

SMART SNACKS Creative Ideas and Recipes Male Clients Will Enjoy

By JULIANN SCHAEFFER

hether it's a bag of chips, a sleeve of cookies, or nothing at all, most male clients can use some education on the topic of smarter snacking. And the reasoning goes something like this: With work demands and family obligations, many men feel lucky if they can fit in a quick lunch, let alone a midmorning or afternoon snack during the work week.

"Unfortunately, for men, hectic weekday schedules and work demands can take priority over eating. All of a sudden, 5 PM rolls around and they have nothing substantial to show for the day," says Kara Lydon, RD, LDN, health communications manager at Chobani. But as she explains, if you can get your clients to make snacking a priority early on, their body will learn to remind them later. "Train your body to expect a snack midmorning and/or midafternoon, and eventually your body will tell you it's time for a snack rather than the clock."

According to Tara Gidus, MS, RD, CSSD, LD/N, a nutritionist for the Orlando Magic NBA team, snacking can help solve what can happen when someone goes too long without food: overeating. "Men tend to eat large portions at meals and forget to eat between meals," she says. "They get ravenously hungry, which leads to making poor choices, eating too quickly, and then overeating.

"Men need more calories than women because of their larger size and higher muscle content," she adds. "Snacks are a perfect way to bridge energy from one meal to another, prevent ravenous hunger, and also provide nutrients that may be missing from the diet."

Today's Dietitian spoke with RDs about the importance of healthful snacking for the average male client and collegiate athlete as well as the most important nutrients they should contain, and they provide creative snack ideas these men can make at home or purchase at their neighborhood supermarket.

Obstacles to Snacking Healthfully

Step one in overcoming men's most common obstacles to healthful snacking is defining what to eat vs. what not to eat.

"A snack has to contain purposeful nutrients," says Becci Twombley, RD, CSSD, director of sports nutrition at the University of Southern California and a spokesperson for American Pistachio Growers. "Many athletes hear me say, 'Snack three times per day,' and they immediately think of

chips, cookies, or candy when, in fact, I'm referring to whole or dried fruit, yogurt, beef jerky, and nuts."

Twombley says the clientele she works with most, young college athletes, often struggle with the same constraints as older working professionals: time. The answer for both is preparation.

"Prepare ahead of time," says Jim White, RD, owner of Jim White Fitness & Nutrition Studios in Virginia Beach and a spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. "Take an hour out of your Sunday afternoon to prepare all of your snacks in individual baggies so you can easily grab them during the busy work week."

Whether your client is a professional ball player, a corporate executive, or a stay-at-home dad, smart snacking has benefits for him.

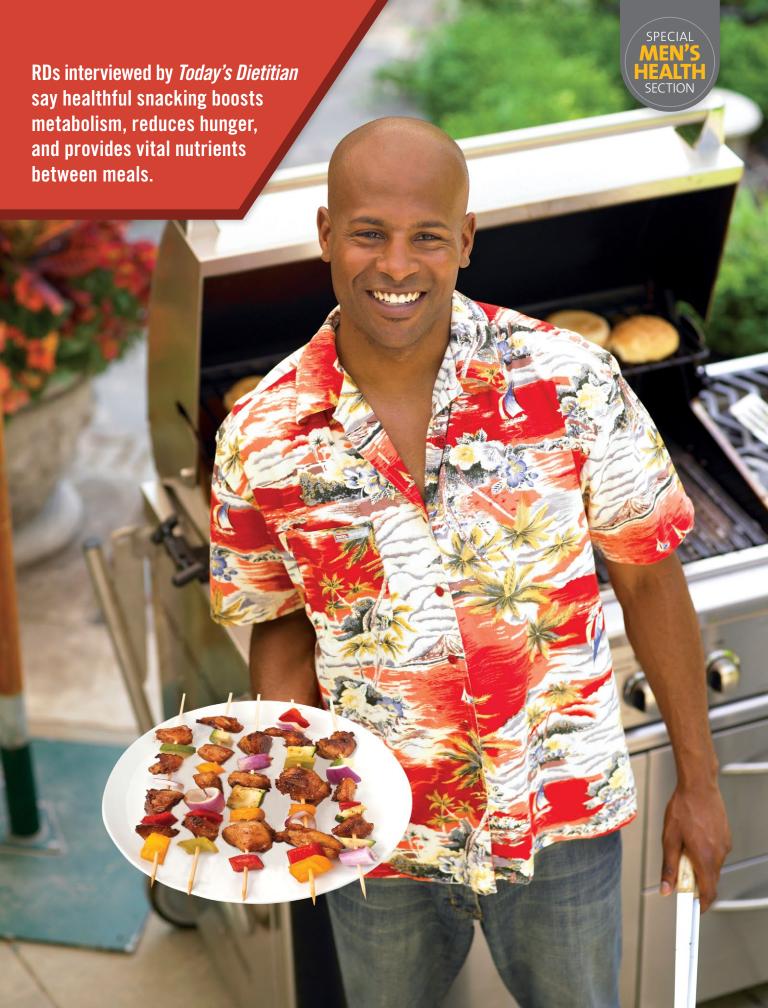
"If you're constantly active or just sit in front of a computer all day, it's good to refuel from time to time," says Bryan Roof, RD, LDN, a chef and senior editor of America's Test Kitchen. "Snacking keeps your metabolism up, keeps blood sugar from dipping too low—avoiding those brain-dead moments throughout the day—and prevents you from bingeing when you finally sit down for a meal."

Twombley agrees, adding that it's an important part of fueling muscle growth and recovery. "Without fueling the body every three to four hours, cells have to go back and forth between the starved and fed state, which makes energy utilization inefficient," she says. "Fatigue, irritability, and frequent illness are just a few consequences from failure to snack."

Key Nutrients

There's no snack that will be equally sufficient for every person, but they should contain 300 kcal, 1 g of fat, 1 to 2 g of saturated fat, 15 to 20 g of protein, and 30 g of carbohydrate, explains Leslie Bonci, MPH, RD, CSSD, LDN, director of sports nutrition at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center and the Pittsburgh Steelers' team dietitian for nearly two decades.

Of these nutrients, protein is particularly important, according to Twombley. "Protein is important for both men and women, but men need more protein per day than women," she says. "Pistachios are a great source of protein, which is important for repairing and renewing tissues in the body and for building and maintaining muscle mass."



Lydon also likes protein for its muscle-building abilities, noting that for one 6-oz serving of Chobani Greek yogurt, men get 13 to 18 g of protein. Add some granola such as a single serving of Bear Naked Peak Protein Granola, and it adds an additional 6 g of protein.

Fiber is another nutrient that deserves more attention from men. "I've noticed in my community that men tend to be a little more deficient in fiber ingestion," says Adam M. Burda, MS, RD, LD, a clinical dietitian at Western Maryland Health System. "Most men are so preoccupied with their meat and potatoes that they tend to forget their vegetable and whole grain consumption."

Snacking Suggestions

One obstacle almost everyone can relate to is the long, stressful workday—be it at the office or on the field. But snacking can combat stressors head on, Twombley says. "Stress generates a lot of free radicals; therefore, capturing these roque electrons with some antioxidants would be helpful," she explains. "Tart cherry juice, carrots, mango, and broccoli are all good sources of various antioxidants that will decrease fatigue throughout the day."

Burda prefers to indulge his sweet tooth when tension hits and suggests clients do the same. "Chocolate-covered almonds or peanuts or yogurt-covered peanuts or raisins is something that I turn to," he says.

White likes the crunch of pretzels or nuts in times of high stress. If none are available, he turns to instant oatmeal with dried fruit.

Gidus recommends snacking outside the box, especially for men who are particular about what they eat. She suggests men find a sandwich they like and serve it in smaller portions. "Snack doesn't always mean traditional snack food," she says. One-half of a sandwich makes a suitable midafternoon snack.

Bonci likes recommending a healthful serving of nachos to her players, consisting of baked tortilla chips, black beans, salsa, and shredded light cheese.

And for guys always on the go, Roof says easy-to-grab items are more likely to get eaten. "It goes without saying that it's easier to snack on items that are grab-and-go, can be prepared ahead of time, and are easily transported," he says. "Items like nuts, fresh and dried fruit, single-serve cheese, turkey or beef jerky, and Greek yogurt are good choices. I also consider drinking plenty of water a form of snacking. It suppresses the appetite, keeps your metabolism up, and benefits the body in a host of ways."

Hot summer days call for lighter snacking options. When trying to beat the heat, White chooses a 1/2 cup of low-fat cottage cheese sprinkled with 1 T of ground flaxseed, or 3 cups of popcorn.

Bonci recommends premade smoothies by Odwalla and Naked. She also likes frozen fruit bars, Laughing Cow spicy cheese wedges with celery, and spicy black bean dip such as Desert Pepper with Special K chips for summer snacks.

If your male athlete clients know their way around the kitchen, suggest they try a high-calorie smoothie recipe from Chef Tory McPhail that Twombley often uses: 1/4 avocado, 1 oz pistachios, 8 oz skim milk, 6 oz Greek yogurt, one banana, and ice for texture. "This smoothie also is great for posttraining recovery to build mass," she says.

For men who prefer to buy smoothies, Jamba Juice offers a new Fruit & Vegetable smoothie that provides two full servings of fruit and one full serving of vegetables. "Smoothies are an excellent way to get fruits and veggies, which provide fiber, vitamins and minerals, and antioxidants," Gidus says.

Another snack recipe for those more adventurous in the kitchen is homemade jerky. "Making your own beef jerky is definitely perceived as a 'manly' cooking venture," Roof says. "It's easy to do and most of the work is hands off. I prefer to make my own because I have full control over the quality of the meat and other ingredients that go into it."

Roof says homemade jerky is as simple as marinating thin slices of meat for several hours, then spreading them on a wire

GRILLING ON JULY 4

If there's one cooking apparatus that's got male written all over it, it's the grill—and summer is the grill's best friend. Instead of the typical burger and hot dog fare, suggest male clients grill some healthful snack options for the Fourth of July parties they may be hosting this year.

Adam M. Burda, MS, RD, LD, a clinical dietitian at Western Maryland Health System, thinks turkey bacon-wrapped scallops are an excellent snack made on the grill or "shish kebabs made with cut-up pieces of steak, chicken, shrimp, green peppers, red peppers, yellow peppers, and mushrooms marinated in fat-free Italian dressing."

Know some clients who are particularly adept at grilling and may be up for a challenge? Bryan Roof, RD, LDN, a chef and senior editor at *America's Test Kitchen*, suggests guys try their hand at grilled jalapeño poppers or bruschetta with grilled bread and a variety of fresh veggie toppings. He also prefers grilled veggie crudités with a cool yogurt dip or grilled prosciutto-wrapped fresh mozzarella or melon.

Whatever healthful foods clients put on the grill, remind them not to let any perishable items sit out too long in the hot sun at outdoor parties, so no one ends up with a bout of food poisoning. "Refrigerate perishable food items within two hours [of being outside] at a refrigerator temperature below 40°F," Burda says. "And on a hot day of 90°F or greater, food should not sit out for more than one hour.'





rack to dry in the oven at 175° to 200°F. Clients can use a food dehydrator instead if they're interested. Guys who'd rather buy than make their own meaty snacks can try various types of seasoned turkey, beef, and venison jerky by Premium Buffalo Bills.

Men also can make a lower-in-fat version of deviled eggs, says Joshua Hammond, MBA, RD, LNHA, a licensed nursing home administrator. "Eggs are cheap and packed full of protein. Instead of mixing full-fat mayo with the yolk, you can try reducedfat or low-fat sour cream. Don't forget to garnish with chives."

Dietitians should suggest snacks suitable for active clients, since pre- vs. posttraining needs can differ. "Pretraining snacks should include about 30 g of carbohydrate," Twombley says. "Dried fruit—mangos, blueberries, apricots, etc—bananas, applesauce, or 4 to 6 oz of 100% juice generally are well tolerated and produce a significant boost in energy."

White's favorite preworkout snacks include bananas, veggies with hummus, and whole grain crackers with deli meat. One healthier meat line is Farm to Fork Naturals, made from pork or turkey raised with no antibiotics and 100% vegetarian feed.

Is hummus too "girly" for some guys you know? Maybe they'll like Kashi's new Hummus Crisps, made from chickpeas and the company's signature whole grain blend—but with a guy-friendly look.

Before an intense cardio workout, Bonci, who's also a spokesperson for the California Dried Plum Board, recommends that players eat an apple with peanut butter. Her best posttraining snack suggestions include a serving of California dried plums and almonds or "nature's muscle milk," a 16-oz bottle of low-fat chocolate milk, such as TruMoo, which boasts twice the carb and protein count compared with many juices and sports drinks.

Twombley offers a word of caution, however, to men who may rely too much on their daily shake or supplement: "Many men get sucked in to 'supplement'-style snacking. They somehow become convinced that they require protein shakes, preworkout supplements, or additional protein, forgetting that foods also can offer the nutrients required for building muscle and recovery. Teaching athletes when to fuel with protein and carbohydrates is a crucial step in teaching them how to recover. By translating the nutrients into foods, the athletes have an easier time understanding how to implement their plan.

"For instance, [they can] add lean protein to foods high in antioxidants for afternoon snacks, such as fruit and Greek yogurt, tuna and carrots, or pistachios and dried cranberries," she adds. "I try to remind athletes that all supplements are found in foods." For extra omega-3s, clients may enjoy Bumble Bee's new Prime Fillet Omega-3 Albacore; each serving contains a combined 200 mg of EPA and DHA.

For guys with a sweet tooth, White recommends a sampling of fruit such as a small box of raisins, apple slices sprinkled with cinnamon, or ½ cup of strawberries with 1½ T of nonfat yogurt.

Sweet and Spicy Grilled Pineapple

Ingredients

1 pineapple

1 T olive oil

1/4 cup red pepper jelly

Directions

- 1. Prepare your grill by lightly oiling or spraying the grates with nonstick cooking spray. (For a charcoal grill, coals should be glowing; for a gas grill, set to medium heat.)
- 2. Peel and core pineapple and cut into 1-inch rings. Brush each ring lightly with olive oil using a pastry brush.
- 3. Heat the jelly on the stove or in a microwave to liquefy and brush on the pineapple with a pastry brush. Grill 2 to 3 minutes per side, until lightly browned and you see grill marks.

Nutrient analysis per serving (1 pineapple ring)

Calories: 60; Fat: 1.5 g; Carbohydrates: 12.5 g;

Fiber: 0.8 g; Protein: 0.3 g

- RECIPE COURTESY OF LESLIE BONCI, MPH, RD, CSSD, LDN

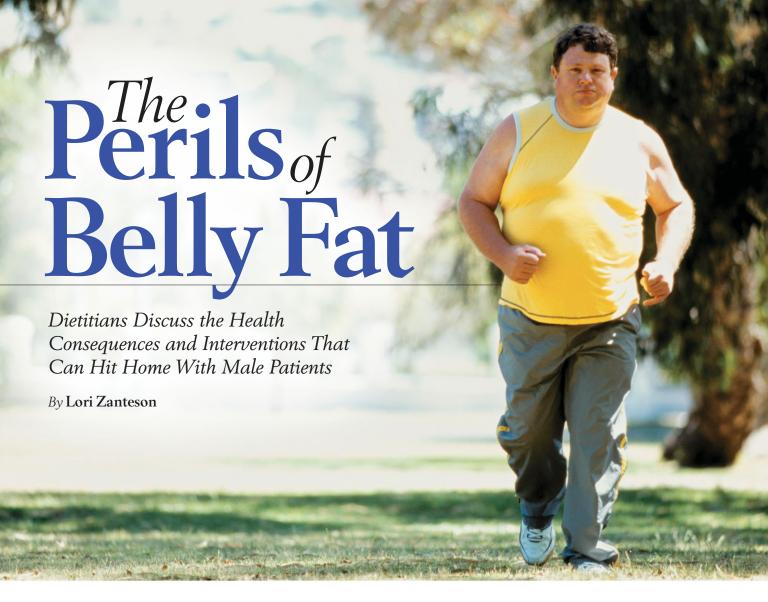
Instead of yogurt, guys can top the season's best fruit with nut butter, Hammond suggests. "Nuts or nut spreads are a fantastic and satisfying snack choice," he says.

Importance of a Steady Snacking Routine

The early effort of getting into a snacking routine may seem troublesome to male clients who'd rather spend that time perfecting their jump shot, but Twombley says the longterm benefits more than pay off. "By snacking throughout the day, a steady stream of nutrients is created, which keeps the cells healthy," she says. "Healthy cells will work hard to use fat as an energy source and will maintain their integrity to keep muscles, tendons, and ligaments strong. By consistently adding snacks with antioxidants, tissue damage can be minimized, preventing nagging injuries in the future."

Bonci agrees: "With my athletes, I talk about food as part of the equipment, as guys love their 'stuff,' or [I refer to nutrition as] premium fuel in the race car. Not only will eating right make them feel better but look better, too—for the immediate and in the long term, whether in the boardroom or on the playing field."

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en who give their health low priority by neglecting to eat healthfully and exercise regularly put themselves at risk of becoming overweight or obese. When the weight accumulates around their belly, they're especially vulnerable to developing chronic diseases down the road. And many men, unfortunately, are following this detrimental path.

"Men aren't the best at health care," says Chicago-based dietitian David Grotto, RD, LDN, founder of Nutrition Housecall, LLC and author of *The Best Things You Can Eat*. "They're more likely to smoke, drink, and do drugs, and skipping meals is their No. 1 dieting approach."

Manuel Villacorta, MS, RD, CSSD, author of *Eating Free:* The Carb-Friendly Way to Lose Inches, Embrace Your Hunger, and Keep Weight Off for Good, sees this trend among his male patients every day. He says many men don't value the time it takes to eat nutritious meals because, in their minds, there's no time. However, because many don't like to cook and would rather stop at fast-food restaurants, they develop poor eating habits that can lead to excessive belly fat, leaving them more

vulnerable to cardiovascular disease (CVD), metabolic syndrome, certain cancers, and benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), an enlarged prostate.

Given these health consequences, nutrition professionals have the opportunity to learn how to better reach their male clients and help them implement strategies to lose the weight around their midsections, prevent disease, and live healthier lives.

Research Roundup

One of the biggest differences between the sexes is the way they perceive their weight. According to a 2012 study from the University of Illinois, men who are overweight or obese are more likely than women to underestimate their weight. Overestimating weight was associated with female gender and younger age, while underestimating was associated with male gender and older age, placing them at risk of obesity-related diseases. What raises the risk even further is the type of belly fat.

Abdominal fat falls into two categories: subcutaneous fat, found just below the skin, and the more consequential visceral fat, which surrounds the vital organs deep within the abdomen. Less obvious than subcutaneous fat, visceral fat, sometimes



called "hidden fat," is only visible with the use of CT scans or MRI, so even thin or normal-weight people can have it. Visceral fat causes excess fatty acids to drain into the liver and muscles, triggering changes in the body that can increase LDL cholesterol and triglycerides, and make insulin less effective in controlling blood sugar, leading to insulin resistance.

Cardiovascular Disease

Studies have long shown the association between abdominal obesity and CVD, which increases the risk of cardiac rhythm problems, heart attack, heart failure, stroke, and sudden death. A study published in the June 2007 issue of Critical Pathways in Cardiology found that excess visceral abdominal fat was associated with elevated triglycerides, reduced HDL cholesterol, elevated blood pressure, and increased fasting plasma glucose. The study suggested that addressing abdominal obesity and excess visceral fat can improve CVD factors.2

A Canadian study published in the June 2012 issue of *Health* Reports suggested that abdominal measurements, such as waist circumference, waist-to-hip ratio, and waist-to-height ratio, even among those who fall within a normal BMI category, can indicate CVD risk factors. In fact, among men in the normal and overweight BMI categories, waist-to-hip and waist-to-height ratios were associated with having at least two CVD risk factors.3

Independent of BMI and the amount of visceral fat is the ratio of visceral to subcutaneous belly fat, a unique CVD risk factor for some people. According to research published in 2012 in Diabetologia, a higher visceral-to-subcutaneous fat ratio, measured by CT scans, was associated with the most studied CVD risk factors, including blood pressure, insulin resistance, and elevated cholesterol blood levels.4

Type 2 Diabetes

Several studies support the link between visceral fat and the risk of developing type 2 diabetes, although these findings have been deemed controversial. A report published in the May 2008 issue of the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition cited studies that showed an association among belly fat, insulin resistance, and hyperglycemia. The studies found that visceral fat is increased in proportion to BMI, and releases excess free fatty acids associated with insulin resistance. Researchers in this study concluded that the accumulation of abdominal fat raises the risk of type 2 diabetes.5

Metabolic syndrome, defined as impaired glucose metabolism, central obesity, elevated blood pressure, and dyslipidemia, affects about 25% of the world's population. In the United States, it's most common in men, and incidence increases with age. Metabolic syndrome is known to raise the risk of both CVD and type 2 diabetes because of insulin resistance and abdominal obesity. A study published in January

2012 in Postgraduate Medicine found that weight loss and increased physical activity significantly improved all aspects of metabolic syndrome. In addition, researchers recommended dietary modifications, such as eating more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, monounsaturated fats, and low-fat dairy products, to benefit most patients.6

Cancer

Overweight and obesity also have been associated with an increased risk of certain cancers, including colorectal and colon cancer. According to data published in March in Gut, men who are obese have a 30% to 70% increased risk of colon cancer. Colorectal cancer follows similar trends. Researchers indicated that abdominal visceral fat was of greater concern than subcutaneous fat and that obesity may be associated with worse cancer outcomes, such as recurrence or death.7

Prostate cancer, the second most common cancer among men, is linked with some components of metabolic syndrome, including obesity and belly fat.8 Moreover, abdominal fat has been linked with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.9

BPH

In addition to raising prostate cancer risk, belly fat may increase the risk of BPH. An enlarged prostate causes urinary tract symptoms, such as difficulty holding or releasing urine, as well as erectile dysfunction and loss of libido. It affects men beginning at about age 55, and the incidence increases as they get older.

Abdominal fat falls into two categories: subcutaneous fat, found just below the skin, and the more consequential visceral fat, which surrounds the vital organs deep within the abdomen.

Although it's considered a common condition affecting aging men, studies have shown a higher incidence of BPH in those who are obese and have central obesity. A study published in the January 2006 issue of *Obesity* indicated that while both BMI and waist circumference were positively correlated with prostate size, belly fat was the only independent factor affecting prostate hyperplasia, suggesting that it's an important risk factor of BPH.10

More recent research cited in the July 2009 issue of Current Urology Reports also names belly fat as a risk factor for BPH. According to the study, men without excess belly



fat who engaged in physical activity, ate a low-fat diet, and consumed five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily had a lower BPH risk.¹¹

How Can Dietitians Help?

Alarming as the science is, the link between belly fat and chronic disease may not be the best motivator for a man to make the dietary and lifestyle changes needed to reduce his midsection. To encourage male clients to adopt more healthful lifestyles, it's best to take a performance-based approach, Grotto says. "Guys don't respond to a disease model," he adds.

Men are most concerned about performance—sexual, mental, and physical—which can be affected by extra pounds around the waistline, he says. Rather than beginning a consultation by talking about the threat of disease, Grotto suggests asking male clients whether it's difficult to get out of bed in the morning or stay up at night. "All [of this] can be attributed to belly fat," Grotto explains. "[Discuss] practical things that happen on a daily basis rather than the obscure, which won't resonate. Performance vs. disease makes a lot of sense."

It's less likely that a male client will discuss his sexual performance with a female dietitian, but since it's a common concern, simply mention that belly fat is linked to sexual problems such as erectile dysfunction. Or, if that's uncomfortable, use a bit of innuendo, Grotto suggests. He promotes the benefits of healthful dietary and lifestyle choices to his male patients with the phrase, "If it's good for the heart, it's good for other parts," allowing them to make that connection on their own.

Villacorta talks about the gut right away with his male clients, telling them "rather than weight management, we're going to do waist management. They actually like that because they always think weight loss is for women."

After the first session, when his male clients realize they don't have to follow a specific diet, Villacorta says, "They're like wow, and they really open up to me," and talk more about personal things, such as the importance of appearance and sexual performance.

As his clients get more comfortable, Villacorta provides strategies to motivate them—a critical initial step toward healthful, positive change. Most men think they have to eat salads to reach their weight loss goal, Villacorta says, so when he recommends they eat a burrito—albeit a healthful one—they're shocked.

It's important to "give them a meal plan that speaks to them, like a nice 5- or 6-oz piece of chicken or fish," he explains. "That deck of card-sized protein doesn't work for everybody, and men really don't like to be hungry."

But at the same time, most men don't like to take the time to eat healthfully either, Villacorta says. "They believe eating gets in their way—no shopping, no cooking, no eating."

During his sessions with clients, he stresses that eating should be a priority and uses a hands-on approach, such as

stocking his office shelves with real-food products from local markets so he can show them exactly what to buy. "You can tell them how to look for high fiber, to read the label, but unless you show them, they're not going to get it," Villacorta says. When male clients leave his office, they have a shopping list and some even take pictures of the products with their phones. Making it simple takes away the overwhelming feeling of grocery shopping—something most men don't do.

Villacorta also keeps menus on hand from his clients' favorite restaurants. Together they review the menus to determine healthful food choices. This way "they continue to go to their favorite places, and they buy what they like. Otherwise, they have no clue. I give them meal plans they're comfortable with and can live with. I show them it's doable."

Grotto also is a proponent of keeping real food in his office so he can counsel clients, but he goes one step further: He visits clients in their homes. Grotto goes through their pantries to determine which foods they enjoy and shows them which items to eat more or less of. Then he prepares a delicious dish for the family right in their kitchen. "Men are very tactile, very verbal," he explains. "You have to paint the picture to provide the experience then and there."

One of the biggest misconceptions men have about achieving a healthier weight is that the fun associated with eating will be taken away, Grotto says. Men don't want to give up flavor, he says, so he shows them how to trade in the unhealthful versions of the foods they like for the more healthful ones that are just as satisfying. For example, he suggests clients choose lean cuts of meat to make chili or fry French fries in canola oil and eat them in smaller portions.

Grotto uses MyPlate when discussing portion sizes with men because they can see what filling one-half of their plate (make it a 9-inch plate) with fruits and vegetables looks like. This also helps men with the concept of eating until they're satisfied rather than eating until they're full. For men, fullness has been the main indicator of when to stop eating, but "we have to redefine what full is," he says.

To reach male clients, it takes a great deal of follow up and repetition, Grotto continues. But if dietitians can communicate with men in such a way that convinces them that their RD understands their concerns and needs, they'll be sure to get their male clients to strive toward a healthier weight and future.

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For references, view this article on our website at www.TodaysDietitian.com.

MEN'S FITNESS



THE MALE MINDSET

By Jennifer Van Pelt, MA

Learn what exercises most appeal to men and what will help improve counseling sessions.

In 1992, the book Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus hit bookstores and was an immediate best seller. The basic premise of the book—that relationships between men and women can improve if their differences in needs, desires, and behaviors are acknowledged—also can apply to fitness.

Men and women may share the same goal of getting and staying in shape, but their motivations and exercise choices are very different. In this month's column, I'll discuss these differences and outline strategies for adhering to an exercise and fitness plan that dietitians can share with male clients.

Men who are competitive athletes, seniors, or overweight or obese have specific fitness needs that generally transcend gender differences. Therefore, I'll focus on the average male exerciser, who's slightly out of shape, carrying a few extra pounds, and interested in developing an exercise program for maximum benefit.

Exercise Choices

Your male client's age may influence his fitness choices. "Younger men are more concerned with getting stronger and tend to focus a lot on strength training and not as much on cardiovascular exercise," says Joe Cannon, MS, a personal trainer and National Strength and Conditioning Association-certified strength and conditioning specialist. Older men, on the other hand, pay more attention to cardio and may be more concerned with exercising around injuries or conditions they may have, such as arthritis or diabetes, Cannon adds.

Age also may influence the risk of injury. "Middle-aged men sometimes think they're still 20 years old and are

bulletproof, so they lift weights that are too heavy too fast and put excess strain on ligaments and tendons, increasing injuries," Cannon says.

Chief Motivators

Research studies and sports psychology theory suggest that men are most motivated by competition, social aspects, peer influence, ego and performance, and strength-training activities.1-5 Women tend to be most motivated by body image, improvements in health, and calorie-burning aerobic activities. These male motivational factors contribute to the success or failure of maintaining an exercise program, the physical activities chosen, and risk of injury.

Understanding the male mentality regarding exercise can help guide fitness counseling. Two of the most common exercise-related male mindsets that fitness and nutrition professionals must overcome when counseling or training male clients are what I call "weekend warrior syndrome" and "muscle obsession."

Weekend Warrior Syndrome

Weekend warrior syndrome involves overexercising on the weekends, with little or no exercise during the week mostly because of busy workdays and family schedules. While anyone can fall victim to weekend warrior syndrome, men are more susceptible because of the motivational factors of competition, socializing, and peer influence. Participation in weekend-only recreational sports appeals to their "manliness" but also increases their risk of injury.

Exercising only on weekends, while not ideal, is better than no exercise at all; however, injuries occur because weekendonly exercise typically is too intense for the client's fitness level. For example, weekend basketball, racquet sports, and soccer games involve 60 minutes or more of interval training requiring bursts of high-intensity activity. A deconditioned exerciser will have a much higher risk of injuries, including muscle sprains, falls, and even heart attack.

Combatting weekend warrior syndrome is challenging, especially when its cause is a busy work schedule. Encourage clients to add at least two exercise sessions during the week. Thirty minutes of cardiovascular conditioning twice per week, perhaps over lunch or immediately before or after work, combined with stretching at the end of the day can contribute to their overall fitness level as well as reduce the risk of weekend warrior injuries.

Muscle Obsession

Muscle obsession is fueled by an emphasis on strength training, ego and performance, and socialization. Go into any health club, and you'll notice that men dominate the freeweight area and often compare muscle size and the amount