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Foods That Boost Testosterone and Libido

In the Testosterone Routine you’re given the do’s and don’ts involved with creating optimal testosterone levels.

What we don’t go into are the specifics.

In this awesome addition to the T Routine we’ll do just that.

We’re going to go over why certain foods are good and why others are bad, and then we’ll give a simple list that you can print out and put on your fridge as a reminder of what to eat and what to avoid.

This isn’t going to be a massive list of things you cannot and can consume. We’re going to focus on the more important ingredients that should be a part of your testosterone-boosting diet and daily routine because these will make the greatest difference.

Testosterone and Life

Testosterone levels are declining in men. That’s bad. As you read through the Testosterone Routine, however, you’re going to see that there’s so much more to having optimal testosterone levels than eating right and training right.

You have to compete. You have to win.

Typically (not always) at the age of 30 men experience a 1% annual decline in their testosterone levels. Some think that this is as much linked to an increasingly sedentary lifestyle as it is to a less combative lifestyle.
After 30, men stop fighting. We stop doing the stupid, dangerous things we did in our youth. We stop living exciting lives.

Now, I’m not saying that you need to go skydiving or bungee jumping – though that’s not a bad idea. I am saying that you need to compete. You need to fight in a gym. You need to act on your desires for adventure.

Granted, these will produce spikes in testosterone, but you want to maintain that ability to fluctuate your T levels into your 40s, 50s, and 60s. So get out there and live...

... And consume more of these foods and fewer of the ones to follow.

We’re going to start off by better understanding the nutrients that fuel testosterone, dietary fats.
Part 1: Foods That Boost Testosterone

The importance of fat in your diet to produce testosterone cannot be understated.

This doesn’t mean you’re going to consume *every kind of fat*, however, and it also doesn’t mean you’re going to consume an *extreme* amount of fat.

In the Testosterone Routine I prescribe a diet that’s hovering around 40% of your calories from dietary fats. That’s based off of a number of studies.

The first study found that diets with under 20% of the calories coming from fats saw lowered testosterone levels than those with 40% fats.¹

Another study by Volek et al. again found the importance of dietary fats for testosterone, but also interestingly found – along with other studies – that a high protein: carbs or protein: fats ratio would create lower testosterone levels during rest than diets higher in carbs and fats, meaning that you’re going to consume more carbs and fats than proteins.²

**Step 1: Know Your Fats**

First, after reading the *Testosterone Routine* you’ll know the importance of fats and of cholesterol.

Where you get your fats and the foods you eat are, however, as important as the fat itself.

Take the vegetarian or vegan diet as an example.


You can consume fats from avocados and through supplementation, but you’re not going to create as much free T or overall testosterone if you’re consuming a healthy diet filled with vegetables and fruits and meats.³

Two other studies by Wang et al and Dorgan et al found a similar correlation between men who were given low fat diets versus men who were given high fat diets. Both found that the men who were on high fat diets had 12-13% higher testosterone levels, and higher free testosterone levels as low fat diets – vegan and vegetarian diets included – tend to produce more SHBG, a protein that brings to testosterone rendering it effectively useless to do what testosterone does.⁴,⁵

There are also different kinds of fats, and not every kind of fat is good for you. In the list of foods that are testosterone-boosting vs the foods that are estrogen-boosting, you’re going to see a solid grouping of fats.

If, however, you’re consuming a nut or a food that you’re not sure about, simply Google the nutritional facts for that food and see which fats it’s predominantly made of. You’ll see which ones to consume and which to avoid next.

**Testosterone-Boosting Fatty Acids**

**Saturated (SFA)**

They’re hard in room temperature (like when your bacon fat solidifies after being left on a cool pan). They’re great for your testosterone levels and should be a

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healthy part of your diet. Animal fats are the best source, along with butter, dairy products, and coconut oil.

**Monounsaturated (MUFA)**

These are also great for your T levels and should be a healthy part of your dietary breakdown. They’re liquid in room temperature, and include avocado and olive oil. Don’t confuse these with PUFAs, which are not good for your T levels, and we’ll talk about them next.

Another important note about MUFAs is their connection with vitamin E, which is an important one as shown by this study\(^6\) that found that rats that were given vitamin E had significantly higher testosterone levels. It makes sense. Vitamin E destroys harmful free radicals that would bind to free testosterone.

We’re going to be talking about nutrients and foods that you can consume coming up, and you’re not actually going to see vitamin E on the list. That’s because, so long as you’re getting your MUFAs, you won’t need to supplement with vitamin E.

**Testosterone-Killing Fats**

**Polunsaturated (PUFA)**

These too are liquid in room temperature, but they’re not good for your T levels. They include canola oil, sunflower seed oil, fish, and margarine.

The reason for PUFAs not being great for testosterone is the fact that they’re prone to damage when they get in contact with light, heat, or oxygen, the two latter being prevalent in the human body. When they come into contact with either of the above, they break down into harmful free radicals.

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\(^6\) https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/6816576
Important: I have also found a study that went against the consensus with PUFAs increasing T – though there’s more evidence to suggest otherwise. With that said, I don’t limit my fish intake. I take fish oil tablets daily because of their positive effects on brain health. You can go the extreme route and limit these fats from your diet, but a big part of our evolution as humans took place when we began to consume more fish. Just a thought.

**Trans Fats**

Of the fats mentioned, trans fats are the worst, they’re also unnatural. Anything deep fried contains a hefty amount of trans fats and the foods you’ll find in the freezer isles in your local market do as well.

**More on Fats**

One study found increased SFAs and MUFAs result in increased T production, but an increase in PUFAs resulted in suppressed testosterone production.  

Another study found placed their subjects on a diet where 40% of their calories were dietary fats, primarily from animal sources. They cut that amount to a low fat diet where only 20% of their calories came from fat, saw the subjects testosterone levels plummet, then rise again once they were placed back on the 40% calories coming from fats diet.

In short, consume a fair amount of SFA and MUFA fatty-acids while a moderate amount of PUFAs and no trans fats.

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Step 2: Know Your Carbs

We’ve talked at length about fats because of their very direct connection to producing testosterone. However, carbs are just as important because of their very direct relationship to cortisol.

Cortisol and testosterone oppose one another. Carbs help lower cortisol and help free you up to produce optimal testosterone levels.

For this reason, we’re not going low carb. A study out of the University of North Carolina found that a low carb diet increased cortisol levels and decreased free testosterone levels.⁹

Both Anderson et al and Volek et al found similar results in sedentary and resistance-trained subjects respectively, that both saw a decrease in free testosterone and an increase in cortisol with a low carb diet.

Just like dietary fats, not all carbs are good.

There’s debate on this topic, but it makes sense that carbs that are higher in gluten and increase prolactin levels ¹⁰ (prolactin has a testosterone lowering effect ¹¹) would have a negative effect on your testosterone levels as well.

Things like grains and breads are also typically highly processed. It makes sense to follow a diet that primarily consists of things you can pick, pluck, or kill. A diet high in animals, fruits, veggies, and even things like potatoes, is ideal.

Don’t, however, decrease your carb intake, following a primal diet that’s devoid of carbs. Plenty of research is coming out showing that while animals are the most nutrient and calorically dense forms of food our ancestors had access to, they still ate plenty of fruits, veggies, and other sources of carbohydrates.

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¹¹ https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1476085/
The aim for carbs is to be at about the 40% mark, along with your fats intake.

Here’s the thing, we’re all different. You may thrive off of higher fat and lower carbs or higher carbs and lower fats with higher protein (while studies suggest otherwise, there have also been compelling arguments for higher protein intakes and hormonal health because of the effects on body composition).

I like higher fat and higher carb diets. If you’re over weight, the first thing to do is to focus on getting your body fat percentage around the 10% mark so your caloric make-up will change. Carbs, no matter your goal, should be a solid part of your diet.
Testosterone-Boosting Foods

The following foods help directly boost your testosterone levels because they’re high in nutrients that help boost testosterone. Beside each food I’ll put the ingredient or nutrient that they’re high in (some are high in more than one) so you know why they’re great for your testosterone levels.

First, however, let’s cover the nutrients that will propel your T levels to new heights.

Fats (we’ve already covered this)

Carbs (we’ve already covered this)

Zinc

Zinc blocks aromatase, which is a precursor to estrogen. It also increases testosterone levels directly. You need at least 15mg of zinc daily, and mega dosing has been shown to be fine in recent studies. You want to get your zinc levels tested before supplementing.

Selenium

Selenium is a nutrient that’s been linked to improved sperm quality and testosterone levels.

Boron

Boron was found to increase free T in rats and human subjects saw a 29% increase in T levels.

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15 http://www.bioimmersion.com/media/docs/fructoborate_monograph.pdf
Resveratrol

Increases the protein sTAR in cells, which enhances the conversion of cholesterol into testosterone and blocks the conversion of testosterone to estrogen.\(^{16,17}\)

Vitamin A

Vitamin A is an essential nutrient. Without it you’d go blind and become infertile. It’s also been linked with increased testosterone levels.\(^{18,19,20}\)

Vitamin K2

In two Japanese studies done on rats, the subjects’ T levels rose 70% in the blood and 90% in the testes.\(^{21,22}\) K2 needs to be researched more, but it also needs to be a part of your diet. Though we get K2 from leafy veggies, it’s also important to supplement with it.

Vitamin C

Vitamin C is interesting. It protects testosterone cells from oxidative damage\(^{23}\), lowers cortisol levels, improves sperm count and quality\(^{24}\), but it isn’t shown to directly improve testosterone levels. The positives demand that we supplement and consume it, however.

B Complex

B vitamins are involved in the synthesis of hormones and enzymes. You’ll find them in eggs, meat, and other testosterone boosting foods.

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\(^{16}\) http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16611627
\(^{17}\) http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17766065
\(^{18}\) https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/3360302
\(^{19}\) http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11055546
\(^{21}\) http://www.lipidworld.com/content/10/1/158
\(^{22}\) http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0304416506001590
\(^{23}\) http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22731648
\(^{24}\) http://online.liebertpub.com/doi/abs/10.1089/jmf.2006.9.440
**Vitamin D3**

D3 has been shown to increase free testosterone levels. While many suggest supplementing with 4,000IU daily, some evidence suggests we need up to double that daily.²⁵

**Magnesium**

Like D3, magnesium increases free testosterone. Free T is the only form of T that’s able to flow freely around the body, which makes it the only form of testosterone that truly matters. While you’re focusing on overall T production, also focus on freeing that T up with magnesium and D3.²⁶

**Iodine**

Iodine is closely connected to your thyroid health. A lack of it has been shown to cause hypothyroidism which lowers metabolic rate and testosterone.²⁷

**Pre and Probiotics**

Not a ‘nutrient’, but gut health is increasingly being shown to help improve testosterone levels in men, even converting cortisol into androgens in the gut.²⁸ ²⁹

I *highly* recommend using these probiotics and enzymes with every meal:

-Masszymes

-Probiotics

Now we’ll get to the nitty gritty and go through foods you should have in your diet, and some you should avoid. There will be no ‘conclusion’ to this list because

²⁸ http://www.sciencemag.org/content/339/6123/1084.short
²⁹ http://www.asbmb.org/asbmbtoday/asbmbtoday_article.aspx?id=48671
I want you to be able to print out the pages without having a bunch of useless literature from someone who just wants to hear themselves.

So, print out the list, go through each of the foods and ingredients and see which you’re consuming and which you can have more of in your life.
Estrogen-Killing Veggies

Cruciferous vegetables are high in phytochemicals that block estrogen production. Be sure to have a healthy amount of these veggies in your diet. You can include them in smoothies and get them from a good greens supplement.

On greens: I really like using greens. They give us nutrients and vegetables that we rarely consume in a normal diet. As a single guy as well, I don’t spend a ton of time in the kitchen preparing meals so getting my greens in supplement form helps a lot. I do, however, choose to use a company called Athletic Greens. They make a high-quality supplement at a good price. Check them out here

Cruciferous vegetables include:

- broccoli
- cauliflower
- cabbage
- Brussels sprouts
- bok choy
- kale
- collard greens
- turnips
- rutabagas

Fruits, Veggies, and Other Plants and Fungi

- Pomegranate (boosted T by 24%\(^{30}\))
- Red grapes (wine, raisins included) resveratrol
- Potatoes of all kinds (doesn’t contain gluten, good for lowering cortisol)
- Cream of wheat
- Parsley (increases free T\(^{31}\))

\(^{30}\) [http://www.endocrine-abstracts.org/ea/0028/ea0028p313.htm]
Ginger (17% increase in T[^32])
- Raw cacao (filled with T boosting fats and antioxidants)
- White mushrooms (block aromatase, the precursor to estrogen[^33])
- Avocado (71% make up of t-boosting MUFA)
- Blueberries
- Blackberries
- Acai Berries
- Coconut/Coconut butter/oil (SUFA, MUFA)
- Onions (phytochemicals, antioxidants, one study found 300% increase in T[^34])
- Coffee
- Olive oil (MUFA)
- Chia Seeds (have these instead of estrogenic flax seeds)
- Oats (I said no grains, but oats are filled with steroidal saponins that boost T)
- Tumeric[^35]
- Citrus Fruits (rich in antioxidants, very anti-estrogenic)

**NUTS**

- Brazil nuts (SUFA, selenium)
- Macadamian nuts (SUFA)

*Most nuts are high in PUFAs, so opt for the nuts above. Avoid walnuts, pistachios, almonds, and peanuts, and each have been found to increase SHBG, the proteins bound to testosterone.*

[^32]: http://www.iasj.net/iasj?func=fulltext&aid=71548
[^34]: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19384830
Meat, Dairy, and Other Animal Products

- Yogurt (pre and probiotics are increasingly being shown to help boost T levels\(^{36}\))
- Blue cheese (SUFA, probiotics, K2)
- Butter (SUFA, K2 opt for grass fed if possible)
- Oysters (zinc, selenium, vitamin D, copper)
- Animals

I put animals in there simply to note that they are a testosterone super-food. All animals. Of course, opt for grass fed when possible, or even better yet, HUNT (the MUFA content in a wild animal is far higher than a farmed and corn-fed animal) as the quality of the meat is far better than what you’ll find in a slaughterhouse.

**Included in ‘animals’ is:**

- Bacon (naturally smoked or plain cut)
- Boar bacon (what I consume)
- Eggs (MUFA, SUFA)
- Elk
- Beef (grass fed beef is great for T)
- Venison
- Moose
- Bear
- Ram
- Bison
- Buffalo

Depending on where you live and what you can hunt, get as much variety as you can. Increased variety in diet has also been shown to improve absorption of nutrients.

\(^{36}\) http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0084877
Foods That Hurt Testosterone and Libido

The following foods are high in phytoestrogens that can increase your estrogen levels. Here’s the thing about phytoestrogens, depending on the person and their chemical make-up, they can actually help you flush out chemical estrogens. I haven’t seen a test that helps determine which it will do for you, so I cut out chemical estrogens, buying natural cleaning products and avoiding plastics, and avoid these foods (except beer).

- Soy
- Flax
- Beer/booze
- Beans/legumes
- Liquorice
- Fibers
- Processed grains
- Mint
Foods That Stop Erectile Dysfunction

- Beets
- Garlic
- Citrus Fruits
- Oysters
- Leafy greens
- Pomegranate