

Protein Sources Other Than Meat...

Protein, that magical macronutrient that aids in muscle growth and repair. That all important element that is needed to ensure the repair of all body cells and the building of new ones. Protein is an essential part of our diets, especially when exercising to aid in the recovery process. When most people think of protein, they immediately think meat. And they are not wrong. Meat is a fantastic protein source. But it does not mean there are not other sources of protein out there. So for all my vegetarian friends, or those who are just wanting to add protein to their diet without adding more meat, here are a few other high protein foods you can add to your diet to ensure you are getting the recovery you need.

Eggs – yes still an animal source of protein but not meat. Eggs are one of the only vegetarian foods that contain all essential amino acids, making it a whole protein and a fantastic addition to your diet.

Tofu (Soy) – 10-12g protein per 100g. Probably the most known vegetarian protein source among most people. Tofu can be added to stir fries, soups or laksas, even salads.

Lentils and chickpeas – 5-7g of protein per 100g (canned). can be added to salads, soups, can even make a delicious meat free Bolognese sauce. These legumes are super versatile and also high in fibre, fantastic for digestion.

Quinoa – 4g protein per 100g. Quinoa is the perfect alternative to rice, pasta or couscous and is a great vegetarian protein source.

Peas – 5g protein per 100g. Ever heard of pea protein? It is an alternative to whey protein. A vegetarian friendly protein powder. So obviously peas are a good vegetarian protein source.

Cottage Cheese – 10g protein per 100g. Cottage cheese is a great way to up protein intake and is yummy with veggie sticks or boiled eggs. Sprinkle with some paprika and dig in.

Greek Yogurt – 5g protein per 100g – A small tub usually has 200g in it so 10g protein per sitting. Add it to fruit, granola, even as an alternative to sour cream on things like tacos or dollop on spicy curries.

Nuts and seeds – vary from 20 - 30g protein per 100g. Now I don't recommend sitting and eating 100g of nuts in one sitting, but for comparison reasons, 100g is our go to measurement. Add a variety of hemp seeds, linseed, almonds, walnuts, pumpkin seeds, chia seeds, pistachios, cashews or peanuts. 100% natural nut butters like peanut or almond butter are a great staple for the pantry. Have on toast, with celery, on corn thins or with fruit.

Oats – 10g protein per 100g – Oats are a perfect start to ones day. Being a complex carb releasing slow release energy, as well as providing the body with protein, this breakfast is sure to keep you fuller for longer and avoid those pesky morning tea muffins.

Broccoli, spinach, kale, mushrooms, asparagus and brussel sprouts, also considered to be high protein vegetables which also come with a huge combination of vitamins and minerals.

Now meat protein does have its advantages. For example, 100g of chicken can provide around 22g of protein, while tofu has only around 10-12g. So meat has much more protein per 100g. Our bodies are also able to digest animal proteins much easier than vegetable proteins, so there is another tick in the meat department. But if you eat plenty of high protein vegetables and other protein sources throughout the day, as well as a meal or 2 of some kind of meat, you should easily be getting enough protein for your dietary requirements. A balanced diet consists of some meat and plenty of other high protein sources. Don't rely just on meat to get your dietary intake of protein. Remember balance and moderation is always the key to good health and maintainable diets.