

GABRIELE

FITNESS & PERFORMANCE



The Big 6 Nutrition Principles

By Tom Langton

This article was supposed to be a follow up to "The Power of Protein" (If you missed it, [click here](#) to check it out). Many of my faithful readers e-mailed some awesome questions and I will answer them in a future newsletter (I promise KG!). However, after having some great conversations with clients about nutrition, I kept hearing alot of the same issues pop up. Then I talked to some of our "Biggest FAT Loser" competitors about problems they had with their food, so I just had to get some of these ideas down.

The list I have below I will call my "Big 6 Nutrition Principles". These do not cover how many grams of carbs to take in or what is the healthiest type of cooking oil or any other specific details. These principles will hopefully help you with some of the problems you might be facing. The majority of people we work with, whether an athlete or a fat loss client, can relate to at least one, if not all of these.

The Goal is to Keep the Goal, the Goal

This is the motto of Dan John (great strength coach and author) and summarizes one of the biggest problems many of our clients have. Having a goal set and working toward that goal on a daily basis is extremely important. We all know that, the problem lies in just having one main goal and working towards it for an extended period of time. For example, I've had conversations that go something like this *"I want a nutritional program that will help me build muscle, but not get bulky, lose weight, but not look too skinny, help me sleep better and increase my performance on the tennis court, but also help with my half marathon training."* That is not an exaggeration either, 1 person , 7 goals, 1 nutrition plan. I'm not a math guy, but that equation is a recipe for disaster. Have one goal, set it, stick to it and have a laser like focus on it.

Consistently Inconsistent

Here is my typical Monday morning conversation

"How did you do with your food last week?"

"Great, I had a really good 4 days, BUT...."

Anytime that big BUT (no pun intended) comes out, I know where the conversation is going. Fill in the blank with whatever you would like here, *"I had a dinner party", "I was entertaining clients", "I had a bad weekend"*. This is the cycle that most people get on. Listen, I'm not saying you have to be perfect with your food, but most people will have one bad meal and then fall off the wagon. How many times have you told yourself, *"I've had a bad weekend already, I'll start being healthy again Monday morning"*. A bad meal is ok, just don't let it throw you off your game.

You Already Know What You Need to Know

I would estimate that 90% of our fitness clients have a pretty good idea of what foods are healthy and what a decent nutrition program looks like. Most people can go into a restaurant, look at a menu and know what they should or shouldn't be eating to reach their goal. So why isn't everyone as healthy and fit as they would like? Do you need someone to tell you exactly what to eat and what not too? Are you looking for that magic bullet? The one diet or food that will change their life forever? The problem is, most people already know what that diet is, they already know what eating healthy is, so when they are told what to do and what to eat, it's not exciting, sexy and new. It is actually quite boring. Nobody wants to be told that they have had the right info and knowledge to be fit all along and just haven't done it. Good health and nutrition is not a mystery, there are no secret potions or formulas. Odds are you probably know what you need to do.

It's Simple, But It's Not easy.

The best way I can describe this one to you is with a quick story. We are training a high school senior who is leaving for college in the fall. He was a good football player, but is choosing not to play in college. So his goal is simple, he wants to lean out and look as good as possible when he starts school in August. He trains hard and always has, so the biggest thing for him was nutrition. The first day of his training he asked me what he should eat and I said *"Meat and vegetables and only drink water"*. He nodded his head and said, *"Ok Coach, got it"*. That was it, the consultation was over, that was 4 weeks ago. We weighed him in on Wednesday and he already has lost 9 lbs of fat and his strength numbers are rising on a weekly basis. Now I understand some people need a little more guidance than this, but it shouldn't be complicated. Eating clean is pretty simple and pretty boring, it's just not easy.

The Duct Tape Method

I'm not a real handy man, but I do know that duct tape can fix just about anything, for a short period of time at least. That is the same mentality that a lot of people have in regards to their nutrition. They find the quickest method that will work for a short period of time and go with it. Walk into any book store and there are hundreds of diets that will work for you, for short periods of time. The problem with this type of problem solving is that eventually, the duct tape stops working and the problem usually gets worse. We have seen it a lot, people going hard core with a "new" diet and getting great results for a time, then stopping all together and usually ending up right back where they started, sometimes even worse.

Change Your Playbook

I don't want to make it seem like everyone we work with has terrible nutritional habits, that is not the case at all. We have had so many of our clients change their eating habits and achieve tremendous long term success. They too encounter problems though, the main one is hitting plateaus. A lot of people we see with great success in their fat loss, weight loss or muscle building efforts eventually will come to a point where they are no longer seeing the results they expect. They are doing the same things and staying clean with their diet, but not seeing any change. This is a case where some minor adjustments may be needed. Just like a football coach has to change his playbook slightly from week to week and year to year, small changes are necessary for continued success. You don't need to develop an entirely new system, stay with what works for you, just re-examine your plan and make some tweaks.

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