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Diets Designed for Athletes

Maryann Karinch
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It is not enough anymore to train hard and smart or get enough sleep to get ahead of the pack in the world of competitive athletics.

Even the notion of “eating right” and maintaining a proper diet has become a complicated science in which athletes must wade through a sea of books, theories, packaged meals, vitamin supplements, and recovery drinks. There’s no magic pill. A regimen that works well for a bodybuilder could spell disaster for an ultra-marathoner or triathlete.

The author has written a practical guide that should offer some insights when maneuvering through this maze of often contradictory information. Karinch is a nutritionist, endurance athlete, and author of numerous books, including Lessons from the Edge, which features stories and advice from athletes in extreme sports.

This book includes several case histories of bodybuilders and endurance athletes chronicling their dietary problems and how they sought to achieve diets that were healthful and would enhance their performances. High-altitude mountain climbers, for example, face special challenges in frigid, oxygen-depleted environments. They do better with energy gels because they don’t freeze or get too brittle and hard to eat.

Karinch offers several recipes for nutritious meals that can be prepared easily by those too busy with their training to cook, and for those who can barely boil water. Sometimes the meal is as simple as a can of tuna or a high-protein soy-based shake. She provides charts and comparison graphs to help the athlete make decisions when customizing a training diet. The text is presented in an easy-to-access format that makes the book an excellent reference guide to be consulted regularly.

Karinch, a former bodybuilder, shares her past experiences and the frustrations she felt as she groped for the nutritional magic bullet that would put her center stage. She urges athletes in stressful sports, such as NASCAR racing, to use supplements to boost their immune systems.

Because the author cuts through the scientific verbiage, recreational weekenders, gardeners, and anyone interested in creating a more healthful diet will find this book invaluable.

KARL KUNKEL (January / February 2002)

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