

The Free Fitness Tips Newsletter – October 2009

brought to you by

<http://blog.freefitnesstips.co.uk/>

The Free Fitness Tips Newsletter – October 2009 is sponsored by:



Hello everyone. Welcome to the October 2009 **Free Fitness Tips Newsletter**. I'm now back from Brazil and settling back into a normal routine. As regular readers will know there hasn't been much content added to the blog this month. The reason for this is that I've been really struggling to find the time to write new articles. Hopefully, this month now that I'm a bit more settled I will be able to get a few more new articles published.

Anyway, I still managed to get a couple of articles published so this month's newsletter still includes:

- [Featured Article!](#)
- [Free Fitness Tips Blog Updates!](#)
- [Final Words!](#)

1) Featured Article

As I discussed previously I've not managed to get many articles added to the blog this month so the only contender for a featured article is...

What is Dietary Fat?



In the past I discussed the two macronutrients [carbohydrates](#) and [protein](#) in detail. Today I want to complete my write up of the three macronutrients and provide an introduction to dietary fat.

WHAT IS DIETARY FAT?

Dietary fat is probably the media's least popular macronutrient. Everywhere you look people are being advised to consume less fat, buy low fat products or even avoid fat completely. However, despite this negative perception dietary fat is an essential part of your diet. It supplies your body with essential fatty acids (EFAs), provides energy, helps your body absorb certain [vitamins](#), helps your body grow and supports a strong immune system.

Dietary fat contains more than double the calories of the other macronutrients with nine calories per gram compared with carbohydrates and protein which both contain four calories per gram. There are a number of different types of dietary fat and I will be discussing each of these in greater detail below.

HOW MANY DIETARY FATS ARE THERE?

There are four main types of dietary fat although each of these can be broken down further. Their names refer to their chemical structure. Although certain foods may be referred to as a source of saturated fat or a source of trans fats it is never really that simple. Most fat sources are a combination of two or more fat types. For example, whilst olive oil is often referred to as a source of monounsaturated fat it also contains smaller levels of polyunsaturated and saturated fats.

1) SATURATED FATS (SAFAs):- Saturated fat are those where all the carbon atoms are bonded to hydrogen atoms i.e. they are saturated with hydrogen. They are found mainly

in animal products such as meat, butter, cheese and cream

2) MONOUNSATURATED FATS (MUFAs):- Monounsaturated fats are those where there is one double bond between carbon atoms. This means the carbon atoms are bonded to hydrogen atoms at all but one point (the double carbon bond). They are therefore not fully saturated with hydrogen atoms (hence the 'unsaturated' part of the name) but only at this one point (hence the 'mono' part of the name). Monounsaturated fats are mainly found in avocados, nuts and olive oil.

3) POLYUNSATURATED FATS:- Polyunsaturated fats are those where there are two or more double bonds between carbon atoms. This means that they are not fully saturated with hydrogen atoms (hence the 'unsaturated' part of the name) and this happens at two or more points (hence the 'poly' part of the name). The two main types of polyunsaturated fats are omega 3 fatty acids and omega 6 fatty acids. Omega 3s are mainly found in oily fish whereas omega 6s are mainly found in vegetable oils. Both omega 3s and omega 6s are essential fatty acids which means they cannot be produced by your body and must be sourced from your diet.

4) TRANS FATS (TFAs):- Trans fats are those where an originally unsaturated fat has hydrogen atoms added to it. They can be created naturally when a hydrogen bond on an unsaturated fat gets twisted. However, the vast majority of trans fats are man made in a process called hydrogenation. Man made trans fats are mainly found in processed foods such as biscuits, cakes and crisps.

WHICH TYPES OF DIETARY FAT SHOULD YOU CHOOSE?

Conventional wisdom suggest that you should consume mainly unsaturated fats, limit your intake of saturated fats and completely avoid trans fats. The logic behind this is the effect that each type of fat has on your HDL (high density lipoprotein) and LDL (low density lipoprotein) cholesterol levels. LDL cholesterol can build up in the artery walls which causes them to become blocked and restricts the flow of blood through them. Ultimately, this can lead to [high blood pressure](#), increase your risk of heart disease and damage your vital organs. HDL cholesterol removes excess LDL cholesterol from your bloodstream and blood vessel walls then transports it to the liver where it can be processed and removed from the body.

So based on conventional wisdom unsaturated fats increase levels of HDL cholesterol whilst reducing levels of LDL cholesterol and therefore come highly recommended. Saturated fats increase levels of both HDL and LDL cholesterol, hence the reason moderate consumption is advised. Man made trans fats are believed to have no health benefits. They increase LDL cholesterol levels whilst reducing HDL cholesterol levels and should be avoided at all costs.

Whilst on the surface this does seem like good advice, Scott Kustes challenges this conventional wisdom in an article he wrote for [The Fitness Black Book](#). Scott suggests that you should choose natural fats where possible. Trans fats are largely man made so should be avoided. However, a lot of polyunsaturated fats such as vegetable oils are highly processed and cannot really be classed as natural fats. Therefore, these

polyunsaturated fats should be avoided too. Monounsaturated fats, certain polyunsaturated fats such as fish oils and saturated fats all count as natural fat and should be consumed.

So overall here's the lowdown on each of the four fats...

- **Saturated Fats:-** OK to consume but make sure they come from natural sources e.g. go for a joint of beef instead of a beef burger.

- **Monounsaturated Fats:-** OK to consume but make sure they come from natural sources e.g. go for nuts and olive oil instead of margarine and mayonaise.

- **Polyunsaturated Fats:-** OK to consume but make sure they come from natural sources e.g. go for oily fish, seeds and green leafy vegetables but avoid vegetable oil.

- **Trans Fats:-** Avoid at all costs.

HOW DOES YOUR BODY USE DIETARY FAT?

When you ingest any type of dietary fat it is broken down into glycerol and fatty acids in the stomach and intestine. Since fats and oils cannot be mixed with water or water based substances such as digestive fluids, the glycerol and fatty acids next need to be altered in a process called emulsification. This process allows fats to be held in the digestive fluids long enough to be digested. Once digested the fat is then transported to your body's cells via the bloodstream and lymphatic system.

Your cells use fat in a variety of ways some of which include:

- *Providing insulation for your nerves.*
- *Forming the structure of cell membranes in your body.*
- *Lubricating your joints.*

DIETARY FAT SUMMARY

Dietary fat is often seen as the macronutrient to avoid. However, as long as you go for natural fats it is a highly important part of your diet. By choosing the right fats you can keep your cholesterol levels under control and keep your body functioning properly. I hope this article has given you a basic introduction to dietary fat and its importance. In my next few articles I plan to expand on the pros and cons of consuming dietary fat and also recommend a selection of natural fat choices.

Until then I want to hear your thoughts. Do you agree with my recommended fat choices? Is there anything I have missed? Let me know by leaving a comment.

Sources:

[Fat \(Wikipedia\)](#)

[Fat Summary \(Weight Loss Tips and Secrets\)](#)

[Digestion of Dietary Fats \(Carbs Mart\)](#)

[The Fat Panel](#)

[The Four Types of Fat – Sorting Out the Confusion of Dietary Fats \(The Fitness Black Book\)](#)

2) Free Fitness Tips Blog Updates

Unfortunately I only managed to publish two new articles to the blog this month which were:

- [*What is Dietary Fat?*](#) - October 25th 2009 (This month's featured article)
- [*10 Reasons You Should Walk 10 Miles A Week*](#) - October 29th 2009 (Guest post from Mary Ward)

3) Final Words

Due to the lack of blog content this month the newsletter is pretty slim. Hopefully, next month it will be a bit more substantial.

Until next time,

Tom Parker (Owner and Creator of Free Fitness Tips)

The Free Fitness Tips Newsletter – October 2009 is sponsored by:


