

The Anabolic Cocktail

Here we go again, another newsletter about Meal Replacement Drinks (MRDs). How many ways can we discuss the benefits of incorporating meal replacements/substitutes—or as we like to call them, fitness fast foods (FFF)—into your daily food plan? We have definitely covered them all in many previous publications. Ah . . . but wait, this is different and very cool because someone has finally produced a TRUE ready to drink (RTD) workout shake and guess what it's called?

“The Workout Shake”

In order to be an *actual* pre or post exercise formula that can deliver the desired outcome of producing better workouts and faster recovery, there is a well-established scientific criterion that must be met.

In the past, the proper product would have been a tough sale

No one dared to properly formulate a pre/post RTD for the simple reason of economics. Manufacturers of existing RTD shakes (including the best selling one), “sell out” to the “marketing side”. What we mean is that unfortunately, up until recently, the average gym goers/exercisers (not the well-informed athlete) has generally looked for “higher protein” formulas when choosing something to ingest quickly before or after training.

Worse, many of this health club group would also want the formula to include a low carbohydrate count. So basically, they ended up drinking a protein supplement, which of course delivered little to nothing of what they actually needed.

Worse yet, the total calories may have even been higher than if they had consumed the proper formula. So, at the end of the day they got exactly the opposite of the desired outcome: took in calories that delivered less energy and did not fire up their muscle-building machinery, as opposed to taking in the same or less calories that could have produced all they were looking for.

Unnnnnn-believable. But that's how you end up with those types of backward formulas in the gym coolers. The makers play to what they believe you want, not what you need, because it's too costly or impractical to properly educate everyone—great marketing, bad science, wrong outcome!

The right energy formula

The basic ingredients that can deliver the desired results is no secret. Anyone can pull up volumes of recent peer review literature that clearly spell out what exercisers need to recover faster and produce more energy in order to have the potential to perform at a higher level, which—with everything else equal, including total calories—may not only boost performance but can lead to greater fat loss.

The not-so-secret “sauce” starts with a carbohydrate/sugar profile that can enter the body quickly, act fast, but continue to support energy levels throughout the training period. Therefore, you need a high dose of simple carbohydrates (primarily sucrose, which is ½ glucose, ½ fructose) mixed with a moderate dose of protein and relatively low fat.

Besides supplying necessary amino and fatty acids, the simultaneous ingestion of the formulas protein and fat, helps manage the speed in which the carbohydrates enter the body, allowing the recipient higher but even energy levels throughout the desired period. Ahhh, but there's more. By consuming the right ingredients before the workout, we can also enhance the recovery process.

The right recovery formula

Although recovery primarily takes place after the workout, you can help speed and improve the process before you start by ingesting the same ingredients shortly before the workout, just as you do immediately following.

As we all should remember, insulin is king when it comes to building muscle. Not only does

the hormone start and continue the entire muscle building process, but insulin also helps minimize the damage caused by exercise, allowing the body to spend more time building muscles rather than constantly repairing them. By ingesting the drink pre-exercise, the carbohydrates (CHO) not only supply workout energy but also kick-off the helpful insulin release that will work to mitigate the exercise-induced damage. And by repeating the same basic formula post-workout, a renewed insulin release initiates and enhances the muscle-building hormone cascade (more insulin, more testosterone, GH, IGF-1, etc.).

When liquid is better

Although you can get the same CHO, protein and fat mix in bar form, which still digest much faster than traditional foods, all studies that demonstrated the best outcomes were designed using a liquid delivery system for the macronutrients rather than food form.

Liquid form would certainly get into the system faster than all other forms, but it may also be more effective in driving insulin to the necessary levels that can improve the entire anabolic process.

That said, bars do meet the necessary “quick digestion criteria” and are often more practical based on venues. And bars can still deliver the desired result provided the above formula outline is met.

RTDs are also a convenient method of acquiring pre-workout nutrients when time is a problem as in early morning workouts (from bed to the gym) or straight from the office to the gym because by ingesting the liquid form, the contents are almost immediately at work in the body.

So there you have it, plain and truly simple: mix predominantly CHO with moderate protein and low fat into an acceptable calorie range, deliver it in a liquid matrix and you have what you always needed—the perfect pre and/or post RTD workout shake. Finally!

(Add some Creatine/Volumizer and BCAA with your Workout Shake and you'll think you are taking something illegal).

Until next time,

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 Container (330mL)	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 270	Calories from Fat 45
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 5g	8%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 20mg	7%
Sodium 320mg	13%
Total Carbohydrate 36g	12%
Dietary Fiber 2g	8%
Sugars 32g	
Protein 20g	40%
Vitamin A 25%	Vitamin C 15%
Calcium 50%	Iron 0%
Vitamin D 15%	Vitamin E 15%
Thiamin 20%	Riboflavin 40%
Niacin 15%	Vitamin B6 20%
Folate 15%	Vitamin B12 30%
Biotin 15%	Pantothenic Acid 20%
Phosphorus 60%	Iodine 40%
Magnesium 10%	Zinc 5%
Selenium 15%	Molybdenum 5%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

