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What are the best foods to eat to help in conjunction with exercise to achieve rock hard abs?

The key phrase in this question is 'conjunction with exercise' because unfortunately there isn't a miracle food that will give you washboard abdominals. A well balanced diet drawing adequate portions from all the important food groups is the best starting point for any diet. This will ensure your body is getting enough nutrients to aid in the building of muscles and provide you with the energy stores necessary to participate in physical activity. If you tend to carry excess fat around your middle and find it necessary to lose weight in order to reveal your rock hard abs, it is critical that you keep track of your caloric intake in order to determine if you are taking in more calories (energy) than your body is using. It is very important that you don't set your calorie intake so low that you are starving your body of energy because then it will be impossible to build muscles. Once you have a well balanced diet rich in nutrient dense fruit, vegetables, and protein you are ready to begin a good all around core exercise program which will put you on the right track for a future of rock hard abs.

What foods should people avoid?

As far as what foods should be avoided a good recommendation is to avoid refined or processed foods that contain empty calories from trans fats, artificially added sugars, and other additives. Strive to choose nutrient dense choices from each food group, such as whole grains instead of grains containing enriched flour, and lean meats for proteins instead of cuts of meat that are high in fat. Make sure to check out food labels to get an idea of the amount of nutrients it contains per serving, and if it has any unnecessary added ingredients. A good start is to challenge yourself to eat as many nutrient dense foods (foods that contain the greatest number of nutrients for the least number of calories) as you can, to fulfill your recommended daily intake.

How important is protein to building muscle?

Protein is the foundation for muscle building. After a hard workout you may feel sore which is due to micro tears of the muscle tissue. Nutrients in your blood, including protein, come in and heal these microscopic tears and leave the muscle stronger than it was before the workout. So it is very important to consume foods rich in lean proteins in order to heal and build up a muscle. Most people can receive enough protein from a well balanced diet so it is unnecessary to take protein supplements, and because the body is incapable of storing protein, excess may be turned into fat and stored in that form. Don't forget that other nutrients are also necessary to fuel the process of building muscles so don't ignore the other important food groups like fruit, vegetables, and whole grains.

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