

A woman with a long braid is captured mid-air, performing a box jump over a wooden plyometric box in a gym setting. She is wearing a grey sports bra, black shorts, and green sneakers. The background shows gym equipment like ropes and racks.

July 2026 Nutrition News

Dietary Protein May Help Improve Blood Lipid Profiles

Protein Yogurt and Whey Support Healthy Aging

Leucine and Other Metabolites Associated with Handgrip Strength

Protein Intake May Support Both Muscle and Cognitive Health in Aging

Meeting the Nutritional Demands of CrossFit® Training

Dietary Protein May Help Improve Blood Lipid Profiles

Growing evidence suggests that dietary protein plays an important role in cardiovascular health, particularly through its effects on blood lipids and lipoproteins. This narrative review evaluated findings from randomized controlled trials, systematic reviews, and dietary recommendations to examine how protein quantity, source, and type influence lipoprotein lipid metabolism.



The review found that both animal- and plant-based proteins can improve blood lipid profiles when used to replace refined carbohydrates or foods high in saturated fat. These dietary substitutions were associated with reductions in circulating concentrations of atherogenic lipoproteins, which are linked to cardiovascular disease risk.

Plant proteins generally appeared to have a greater beneficial effect on lipid concentrations than animal proteins. However, specific protein components, including branched-chain amino acids, whey protein, and food-derived peptides, may also independently influence lipid metabolism.

The authors note that while some benefits can be explained by replacing less favorable nutrients in the diet, the biological mechanisms by which protein affects lipoprotein metabolism are not yet fully understood.

Current evidence supports a role for dietary protein in improving blood lipid profiles and supporting cardiovascular health. Both animal- and plant-based proteins may provide benefits, particularly when replacing refined carbohydrates or saturated fats, although plant proteins may produce somewhat greater improvements. Further research is needed to determine the optimal amount and sources of protein for lipid management and heart health.

[Maki et al. Nutrients. 2026 Jul 7;18\(13\):2207](#)

Protein Yogurt and Whey Support Healthy Aging



Strength training combined with adequate protein intake is a key strategy for maintaining muscle mass and function with age. This study compared the effects of whey protein isolate (WPI) and high-protein yogurt (PY) during an 8-week strength training program in previously untrained adults aged 60–70 years.

Seventeen participants were randomized to consume either 25 g of whey protein or 24.5 g of protein yogurt while completing supervised strength training three times per week. Researchers assessed body composition, muscle strength, gait speed, resting metabolic rate, and gut microbiome composition before and after the intervention.

Both groups experienced similar improvements in skeletal muscle mass, strength, and functional capacity, with no significant differences between whey protein and protein yogurt. Muscle mass increased by approximately 0.5 kg in both groups, while strength and gait speed improved significantly.

Whey protein supplementation was associated with a reduction in fat mass, whereas the protein yogurt group showed an increase in resting metabolic rate. Distinct changes in the gut microbiome were also observed, with protein yogurt increasing microbial diversity and the abundance of *Coprococcus*.

High-protein yogurt and whey protein were equally effective at supporting gains in muscle mass, strength, and functional performance when combined with strength training. However, they produced different effects on the gut microbiome, with protein yogurt showing potential advantages for gut microbial diversity.

[Monsalves-Álvarez et al. Sci Rep. 2026 May 18;16\(1\):22592.](#)

Leucine and Other Metabolites Associated with Handgrip Strength

Higher protein intakes are often recommended to support muscle health in older adults, but limited research has examined whether different protein sources produce distinct effects on muscle function.

This secondary analysis of a 12-week double-blind randomized controlled trial included 171 healthy adults aged 50 years and older. Participants received a daily supplement containing either high plant protein (23 g), high dairy protein (22 g), or low protein (2 g). Plasma samples were collected before and after the intervention and analyzed using targeted LC-MS metabolomics. Researchers also examined relationships between circulating metabolites and handgrip strength.

Protein source did not significantly influence changes in the plasma metabolomic profile over the study period. However, time had a significant effect on metabolite patterns. Twenty-six metabolites were significantly associated with baseline handgrip strength after correction for multiple comparisons. The strongest positive associations were observed for creatinine, leucine, proline, and isoleucine. In addition, higher baseline levels of leucine, isoleucine, PCaC32:2, and SM(OH)C22:2 were associated with greater improvements in handgrip strength.

Metabolomic responses were not affected by whether participants consumed plant or dairy protein. However, several baseline metabolites were associated with handgrip strength and subsequent improvements in strength, suggesting that an individual's metabolic status may influence their response to nutrition interventions.

[Martinsen et al. Metabolomics. 2026 Jun 30;22\(4\):106.](#)



Protein Intake May Support Both Muscle and Cognitive Health in Aging

As populations age, conditions such as cognitive decline and sarcopenia, the age-related loss of muscle mass and function, are becoming increasingly common. Both can reduce independence, quality of life, and overall well-being, yet effective drug-based treatment options remain limited. Nutrition has therefore emerged as an important strategy for prevention and healthy aging.

A recently published review examined the relationship between sarcopenia and cognitive decline and explored the potential role of dietary protein in supporting both physical and cognitive health. Overall, evidence suggests that higher protein intakes may help protect against age-related declines in muscle function and cognition. Benefits may occur independently or in combination with regular physical activity.



The review also highlights evidence supporting protein intakes above the previous Recommended Dietary Allowance of 0.8 g/kg/day for older adults. In addition, healthy dietary patterns, particularly the Mediterranean diet, appear to be associated with better cognitive health during aging.

Researchers also evaluated specific protein-rich foods, including dairy, eggs, and soy. Consumption of these foods has been linked to potential benefits for cognitive health, suggesting they may help slow or reduce cognitive decline.

Emerging evidence suggests that higher protein intakes may support both muscle and cognitive health in older adults. Protein-rich foods such as dairy, eggs, and soy, along with overall healthy dietary patterns, may play a role in maintaining physical function and cognitive performance with age. These findings highlight the potential for high-protein functional foods to support healthy aging and help delay the onset of age-related conditions.

[McCarthy et al. Nutrients. 2026 Jul 2;18\(13\):2148.](#)

Meeting the Nutritional Demands of CrossFit® Training

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CrossFit® athletes typically have a healthy body composition, with relatively high muscle mass and body mass index (BMI), particularly among men. However, many athletes, especially women, do not consume enough energy to meet the demands of training. This may increase the risk of Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport (RED-S), a condition associated with impaired recovery, hormonal disruptions, reduced bone health, and compromised immune function.

Protein intake among CrossFit® athletes is generally high, but this often occurs at the expense of carbohydrate intake. Since carbohydrates are the primary fuel source for high-intensity exercise, insufficient intake may negatively affect training performance and recovery. Inadequate intakes of key micronutrients, particularly vitamin D and zinc, both of which play important roles in immune function, muscle performance, and protein synthesis, are also highlighted.

Dietary supplement use is common, with protein powders and creatine among the most frequently used products. However, supplements are not always used under professional guidance.

Many CrossFit® athletes may benefit from greater emphasis on total energy intake, adequate carbohydrate consumption, and sufficient intake of essential micronutrients. While protein and creatine supplements can support training goals, a well-balanced diet remains the foundation for performance, recovery, and long-term health.

Ghazi et al. Nutr Hosp. 2026 Jul 20;43(Spec No4):46-49.



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