

What Is Carb Cycling and What Are Its Health Benefits?

Summary: Learn more about carb cycling and what it can do for your health and well-being.

One of the newer, popular trends among fitness professionals for getting fat-loss results for their clients is carb cycling. Carb cycling generally refers to a cohesive nutrition and fitness plan that alternates between low carbohydrate days with regular or high carbohydrate days, with workouts corresponding with carbohydrate intake for maximum results.

High carbohydrate intake creates an insulin response that delivers nutrients to your muscles, which is why high carbohydrate days are corresponded with high intensity strength workouts. The extra nutrients and glycogen stores help your muscles recover and grow. On the other hand, low carbohydrate days are paired with high intensity cardio workouts, such as sprints. Because glycogen stores are depleted on low carbohydrate days, your body is forced to burn fat for energy, thus increasing fat-burning in your body.

The benefits of carb cycling include:

- Promotes lean muscle growth
- Increased receptiveness to insulin
- Promotes fat-burning
- Fits any lifestyle or dietary constrictions
- Increases energy

It's important to remember that donuts, cake, and other sugary, processed foods or foods including white flour should not be included in high carbohydrate days, as those do not fuel your body effectively. To get the best results, focus on eating whole, clean foods such as vegetables, fruit, sweet potatoes, quinoa, oatmeal, brown rice, etc. Carb cycling may take more effort and planning in the first few weeks, but it can become a very healthy, body-positive lifestyle. Be sure to speak with your doctor or nutritionist to work on a diet that's best for you.