your body to work, they need specific minerals. Iron helps red blood cells carry oxygen. Low levels (anemia) usually causes fatigue.

[Iron supplementation](#) tends to be **handled by medical doctors**, as **overdosing can be toxic**. Still, iron is a common deficiency, especially in vegetarians and people who don't eat a lot of meat.

If you want more information on Iron, follow the link below...

[Iron, an essential mineral.](#)

COMMON DEFICIENCIES

Zinc

Zinc is also similar to [iron](#), in that it is also an enzymatic cofactor. Supplementation can help ensure you have enough in your body.

Zinc deficiency is not a big concern for non-athletes because it is lost through sweat. So those who don't sweat a lot, zinc levels are generally sufficient. But if you do sweat a fair amount, [zinc supplementation](#) can be important.

If you want more information on Zinc, follow the link below...
[Zinc, is an essential mineral.](#)



COMMON DEFICIENCIES

Magnesium

Magnesium is another enzymatic cofactor (like [iron](#) and [zinc](#)), but its more significant role in the body involves regulating hydration and blood pressure. It also serves a function in your brain!

Magnesium deficiency is common in many diets. It's similar to [vitamin K](#) in that it's hard to obtain enough through diet alone since nuts tend to be the only foods high in magnesium.

If your diet lacks magnesium, [definitely consider supplementation.](#)

To get more information on magnesium, follow the link below..
[Magnesium, an important dietary mineral.](#)

Supplements to Consider



CHAPTER 3

Supplements To Consider

Now we'll cover a range of supplements that help with weight management and overall health. They're not critical for health, but could be very helpful.

SUPPLEMENTS TO CONSIDER

Fish Oil



A popular supplement, fish oil is useful because it is full of omega-3 fatty acids. Inside your body, the ratio of omega-3 to omega-6 fatty acids should be roughly 1:1. Since we get plenty of omega-6 fatty acids from red meat, we might be lacking in omega-3 fatty acids. This can usually be fixed by eating some fatty fish, but if that is not your cup of tea, consider taking fish oil.

-- > [A great tasting Fish Oil supplement without the disgusting fish burps.](#)

If you want more information on Fish Oil, follow this link...
[The benefits of Fish Oil](#)

SUPPLEMENTS TO CONSIDER

Creatine

Creatine originally became popular among bodybuilders and performance athletes because it let you get a few extra reps out of your workout. Further research has noted that creatine's basic function (providing energy to your cells) has a host of other benefits.

[Creatine supplementation](#) is especially useful for vegetarians because creatine is most abundant in meat, eggs, and fish.

Creatine supplementation confers a variety of health benefits and has neuroprotective and cardioprotective properties. Having zero creatine in your body is a genetic disorder and causes mental retardation.

To get the full scoop on Creatine and all its benefits, click the link below...

-- > [Everyone benefits from Creatine](#)

SUPPLEMENTS TO CONSIDER

Carnitine

Carnitine (specifically, [L-carnitine](#)) is a component of a few enzymes involved in the usage of fat for energy.

Carnitine deficiencies are not common, and usually only occur in vegetarians and the elderly. Carnitine is usually sold as a fat-burner, but it only works in those that are already deficient. Even then it doesn't really burn much fat.

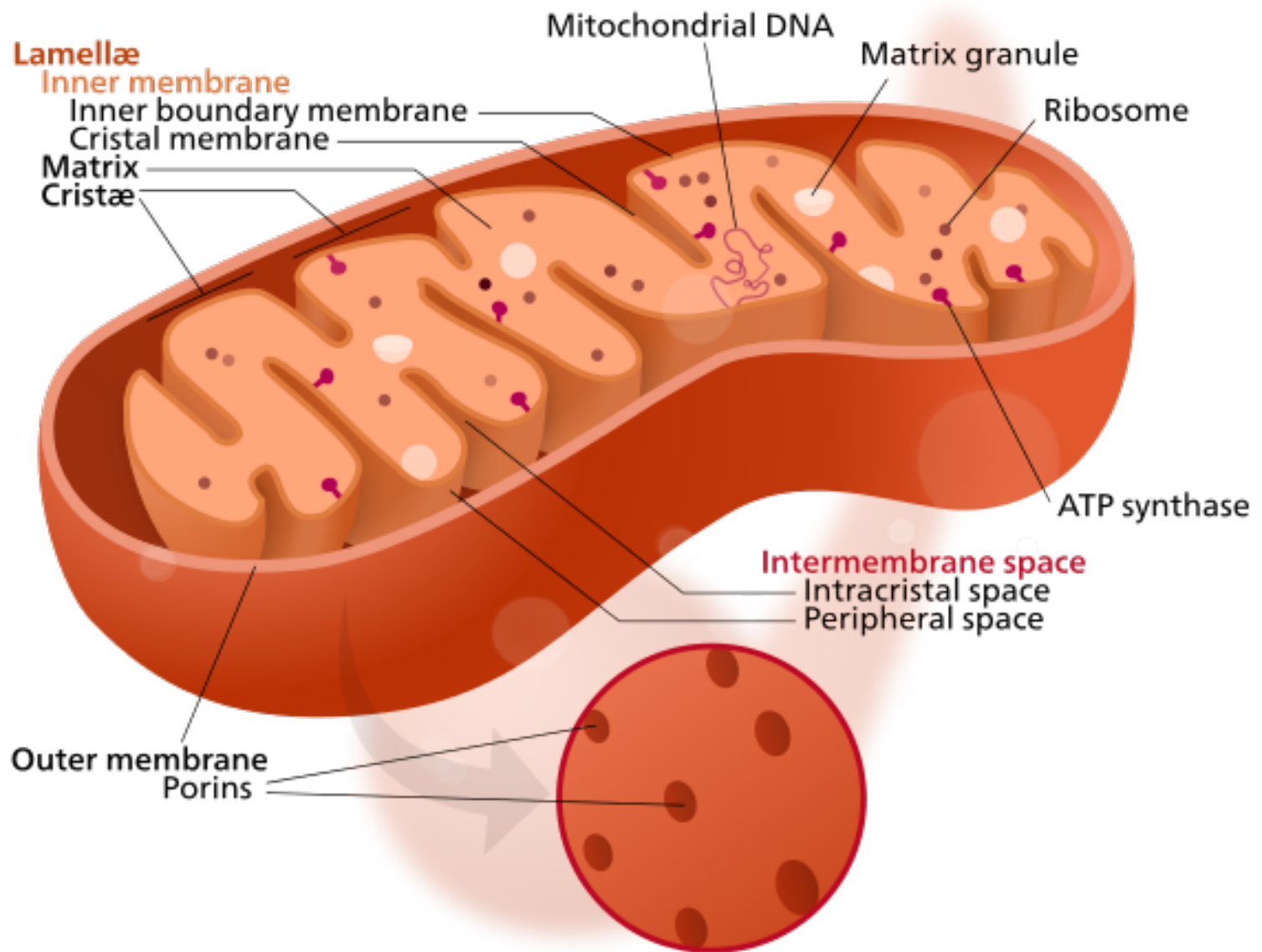
If you want more information on Carnitine, follow the link below...

[---> Why take Carnitine](#)



SUPPLEMENTS TO CONSIDER

Coenzyme Q10



Any kind of cardiac incident or trauma tends to drastically reduce the amount of CoQ10 found in your tissues. Supplementation of CoQ10 can be very useful for anyone with heart issues or bromyalgia.

If you want more information on CoQ10, follow the link below...

[---> Who needs CoQ10](#)

SUPPLEMENTS TO CONSIDER

Protein Powder



It may be weird seeing a macronutrient here, but most people do not get enough protein. Protein has a ton of benefits, from having a very high TEF (the amount of energy your body burns just to use it), to keeping you from losing muscle mass, to even being very filling!

The RDI of protein is extremely understated (and is based on a 132 pound person). You should aim for roughly 1.5g of protein per kilogram of bodyweight (or roughly 0.75g per pound). If you can't get there with your diet, protein powder can be a very convenient and tasty way of hitting your protein goals.

Protein supplements are different than [Amino Acid Supplements \(BCAA\)](#). These tend to be overpriced and unnecessary. High protein foods and protein powders are all you need.

Protein powders come in two forms:

1. [Plant Protein](#)

- Plant proteins come in all varieties, rice, pea, hemp, [blends](#)...

2. Animal Protein

a. [Casein Protein](#)

b. [Whey Protein](#)

I use a [Vanilla Whey Protein Isolate](#) almost everyday. It mixes well with just about anything and it adds a boost of protein to treats and deserts that lack protein.

If you want more information on protein, follow the link below...

[---> All about protein](#)

[---> Frequently Asked Questions and answers regarding Protein](#)

Supplements to Skip



CHAPTER 4

Supplements To Skip

We've already covered why multivitamins are usually not worth bothering with. Here are some other supplements to consider skipping.

SUPPLEMENTS TO SKIP

Fat Burners



There are simply no legal fat burners sold in the United States that work. Caffeine kind of works, but only if your body is not used to it. Once you build up a tolerance, caffeine's metabolic benefits wear out.

Everything from CLA to raspberry ketones to Garcinia cambogia to green coffee extract to whatever the latest-and-hottest fat burner is, they don't work. There is no evidence they work. The only thing that will get lighter, is your wallet.

NOTE: Okay, they technically work. Imagine if your car's efficiency went from 40 MPG to 40.1 MPG. You could say that the efficiency went up, but in reality, it's a negligible increase. The same analogy applies to fat burners. They might help you lose 0.5% more fat, but it's really an irrelevant amount of fat. The key is diet and exercise.

If you want more information on Fat Burners, follow this link...

[The Skinny on Fat Burners](#)

SUPPLEMENTS TO SKIP

Testosterone Boosters

Testosterone boosters should be more accurately called “libido boosters.”

Most people think that a higher libido reflects higher testosterone levels, but unfortunately that is not true. While higher testosterone usually means a higher libido, higher libido does *not* mean higher testosterone.

No testosterone booster on the market has been found to work. If you want to boost your testosterone, make sure you lift heavy weights, get enough sleep, don't get too stressed out, and eat enough saturated fats. No pill will help you.

The only exception is if you are deficient in a vitamin or mineral that is used in testosterone production. The supplements we covered at the beginning ([vitamin D](#), [zinc](#), [magnesium](#)) fit the bill.

To get the full scoop on Testosterone Boosters and all its benefits, click the link below...

-- > [More on Testosterone Boosters](#)

Targeted Supplementation



Targeted Supplementation

While everything we've covered so far has been for general health, there are a lot of supplements that work in very specific cases. For example, [berberine can help control blood sugar levels](#), which can be very useful for diabetics. Peppermint oil can help with irritable bowel syndrome. [Vitex agnus-castus can greatly alleviate PMS symptoms](#). Garlic helps your cholesterol levels. Those are but a few supplements that have been repeatedly shown to help people suffering from specific issues.

It would take hours (and pages upon pages) to go over every single health situation and supplements that could help (and supplements that would make it worse!) We've spent the years researching this information, so you can find [supplements that you may want to consider taking](#).

There's a reason why over 2 million people visit every month, and hundreds of personal trainers, dietitians, and doctors recommend all the [supplement references covered](#). Make it your source for independent and honest supplement information too.

What supplements can I trust?

The cheat sheet to better health, a better body, and a better life.

The experts have spoken...



“REAL SCIENCE, no bro-science. It’s the real deal”

Dr. Jose Antonio, PhD, International Society of Sports Nutrition



“Truly a massive and helpful undertaking.”

Dr. Yoni Freedhoff, MD CCFP Dip ABBM



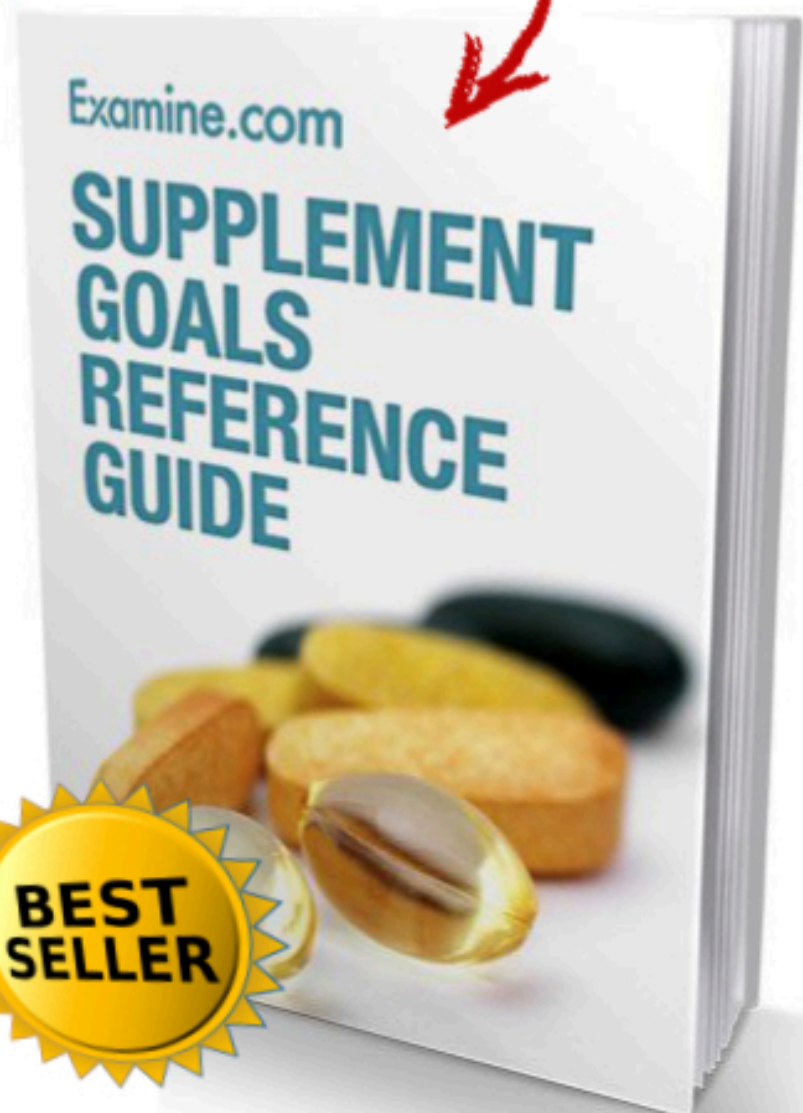
“I highly recommend it”

Eric Cressey, MA, CSCS



“the most comprehensive resource for supplement information”

Alan Aragon, BSc, MSc Nutrition



Tell Me More

Glossary

[Vitamin D](#)

Vitamin D is a fat-soluble essential vitamin that our skin synthesizes when exposed to the sun. It benefits us in many ways, from bone health to mood.

[Vitamin K](#)

Vitamin K is an essential vitamin found in plants or produced from intestinal bacteria. It plays an essential role in bone health and regulates blood clotting.

[Calcium](#)

Calcium is a dietary macromineral found in high amounts in dairy products, and to a lesser extent in vegetables. Used primarily to support bone health, calcium also has a role in maternal and cardiovascular health.

[Iron](#)

Iron is an essential mineral best known for allowing blood to carry oxygen between tissues. Except in case of deficiency, iron supplementation has no proven benefit; on the contrary, it can lead to iron poisoning.

[Zinc](#)

Zinc is an essential mineral involved in regulating many enzymes. It is an antioxidant and immune-boosting supplement. Zinc is most commonly supplemented to reduce the frequency of illness and to support optimal levels of testosterone.

[Magnesium](#)

Magnesium is a dietary mineral. Magnesium deficiencies are the second most common deficiency in developed countries, the first being vitamin D. A lack of magnesium will raise blood pressure and reduce insulin sensitivity.

[Fish Oil](#)

Fish oil is a general health supplement, and is taken as a source of omega-3 fats. It is not needed if one eats enough fatty fish.

Creatine

Creatine is a molecule that can rapidly produce energy (ATP) to support cellular function. It also exhibits performance-enhancing and neuroprotective properties. Creatine is well-researched and remarkably safe for most people.

Carnitine

L-Carnitine is involved in energy metabolism and mitochondrial protection. It is made in the body, but can also be consumed through food. Supplementation of L-carnitine does not burn fat unless the individual is deficient in L-carnitine.

Coenzyme Q10

Coenzyme Q10 is a molecule found in mitochondria. It has a critical role in producing energy for the body.

Fat-Burner

A compound that is designed or used to reduce fat mass through various means; does not inherently specify any interactions with muscle tissue, and many fat burners tend to be stimulatory.

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[Chapter 4 - Testosterone Boosters](#)

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Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index

Find Term

Chapter 2 - Common Deficiencies

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