

Dietary Fat / EFA / Fish Oil Guide

Dietary fats come in all shapes and sizes, and are an exceptionally complex nutritional component. For our purposes, we will keep it very simple. Fats have been vilified in the past, and have been blamed for the current obesity epidemic. Let me put this as plainly as I can – fats do not make you fat (overconsumption and bad eating decisions make you fat.) That said, just like proteins and carbs, not all fats are created equal. Some fats have a much greater propensity to be stored as body fat than other fats. Fats can come from animal or vegetable sources and basically, the more natural and unadulterated the source, the better it is for you. Let me make this very clear: DO NOT FEAR FAT. Even saturated fat is fine and even good for you SO LONG AS the source is natural. Fat is our friend, and when chosen properly can taste awesome and help us drop body fat quickly.

To be sure there are “bad” fats: Highly processed “trans” fats (see below) like margarines and other man made fats are metabolic suicide while sources like olive oil, coconut oil and fish oils can actually extend life and promote fat loss.

Fats can be used for structural things such as cell membranes, various hormones, and organs and for energy requirements. That is in fact what body fat is: energy stored for future use. As you will read below, we will be increasing your intake of specific fats to optimize your metabolism, and completely eliminating other fats for the same reason.

Trans Fats and Why You Need to Hate Them

These days it's hard to get through a day without consuming some form of convenience food. A muffin on the way to work, a snack from the vending machine, crackers with lunch, a snack bar on the way home, and then a convenient 'just add water' biscuit mix with dinner. Those days are gone – here's why: Have you ever read the entire nutritional label on the pre-packaged snacks that we all know and love? If you did, then you would have seen the ingredient *partially hydrogenated oil*. This is a necessary ingredient that allows foods to sit on a shelf for months at a time without going bad—but along with the preserving quality comes a little something called trans-fatty acids. So what are trans-fatty acids? And why should you even care? Trans-fatty acids are produced during the hydrogenation of vegetable oil, and studies show that these manmade molecules are worse for your body than saturated fat. They even raise LDL (the bad one) cholesterol levels while simultaneously lowering HDL (the good one) cholesterol levels.

Trans-fatty acids are also linked to higher rates of insulin resistance. That, my friends will stop fat loss in its tracks. In her book, *The Omega Diet*, Artemis P. Simopoulos, M.D. states that, "Trans-fatty acids interfere with normal fatty acid metabolism by crowding out essential fatty acids from the cell membranes and interfering with the conversion of the shorter chain fatty acids (such as LNA) into longer ones (such as DHA). As a result, there are fewer long-chain fatty acids in the membranes. This makes the membranes less fluid and reduces the number and sensitivity of the insulin receptors." Bottom line, you store more fat.

Food items that contain trans-fatty acids	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • commercial baked goods • prepared mixes • crackers • snack food • margarine • shortening • artificial cheese • deep-fat fried foods • cakes and cake mixes • corn chips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cinnamon rolls • doughnuts • muffin mixes • pastries • pie crust • potato chips • tortillas and tortilla chips • biscuit mixes and dough • anything with <i>partially hydrogenated</i> on the label

Simopoulos goes on to say, "It is difficult to live in the United States and avoid trans-fatty acids because they have infiltrated the entire food supply. Anytime you see the words, 'partially hydrogenated' on a label, know that lurking within are trans-fatty acids. Take the time to go

through the supermarket aisles and read the labels on baked goods, snack foods, and mixes. Virtually every one contains trans-fatty acids.”

Effectively the acceptable level of trans-fats in this program (and for the rest of your life) is ZERO.

EFAs / Omega -3's

So you know which fats to hate – now let me show you which fats to love: EFAs. EFA stands for Essential Fatty Acids. In dietary terms “essential” means that your body cannot make it by itself. There are two families of EFA's, Omega-3 (linolenic acid) and Omega-6 (linoleic acid). Omega-3's (also referred to as “Fish Oils”) are the one we care most about because most of us get sufficient Omega-6's in our diets. EFA's are special because they are the building blocks that make our hormones, membranes, eyes, ears, brains, sex organs and are a part of every cell in your body . And again, you must get EFA's from your diet, because your body cannot make them. Omega-3 EFA's are found in the body oils of cold-water ocean fish like cod, mackerel, halibut, herring and tuna.

Health Conditions link to Omega-3 Omega Deficiencies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eczema and psoriasis • Hair loss • Water loss • Reduced immune function • Behavioral difficulties • Poor healing • Miscarriages • Circulatory disorders • Schizophrenia • Epilepsy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abnormal behavioral changes • Impairment of vision • Spread of rheumatic and arthritic disorders • Deteriorating motor coordination • Glandular atrophy, which in turn leads to infertility, growth deficiency and weight disorders



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The benefits of EFA supplementation are vast and varied. Essentially (no pun intended), EFA's are anti-inflammatory. That means they can benefit most if not all types of inflammation. You might not be aware that heart disease is actually a form of inflammation. That is why EFA's are currently recommended to all cardiac patients. EFA supplementation greatly reduces the risk of many health related conditions in addition to cardiovascular disease, such as cancer, depression, inflammatory diseases of joints and connective tissues, kidney disease/renal failure, osteoporosis, asthma, prenatal and postpartum support, diabetes/insulin resistance and many other diseases as well as increases resting metabolic rate, and improves body composition regulation. In addition, EFA's have been vital in accelerating fat loss by turning on the lipolytic genes (fat burning genes) and turning off the lipogenic genes (fat storage genes).

In days of old – like *caveman* old – we consumed ample quantities of EFA's. We did not suffer from arthritis nor did we die from heart attacks. Generally we were eaten by lions or some such beast. As our diets have become more and more processed and pre-packaged, our intake of EFA's has dramatically plummeted leaving us severely deficient. There is simply no debate - optimal health requires optimum levels of EFA's. The bonus of that is that EFA's aid in fat loss. One study showed EFA's can increase metabolism as much as 400 calories per day – PER DAY! For many that in and of itself should be reason enough to get your EFA's. In my opinion there is only one supplement I recommend to everyone, and it is EFA's.

Top 10 Reasons EFA's are Essential

1. Fish oils, rich in the Omega-3 fatty acids may help prevent depression, stabilize the moods of maniac-depressives, and alleviate symptoms of schizophrenia.
2. Fish oils are one of the few substances known to lower concentrations of triglycerides (fatty substances) that pose a cardiovascular risk, in the blood.
3. Increasing the amount of Omega-3 fatty acids has direct effects on serotonin levels.
4. Fish oils, eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) help prevent heart disease, depression and cancer.
5. Research has shown that supplementation with fish oils can markedly reduce interleukin-1beta production and results in a significant reduction in morning stiffness and the number of painful joints in rheumatoid arthritis patients.
6. Several clinical trials have concluded that eating fish regularly or supplementing with fish oils can reduce the risk of sudden cardiac death by as much as 50%.
7. Researchers at Mayo Clinic report that supplementation with fish oils, EPA and DHA is highly effective in slowing down the progression of IgA nephropathy, a common kidney disease.
8. Epidemiological studies have shown that populations with a high intake of fish oils have a lower incidence of inflammatory diseases such as asthma.
9. Researchers at The University of Tromso now report that fish oil supplementation lowers blood pressure significantly in people with hypertension and has no effect on glucose control even in people with mid diabetes.
10. Medical researchers in New Zealand provide convincing evidence that an increased consumption of fish oils helps reduce the risk of developing prostate cancer.

How Much EFA Do I Need?

That is a good question – and the answer can vary depending on who you talk to. But first let's clear a few things up.

Most “Fish Oil” or EFA pills are 1000mg. But of that 1000mg only 300mg is EPA/DHA (that stands for eicosapentaenoic acid and docosahexaenoic acid respectfully, you don't really need to know that but trust me when I say that is “the good stuff” we want from our Fish Oil / EFA supplement.)

So that means only 30% of the pill is the stuff we actually want. So why is that a big deal? Because to get the optimal benefits from our EFA's (again, depending on who you talk to) we need to consume somewhere around 5-6g of EPA/DHA per day (combined total of the two). That is the same as 5000-6000mg. So if each capsule is only 300mg of the good stuff we could be taking as much as 20 pills a day. That is a lot to choke down.

The good news is there are some very concentrated fish oil products out there. Here are some options:

Option #1 (Good)

Here is one you can buy at Priceline. Here is a pic I grabbed off of Google...



As you can see it has 980mg of EPA/DHA which is over 3x what the typical fish oil supplement has. So now we are only talking 5-6 caps per day –much more do-able. It is also worth noting these caps are “enteric coated.” This means they will not give you “fish burps” which are NASTY.

Option #2 (Better)

Green Pasture. Cod Liver Oil

These are the ones I use. They are the most premium that I use.



I keep this one at home in the fridge and use it in my protein shakes (or take it straight, it tastes that good.) This is a top-notch source of essential fats.

Now you certainly do not need to get these brands, there are many other great brands out there. But these are trusted sources that I **PERSONALLY** use daily.

FINAL NOTE: Vegetable sources of EFAs (ie Flax Oil) are a vastly inferior to fish oils and are not the same thing at all. While they might have their own benefits, they do not come close to what fish oil sources have to offer so stick with the marine based oils.