

CALCIUM REQUIREMENTS FOR ATHLETES



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We learn from an early age that calcium is king when it comes to bone health, but are you actually getting enough calcium into your diet?

The RDI (recommended daily intake) of calcium varies between age and gender, ranging from 1000-1300mg per day for anyone aged 9 and older.

When we're young, our body builds strong bones using a combination of factors including calcium intake, vitamin D and weight bearing exercise.

The human body no longer builds new bone beyond the age ~25 years old, so its crucial to build bones as strong as possible in the early stages of life, and continue to maintain adequate calcium intake into adulthood to help protect bone strength.

Athletes need to be aware of their calcium intake – strong, healthy bones helps with prevention of bone injuries.

Athletes who are in aesthetic or weight-based sports who might reduce their energy intake to meet their goals are at higher risk of calcium deficiencies, and those who avoid dairy need to also be aware of the calcium content of non-dairy foods to ensure they eat adequate amounts and prevent deficiencies.



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Females are at a high risk of osteoporosis after menopause due to hormonal changes that impact bone health, so need to ensure calcium intake remains consistent while young.

Many athletes that come to see our Sports Dietitian are sure they're calcium intake is adequate, but when calculated up, it usually does not meet daily requirements.

Here is an example of a day's meals that would equate to 1200mg (minimum) of calcium:

Breakfast: Fruit smoothie made with 250ml of dairy milk

Snack: Two cheese slices on vita wheats crackers

Lunch: Tofu noodle and vegetable stir fry

Snack: Chobani FiT yoghurt topped with fruit

Dinner: Chicken and a salad topped with 50g feta cheese

PRECISION ATHLETICA		CALCIUM	
FOOD	PER 100G	PER SERVE	
DAIRY MILK <small>(Regular, full fat)</small>	120mg	300mg	
SOY MILK	124mg	310mg	
GREEK YOGHURT <small>(Plain unflavoured, full fat)</small>	100mg	170mg	
CHOBANI FIT YOGHURT <small>(Any flavour)</small>	104mg	177mg	
CHEDDAR CHEESE <small>(Regular, full fat)</small>	765mg	161mg	
FIRM TOFU	320mg	640mg	
SARDINES, CANNED	493mg	493mg	
SALMON, CANNED	205mg	205mg	
TAHINI	330mg	66mg	
BRAZIL NUTS	148mg	53mg	

How does your calcium intake add up against the suggested guide? Not quite meeting the daily requirements?

For help with an individualised nutrition plan to make sure that you are meeting your daily calcium requirements, make sure to contact **Precision Athletica Sport Dietitian - Kelsey Hutton** for advice.

**Note: Calcium content in comparison table is compared per 100g between foods, however serving sizes might actually be higher or lower than 100g – be aware of the serve sizes of these foods you are consuming when adding up your calcium intake.*

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