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# Fitness Management

ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS FOR FITNESS FACILITIES

MARCH 2005

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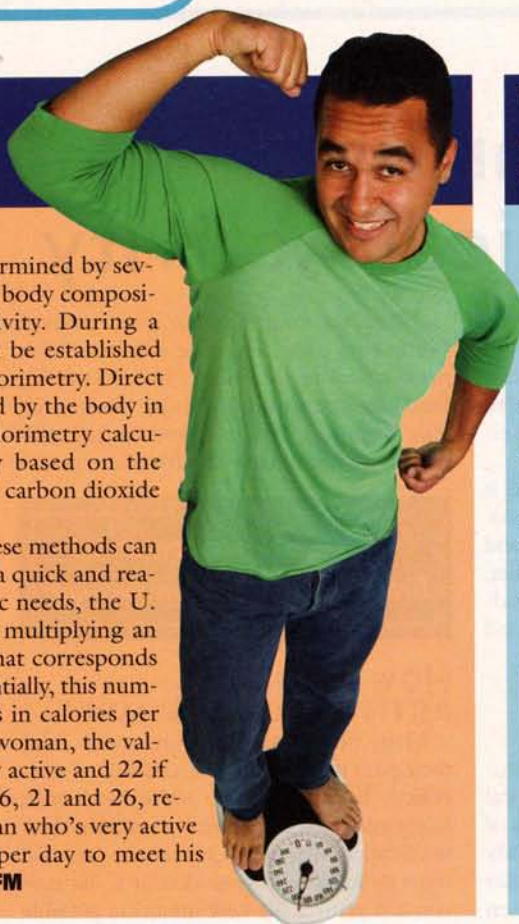
# fitnessQ&A

By Matt Brzycki

## How many calories do you need to maintain bodyweight?

An individual's caloric needs are determined by several factors, including age, gender, size, body composition, metabolic rate and level of activity. During a resting state, caloric requirements can be established precisely by both direct and indirect calorimetry. Direct calorimetry measures the heat produced by the body in a small, insulated chamber; indirect calorimetry calculates the heat given off by the body based on the amount of oxygen that's consumed and carbon dioxide that's produced.

For most people, however, both of these methods can be expensive and impractical. To obtain a quick and reasonably accurate estimate of daily caloric needs, the U. S. Department of Agriculture suggests multiplying an individual's bodyweight by a number that corresponds to the approximate level of activity. Essentially, this number represents the energy requirements in calories per pound of bodyweight (cal./lb.). For a woman, the values are 14 if sedentary, 18 if moderately active and 22 if very active; for a man, the values are 16, 21 and 26, respectively. To illustrate, a 170-pound man who's very active requires approximately 4,400 calories per day to meet his energy needs [170 lbs. x 26 cal./lb.]. **FM**



## Will eating after 6 p.m. cause someone to gain weight?

Simply because calories are consumed after a certain time doesn't mean that it will result in weight gain. The most important thing that determines whether a person gains (or loses) weight is the number of calories that are consumed and expended. Besides, isn't it a bit ridiculous to think that it would be OK to eat up until 6 p.m., but doing so one minute later would result in weight gain? The notion that eating after a certain time will cause an individual to gain weight is nonsense. **FM**



## Do active individuals need more protein?

The research is clear and consistent: The protein needs of active individuals are higher than those of their inactive counterparts. But this need has been drastically exaggerated and overrated by health-food manufacturers and promoters.

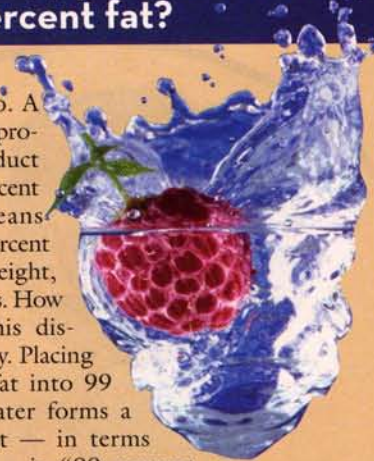
The fact of the matter is that individuals who consume adequate calories generally obtain sufficient protein. Larger, more active individuals require and consume more calories than the average person. With these additional calories comes additional protein. In other words, the increased protein need of active individuals is met by an increased caloric intake. Dr. Gail Butterfield, a registered dietician and fellow of the American College of Sports Medicine, states, "I am not convinced that even with the initiation of a [strength-training] program that protein requirement is increased as long as [caloric] intake is increased."

For adults, the RDA for protein is 0.8 grams per kilogram of bodyweight per day (g/kg/day). Assuming a sufficient caloric intake, 1.2 to 2.0 g/kg/day is present in any mixed diet that contains 15 percent of its calories as protein. **FM**



## When a product label states that it's "99 percent fat-free," is it 1 percent fat?

Yes and no. A package that proclaims a product to be "99 percent fat-free" means that it's 99 percent fat-free by weight, not by calories. How critical is this distinction? Very. Placing 1 gram of fat into 99 grams of water forms a product that — in terms of weight — is "99 percent fat-free." But since water has no calories, this particular "99 percent fat-free" product would actually be — in terms of calories — 100 percent fat. Although this example is hypothetical, the fact is that this discrepancy actually occurs on the packaging of many products. **FM**



Matt Brzycki is coordinator of recreational fitness and wellness programs at Princeton University, N.J. He has more than 20 years of experience at the collegiate level and has authored, co-authored or edited 11 books.

Do you have questions that you need answered? Email them to [edit@fitnessmgmt.com](mailto:edit@fitnessmgmt.com).