



MEDIA RELEASE

An initiative by the Consumer Education Project of Milk SA



Fuel an Active Lifestyle with Dairy

A healthy lifestyle does not mean that you have to play an organised sport or follow a gym routine. There are so many other ways that South Africans can embrace an active lifestyle – which is the most powerful choice you can make for your overall health. The combination of moving more, conscious eating and getting sufficient rest is the key to living well. Whether you are running or walking, choosing yoga or cold-water swimming, if you get yourself moving for around 3 to 5 hours a week, you are meeting global standards for an active lifestyle.

You also cannot separate what you eat from how you exercise. Physical activity changes your body's demand for energy and nutrients. What you eat and drink before and after exercise directly affects how you perform and recover. This is why a balanced diet is so important to active lifestyle enthusiasts.

Why dairy is a smart choice for active people

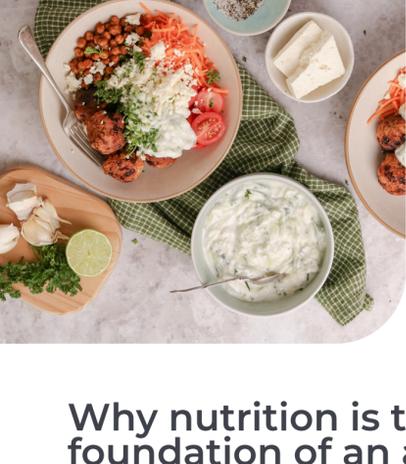
According to Maretha Vermaak, the Registered Dietitian at Rediscover Dairy, dairy foods including milk, maas, yoghurt, and cheese play an essential role in a balanced diet - and they are particularly beneficial for people leading active lifestyles.

She says, "Dairy is not just a smart but a practical, affordable choice for people who exercise daily. The unique dairy matrix provides high-quality protein, including whey and casein, which support muscle repair after physical activity. Dairy products also contain carbohydrates and key electrolytes like sodium and potassium to help provide and replenish energy while supporting hydration. Added to that, nutrients

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such as calcium, magnesium and vitamin D* play an important role in maintaining strong bones and reducing injury risk.

"Flavoured milk, like chocolate milk, has been shown to be a cost-effective post-exercise recovery option, supporting both muscle repair and fluid replacement. Fermented dairy products such as yoghurt and kefir also offer beneficial bacteria that support gut health, linking physical recovery with immune resilience."



Why nutrition is the foundation of an active body

Regular physical activity supports your vital organs and gut health while strengthening your muscles and bones over the long term. Importantly, it also lifts your mood in the moment - reduces your stress and improves your sleep. This dual impact on both physical and mental health is what makes an active lifestyle so vital in our overloaded and uncertain times.

Dr Lize Haveman-Nel, a Registered Dietitian who has a PhD in Exercise Science and Sports Nutrition explains the nutritional support for an active lifestyle:

You need carbohydrates for energy because they supply readily available energy that helps sustain performance and delay fatigue. Whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and legumes, as well as dairy, provide a steady release of energy.

You need protein for strength and recovery because it plays a central role in repairing and building muscle tissue after exercise. An active lifestyle increases protein needs, with most people requiring between 1.2 and 2 grams per kilogram of body weight per day. Spreading protein intake evenly across meals helps maximise muscle repair and adaptation. High-quality protein sources such as milk, yoghurt, amasi, cheese, eggs, lean meats and legumes supply essential amino acids, including leucine, which is particularly effective at stimulating muscle protein synthesis after exercise.

You need good fats for health and support because they provide a secondary energy source, especially during longer, lower-intensity activities. They are also essential for hormone production, brain function and the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins. Omega-3 fats, found in foods such as sardines, salmon, nuts and seeds, are especially valuable for active bodies. They help reduce inflammation, support recovery and contribute to overall metabolic and gut health.

Hydration and micronutrients matter too because water is often overlooked, yet it underpins nearly every process in the body, from muscle contraction to temperature regulation. Staying well-hydrated throughout the day is critical, particularly in South Africa's warm climate. For most people, clean, safe water is sufficient. But regular physical activity can also increase the body's need for certain vitamins and minerals that support energy metabolism, bone health and immune function. These include calcium, vitamin D*, magnesium and phosphorus for strong bones; iron and B vitamins for energy production and oxygen transport; and zinc and antioxidants to support immunity and recovery.

Dr Haveman-Nel concludes: "For most people, eating a wide variety of foods, including plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and dairy, provides all the micronutrients needed to support an active lifestyle."

Rediscover Dairy's top tips for an active lifestyle include:

- ▶ **Eat regular whole food** or minimally processed meals and snacks
- ▶ **Enjoy a variety of fresh**, different coloured fruits and vegetables every day
- ▶ **Eat a minimum** of three servings of dairy per day
- ▶ **Limit ultra-processed foods**, sugary snacks, and excessive alcohol
- ▶ **Ensure an adequate intake of iron and calcium**, especially for women
- ▶ **Get enough sleep and rest** - and listen to your body's signals



Rediscover Dairy's recipes to support an active lifestyle

- ▶ **Easy home-made chocolate milk**
- ▶ **Pear and berry frozen yoghurt bars**
- ▶ **Chicken frikkadel bowl with tzatziki, feta, tomatoes, carrots and chickpeas**
- ▶ **Butternut and feta egg muffins**
- ▶ **Wholewheat chicken wrap with cottage cheese, spinach, and peppers**



There are so many ways to embrace an active lifestyle from daily walks and weekly Park runs to playing padel or going to dance or pilates classes. Most people choose a range of exercises they enjoy that help them to maintain their health. It's more of a mindset than an adherence to just one way of being physically active. And part of this mindset is also about making the food choices that not only fuel your performance but help your body recover and reset.



For dairy ideas and recipes that support active lifestyles, join the Rediscover Dairy Facebook page: www.facebook.com/RediscoverDAIRY

For find out more about dairy's role on healthy diets, visit www.rediscoverdairy.co.za

*Vit D is only in fortified milk