Protein Recommendations for Weight Loss in Elite Athletes

Reference: by Hector & Phillips IJSNEM 2017

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HOW MUCH PROTEIN?

A large body of scientific evidence supports protein intakes in excess of the recommended dietary allowance (0.8g protein/kg/d) to promote the retention of skeletal muscle and loss of adipose tissue during dietary energy restriction.

Current recommendations for protein intakes during weight loss in athletes are set at 1.6-2.4g protein/kg/day.

Protein requirements can shift within this range depending on a number of factors including the rate of weight loss:

1. Resistance exercise may promote lower protein requirements
2. Faster rate of weight loss may promote greater protein requirements
3. The plateau in the lines demonstrates that with decreasing energy intake, increased protein intake becomes less effective to spare lean mass

Protein requirements may be also adjusted depending on the consumption of high quality protein, an even distribution of protein intake throughout the day, and high quality protein intake in close temporal proximity following exercise, particularly resistance exercise.

SUPPLEMENTATION

Evidence-based: Whey protein
Lack of strong evidence or negative side effects: BCAA, HMB, & other herbal/natural substances

EFFECTS ON HEALTH

Consumption of higher protein diets does not have detrimental effects on health, including kidney function, bone health or liver function and blood lipids.