

Busting myths around protein intake and weight-training

Jockeys sometimes worry that eating protein and doing resistance training will make them bulky and heavy, but this is not always the case. Below are some beneficial facts that protein and strength training can have on the body.

Protein

- Protein makes up our muscles, cartilage, skin, blood and many more components in the body. It helps to keep your muscles and bones strong to keep fit, perform whilst racing and to reduce the risk of injuries.
- If you do get injured, you are likely to lose muscle mass from inactivity and/or trauma to the body, so it is even more important to get enough protein in your diet to support recovery.



Protein stores in our bodies are constantly being built up or broken down. If we go long periods without eating protein i.e. fasting overnight and then skipping breakfast, our muscle mass will be broken down to provide protein for our bodily processes.

Top tips:

- Aim for 20-30g protein every 3-4 hours, starting at breakfast i.e. a pint of milk, high protein yoghurt, 3 eggs, palm-size (~100g) of chicken/meat/fish or 200g cottage cheese or quark.
- Choose protein-rich snacks i.e. milk, yoghurt, eggs/omelette, chicken, ham, fish etc. Protein is also the most filling macronutrient so helps to keep hunger pangs at bay!
- Consider having milk or yoghurt pre-bed to support muscle recovery during sleep.

'But won't protein make me bulky!?'

- The optimal way to 'bulk up' or gain muscle is to be in an energy excess (consuming more calories than your body needs) and doing a lot of heavy resistance training. Most jockeys do not consume enough energy to build excessive muscle due to weight restrictions.
- Confused about whey shakes? These are simply powdered milk and a convenient way to meet protein requirements, but are not superior to, and should not replace a balanced diet.
- Do you currently do any body-weight/resistance/strength training? If not, head to your local IJF centre for advice from the S&C team - these forms of exercise are great for supporting muscle and bone strength.

