Understanding Supplements

Supplements play an interesting role in the health and fitness industry. There are folks who are completely all for them, and on the other side there are people who are completely against them.

What we try to do here with the Offseason system is look for truth, which is the only way in which we can provide you with the 100% best service possible and ensure all the money you spend on your supplementation goes towards investments in your goals, and not in wasting your time and money.

The only way one can find the truth on a certain topic is to review the current body of scientific evidence and make recommendations based on what has been proven to work. As you probably know by now, there are a lot of good supplements out there, but there are also a lot more useless ones.

Before prescribing supplemental protocols to my clientele I run them through a checklist.

1. Is there a chance my diet is currently deficient in this nutrient?
2. Am I targeting the correct system and/or tissue that is necessary for improvement with my goals?
3. Does the current body of evidence show that this nutrient works and is safe for consumption?
Supplements can be a double edged sword, some are great for you, but others can do more harm than good. Then there’s the group of nutrients that are completely neutral, neither good nor bad for you; unless you take your wallet into consideration. If the nutrient passes all three of the above tests, then it is becomes approved for the Offseason Training system.

Let’s start off with question #1: *Is there a chance my diet is currently deficient in this nutrient?*

Unfortunately due to today’s standards in food quality and general knowledge in nutrition, the overwhelming majority of us who do not supplement have several different vitamin and mineral deficiencies. These base nutrients are absolutely vital to the success in any health and fitness goal. Without the basics, you’ll plateau and always wonder why.

Take magnesium for example, we have less than half of the magnesium now in our soil then we used to have in 1975. Now when you have a look at magnesium’s functions (it has over 300 biochemical functions in the body by the way) you quickly find out magnesium:

- Improves quality of sleep
- Improves brain function
- Raises testosterone levels
- Maximizes protein synthesis
- Decreases inflammation
- Improves bone health
- Improves insulin sensitivity
- Detoxifies the stress hormone cortisol
- Improves bowel movements and digestive related diseases
- Aids in bringing down abdominal fat and central obesity
- Is necessary for muscular contractions
- Aids in the prevention of cramps and muscle tears

Now if we have less than half of the magnesium in our soil now compared to 1975, it would take an obscene and unsustainable amount of vegetables and raw nuts to get your levels just back up to adequate, let alone optimal. Additionally, magnesium is just one mineral, and look at all it is involved in. Think about the many functions of all the other minerals and how you could be optimizing your game at this point.

Do you think a deficiency in magnesium could hold you back in your goals and may be your liming factor to progressing?

I can tell you right now, **YES.** A single deficiency can 100% hold you back in your progress. Knowing this, think about the realistic scenario in which you have several deficiencies? It would be detrimental to any health and fitness endeavour you set out on.

Which is why it made it to our questionnaire criteria for the Offseason supplement system. If the odds are high you are deficient in a given nutrient, it’s a smart idea to begin to supplement.

Especially in regards to the physically active population (YOU!!!), they need even more of these vitamins and minerals. They are depleted through exercise and also utilized to build muscle, burn fat and detoxify the body. Four things the active population is constantly doing.
Moving on to #2: Am I targeting the correct system and/or tissue that is necessary for improvement with my goals?

Supplements work through different pathways and feedback mechanisms in the body to effect a given tissue or system you are trying to target. When taking a supplement, always ask yourself if it is something that is going to positively affect the certain tissue or system that can help you with your goals. In this case, supporting your offseason system or on-ice performance.

For example, creatine improves anaerobic power output and anaerobic work capacity. So for creatine to be beneficial, you would have to be involved in some sort of anaerobic activity. Such as weightlifting, sprinting, hockey, hammer throw, football, etc. Any sport that demands explosive movement.

Knowing this, it wouldn’t make much sense for a marathon runner or a rower to take creatine given that both of their sports primarily utilize the aerobic system for energy, not the anaerobic. So even though creatine does have research proven benefits, it wouldn’t have any major benefit for these two sports. A good example showing that although something might be good, it will have a totally neutral effect on you because you’re not the target audience for the given nutrient.

Another example on understanding supplemental pathways is the case for Vitamin D in the production of testosterone. Vitamin D plays a role in the production of steroid hormones and studies have shown that men supplementing with Vitamin D over the course of a year increase testosterone levels.
Having said that, anecdotal reports suggest Vitamin D should be taken in the morning due to its effect on decreasing sleep quality if taken too close to bedtime. This makes sense given the fact that your body associates Vitamin D with sun exposure and if the sun is out giving the body Vitamin D your body won’t respond with making proper sleep hormones, because it thinks you’re out in the sun and that it is daytime.

Here’s the problem, impairing sleep quality has a detrimental effect on testosterone production among many other things. So taking Vitamin D for increasing testosterone makes sense, but taking it close to bedtime negates anything you were initially trying to do if you’re one of the lucky few who have sleep issues with near bedtime dosing.

Pick your supplements wisely and understand the affect they have on your physiology so you can determine if it is worth your time or not worth anything. The main pathways in which workout performance and body composition based supplements work through are:

- Boosting neurotransmitter pools
- Boosting adrenal output
- Increase muscle recovery
- Alter muscle pH
- Stimulate protein synthesis
- Increase anabolic hormones
- Increase fatty oxidation capacity
- Promote healthy homeostasis of targeted systems

We have you 100% covered in the offseason system for pathway maximization to improve all aspects of muscle building, fat loss and sport performance. But take this lesson with you for life. It’s your body,
always ensure you know what system and/or tissue you are trying to
effect with supplementation to maximize your results and the weight
of your wallet.

Our last question we must answer prior to the supplemental
recommendations for our clientele is #3: Does the current body of
evidence show that this nutrient works and is safe for consumption?

This is the sure-fire way to guarantee no money is being wasted and
that what you are taking is supporting your goals in muscle building,
fat loss and overall improved health profile.

There are tens of thousands of research papers available on
supplementation alone and their effects on the human body and
performance. Our job is to evaluate the research, keep the good,
throw out the bad and ensure we can confidently stand behind our
recommendations.

Not just through personal experience but also through scientific
evidence as well.

Although is should be noted here that all governing bodies are
different in regards to their lists of approved substances for sport.
Always be sure to check with your governing body of competition to
ensure everything you are taking isn’t against any of the rules.
European leagues have a very different set of rules than North
American leagues, and even the different leagues within these
regions have their own certain regulations as well. Always play on the
safe side and match everything up with the provided lists of approved
substances.