#  Decoding male body image - Stage 5

Duration: 5 hours

## Description

This learning sequence is deigned to investigate the following driving questions:

* What is the image or perception that drives your behaviour?
* What ideals are you being sold and what strategies are being used to sell that ideal?
* Is everyone doing it? What’s the reality of it?
* What do I now know and how can it support me in the future?

This learning sequence can be used in isolation or as a follow on from the [stage 5 Mythbusters learning sequence](https://youtu.be/Bup9EGUYxks). Both sequences follow a process to develop the skills of critical thinking and health literacy whilst investigating how perceptions and images can drive young people’s behaviour.

This learning sequence investigates the media messages which influence those perceptions and images. It presents the facts around these perceptions using male body image as the focus. Finally, students are guided through a reflective process where they recognise what they have learnt, to allow them to make informed and healthy decisions for their future.

## Educative purpose

Through this learning sequence, students will examine and critique health information and media messages related to masculinity and body image. It focuses on three aspects of male body image: food and nutrition, nutritional supplementation and performance enhancing drugs. Students will appraise personal strengths, predict future challenges and opportunities and develop the skills required to manage these in a positive way. A key focus of this learning sequence is to develop health literacy and encourage critical inquiry. These skills will assist students to identify reliable sources of information and services to assist them with current or future challenges. The driving questions frame the unit and focus the learning.

## Syllabus outcomes

* PD5.2Researches and appraises the effectiveness of health information and support services available in the community
* PD5-6 Critiques contextual factors, attitudes and behaviours to effectively promote health, safety, wellbeing and participation in physical activity
* PD5-8 Designs, implements and evaluates personalised plans to enhance health and participation in a lifetime of physical activity

All outcomes referred to in this unit come from [PDHPE K-10](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/pdhpe/pdhpe-syllabus-implementation/learning-environment) Syllabus © NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, 2018.

## Syllabus content

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Outcomes | Key inquiry question | Syllabus content |
| PD5-2 - Researches and appraises the effectiveness of health information and support services available in the community | How can people respond positively to life challenges? | * predict future challenges and opportunities and the skills required to manage these in a positive way
	+ appraise personal strengths to design a strategy for addressing a future life challenges
	+ recognise early warning signs of challenging and unsafe situations, eg physical, emotional and social indicators, external signs, controlling behaviour S
 |
| PD5-6 - Critiques contextual factors, attitudes and behaviours to effectively promote health, safety, wellbeing and participation in physical activity  | Why are external influences an important aspect of my own and others’ health, safety, wellbeing and participation in physical activity?  | * analyse situations where external influences may have an impact on their ability to make healthy and safe choices (ACPPS092)
	+ describe pro-social behaviour expectations in social situations and examine how these can influence decisions behaviours and actions S I
	+ investigate the influences on risk-taking and decision-making and assess their impact on individual health, safety and wellbeing, eg drug use, personal safety, S
* investigate media strategies, marketing and influences associated with health issues affecting young people
	+ critique media messages and evaluate how different interpretations can impact the health, safety, wellbeing and physical activity levels of young people, eg messages regarding body image, nutrition S
	+ critically analyse gender messages in popular culture and consider their impact on individual and community health, safety, wellbeing and participation in physical activity S I
	+ examine marketing strategies to determine the influence they have on young people’s attitudes, behaviour and perceptions of health, eg healthy food habits, drug use,
 |
| PD5-8 - Designs, implements and evaluates personalised plans to enhance health and participation in a lifetime of physical activity  | What strategies can I plan and prioritise in my community to empower individuals to lead healthy, safe and active lifestyles for the benefit of my own and others’ wellbeing?  | * plan, rehearse and evaluate options for managing situations where their own and others’ health, safety and wellbeing may be at short or long-term risk (ACPPS091)
	+ formulate a safety plan to meet the particular needs of a challenging situation, listing choices and consequences and making a decision about the best choice for their own health, safety or wellbeing S I
	+ propose and practise a range of realistic responses to scenarios where peers are encouraging them to behave in unhealthy or unsafe ways in a variety of contexts, eg drug use, gambling, road use S I
 |

## Teaching notes

Schools are advised that resources embedded within this unit are not endorsed by the NSW Department of Education.

### Creating a safe and supportive learning environment

There are a number of strategies that can be used to create a supportive learning environment which enables students to feel safe to learn and ask questions. They include:

* making students aware at the beginning of PDHPE sessions that disclosing personal information that indicates they may be at risk of harm will be reported to the school principal in all instances. This includes personal disclosures related to instances of abuse, drug use, neglect or sexual activity under the legal age of consent.
* being aware that some parts of PDHPE can be confronting and sensitive for some students.
* enabling students to withdraw if they find issues personally confronting to protect them from making harmful disclosures. Equally, it is important to be prepared for issues that arise as a result of a student making a public disclosure in the classroom.

More information on creating a safe and supportive learning environment can be found on the [PDHPE website](https://www.youtube.com/watch).

### Evaluating resources before use

Preview and evaluate all strategies, resources and teaching and learning approaches in full before use with students to determine suitability for student learning needs, stage of development and local school context. Consider the age, maturity, cultural background, sexuality, gender, sex, health and other characteristics of students in your care. Apply professional judgements to all strategies, teaching and learning approaches and resources including audio visual materials (for example videos, media clips and YouTube), interactive web-based content (for example games, quizzes and websites) and texts.

Use the [resource review flowchart](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/083acd3a-daca-4307-9afe-bc6c888f694a/1/final-resource-flowchart-html5.zip/index.html) to decide about the suitability of teaching and learning resources.

Materials should be reviewed in full and endorsed by the school principal before use in NSW government schools.

### Communication with parents and caregivers

Some aspects of PDHPE may be viewed as sensitive or controversial, such as learning about abuse, child protection, drugs, respectful relationships, sexual health, sexuality and violence. Inform parents and carers, prior to the occasion, of the specific details of the PDHPE program, so that parents and caregivers have time to exercise their rights of withdrawing their child from a particular session. In this regard, a parents or caregiver’s wish must be respected.

Establishing how parents and caregivers will be informed about programs and involved in consultation is a school-based decision. Where parents and caregivers indicate they wish to withdraw their child from a program it is useful to negotiate which parts of the PDHPE program they are concerned about. A sample information letter is available on the [PDHPE website](http://www.zerotackle.com/rugby-league/players/highest-paid-players/).

## Lesson overview

### Focus area: Role models and perceptions of health

#### Focus Question 1: What is the image or perception that drives your behaviour?

Lesson learning intention: Students aim to create an understanding that there are subliminal messages that are driving young people’s perception of what it is to be a healthy male.

Success criteria:

* Recognise that messages come from a variety of places
* Demonstrate understanding of the possible links between role modelling and future behaviour
* Recognise that messages from role models can shape our perception of masculinity and femininity.

##### Activity 1: What is the image of healthy for young people?

Teacher note: Students are consistently bombarded with images and messages around health. What health looks like and how to behave to ‘be healthy’. Many messages around body image are directed to females. When looking at the [Mission Australia Youth Survey 2019](https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/publications/youth-survey) results, body image and physical health appear in the top 5, (4th and 5th) personal concerns for young males. Body dissatisfaction for males can often result from comparing themselves to media messages. This can result in weight loss, muscle building, supplementation and image enhancing drugs. However, the results of some of these actions can result in what is viewed as a healthy body image.

We know that health is contextual. This activity will ask students to deconstruct the image of health in their context.

Students record:

* What does health look, sound and feel like?
* How may your image of health differ to:

- someone of the opposite sex?

- someone in your class?

- someone from another country/ culture?

- an athlete?

- your parents/ caregivers?

* Who/ what contributes to the image of what is healthy? For each consider whether the contribution is positive or negative or both?

##### Activity 2: See, Think, Wonder.

Teacher note: For males, perceptions of health and the stereotype of masculinity is synonymous with sport and being an athlete. Other images such as superheros and celebrities taking on the roles of these superheros also support these perceptions. Students are challenged to consider common images of health and reflect on their current views.

Students:

* View the [Cristiano Ronaldo](https://cdn3.volusion.com/hbptt.hfsxm/v/vspfiles/photos/1466-3.jpg) picture. Considering his health, what do you:
* see?
* think?
* wonder?
* Compare their health to Cristiano Ronaldo? Explain the comparison and reasons for this comparison.
* Would you consider all athletes healthy?
* Describe how other male athletes look?
* Create possible links between male athletes and the stereotypical view of masculinity? Explain your response
* Investigate 1 instance in the past where an athlete or other role model have used their image to create the perception they were healthy by:
* identifying the athlete/role models name and what do they do
* naming sources of where media messages may come from about this person; for example, sports advertising, television, Instagram, YouTube
* explaining whether these sources are generally considered reliable. Why/why not?
* describing how this person gave the perception they were healthy
* explaining how these messages compare with your deconstructed view of what health looks like, sounds like and feels like from activity 1
* drawing conclusions about the perception of healthy and actually being healthy.

#### Focus Question 2: What ideals are you being sold and what strategies are being used to sell that ideal?

##### Activity 3: The image that sells

Teacher note: This video uses Cristiano Ronaldo’s image of health to promote a product. Students are asked to deconstruct the techniques that are used by the advertiser to promote the product through Cristiano Ronaldo.

Students:

Watch this clip: [CR7: Driven to Perfection](https://www.sportsdietitians.com.au/factsheets/food-for-your-sport/food-for-your-sport-rugby-league/?v=J7Cr-lV03K0)

* Who is the sponsor?
* What techniques do they use to promote their product?
* What could be underlying message that Herbalife are promoting regarding their product?

##### Activity 4: Unpacking the message

Teacher note: This video draws direct relationships between the product and Ronaldo’s health. Students are asked to reflect on how the product and the person is used to promote the image of health.

Students:

Watch the following clips and respond in the unpacking the message worksheet:

 [Cristiano Ronaldo: The Interview Part II](https://youtu.be/Bup9EGUYxks) (duration 1:36)

* Describe the message being sold in this clip?
* Who is the target audience?
* Are there any obvious advertising strategies within this clip?
* What does this video suggest regarding nutrition?
* Why might that suggestion impact teens?

 [Cristiano Ronaldo- KFC](https://www.sportsdietitians.com.au/factsheets/food-for-your-sport/food-for-your-sport-rugby-league/) (duration 1:00)

* Describe the message being sold in this clip?
* Who is the target audience?
* What does this video suggest regarding nutrition?
* Why might that suggestion impact teens?

Discuss:

* Compare the messages in the two clips? How do they differ?
* Which one is more to believable for young people?
* Is one message more reliable than the other?
* Fact: Cristiano Ronaldo is number 2 on [Forbes](https://www.forbes.com/profile/cristiano-ronaldo/#80d4b53565dc) highest earning athletes, estimated at earning $44 million through endorsements alone.
* Does knowledge of the above fact impact on the health messages that are being given? Can they be considered reliable?

#### Focus Question 3: Is everyone doing it? What’s the reality of it?

##### Activity 5. Decoding nutritional information

Teacher note: This activity challenges students to critically analyse the product advertised in the clip above. Participants are asked to analyse the product and draw conclusions regarding its effectiveness.

Students:

Review the [Herbalife CR7](https://www.sportsdietitians.com.au/sda-blog/protein-shakes-vs-wholefoods/?v-cache=1486611850)  that is being promoted by Cristiano Ronaldo in the above clips.

**Nutritional Information for Herbalife CR7 Drive**

Per 500ml of made up product (2 scoops):

Energy: 411kj

Fat: 0g

Carbohydrates: 23g

Of which sugars: 18g

Fibre: 0.6g

Protein: 0g

Salt: 0.6g

Thiamin: 1.1mg (100%NRV)

Vitamin B12: 2.5ng (100%NRV)

Magnesium: 142mg (38%NRV)

Ingredients: Dextrose, sugar, maltodextrin, trisodium citrate, isomaltulose, acidity regulator (citric acid), magnesium salts of citric acid, potassium citrate, flavourings, colours (anthocyanins), cyanocobalamin, thiamine mononitrate.

Research task: Students use the internet to find responses to the following questions. Students are encouraged to consider their sources of information to ensure reliability:

* Identify the percentage of recommended daily intake (RDI) is in each serving (500ml) for:

- sugar?

- fibre?

- salt?

* Identify foods are vitamin B12, Thiamin, magnesium naturally found in? Are they a part of a normal healthy diet?
* Which websites did you use for your information? Explain how you knew they were reliable?

Create a pros and cons list for the use of this product:

* In your opinion is the product suitable for teens? Why/ why not?

#### Focus Question 4: What do I now know and how can it support me in the future?

##### Activity 6: Apply your knowledge

Teacher note: the following response can be used as a strategies for students to demonstrate what they know, understand and can apply.

Students respond to the following letter.

Hi,

I want to be the next Cristiano Ronaldo. I saw him taking a post-workout drink, it seemed like that was the secret to his success. Where can I get it from? Will it make me look healthy like Ronaldo? Will it make me a better footballer?

Thanks for your help,

The\_next\_superstar07

When structuring your response consider the writer’s self-image and how advertisers use an image of health to sell their product.

### Focus area: Supplementation

 Lesson learning intention: Students analyse the impact that media can have on gender messaging and an individual’s health and wellbeing.

Success criteria:

* Understand the dangers of supplementation
* Consider how supplementation messaging is embedded into media messaging
* Analyse how a balanced diet can remove the need for supplementation

#### Focus Question 1: What is the image or perception that drives your behaviour?

##### Activity 1: What do you think? What do you know?

**Teacher note:** Students are challenged to consider how supplements have been embedded into the concept of healthy nutrition.

Students:

Consider the fact that over 8.3 million Australians take supplements on a regular basis.

* Make a list of all the supplements you can think of.
* How common do you think the use of supplements are:
* for the general population?
* for athletes?
* for teens?
* Make a list of the reasons why people take supplements?
* Make a list of all the reasons why teens would take supplements?
* Highlight any reason from your list that relates to body image or fitting in with the perception of looking healthy.

Record the following statement.

* “Supplements are a part of a healthy balanced diet”.
* Explain whether you agree or disagree with this statement.

Explain your response in a persuasive text format. Use the PEEL/TEEL/SEXY paragraph structure model.

**Teacher note:** Students will be asked to reflect on their list of supplements response at the conclusion of this lesson.

#### Focus Question 2: What ideals are you being sold and what strategies are being used to sell that ideal?

##### Activity 2: The messages we receive

**Teacher note:** Students are challenged to compare articles that promote different health messages. The nine.com.au article promotes the use of supplements. The sports dietitian’s article highlights the importance of a balanced diet. Students are asked to analyse the media messages and the supplement industry is promoted. Students are asked to think about the impact these subtle messages have on the body image of young people.

Students:

Read the following two articles and complete the discussion question in the worksheet provided.

* [How to eat like an NRL Player (nine.com.au)](https://youtu.be/i7yIG1fuCZU)
* [Food for your sport (sportsdietitians.com.au](https://www.sportsdietitians.com.au/factsheets/food-for-your-sport/food-for-your-sport-rugby-league/)

Complete the compare the supplements messages table in the resources section.

Complete a Venn diagram highlighting similarities and differences in the article.

* Why do you think the two articles would differ in their information?
* Who is the target audience for each article?
* Which article is more reliable? why?

#### Focus Question 3: Is everyone doing it? What’s the reality of it?

##### Activity 3: The dangers of supplementation

**Teacher note:** Students will draw conclusions on the implications of supplementation on teenagers and highlight the dangers of embedding supplements into the concept of good health.

Students:

Read the following [article and view the embedded video](http://coach.ninemsn.com.au/2016/05/11/10/22/the-safest-and-most-sensible-way-to-gain-muscle) and answer the following discussion questions in the dangers of supplementation worksheet in the resource section.

Discussion:

* What are the dangers associated with teens supplementing?
* Draw conclusions on the impact of websites, such as the one in the previous activity, that promote the use of supplements?
* What key concepts or ideas do you think are important from the text?
* Explain any message that need to be challenged with in the text?
* How is the clip creating a message to young people that nutrition, their sporting performance and how they should look are all related?
* Create a list of strategies from the clip that supplement companies are using to sell their products to young people.
* Debate the statement: Supplementation provides a quick fix to getting bigger muscles and a better performance.

#### Focus Question 4: What do I now know and how can it support me in the future?

##### Activity 4: Substitution

**Teacher note:** Supplements cannot replace eating actual whole foods. The supplement is processed and cannot compare nutritionally to real foods such as steak or an egg.

Students:

Review the list of supplements. Choose 5 supplements from your earlier list.

* For each, write a [list of whole foods](https://coach.nine.com.au/diet/how-to-eat-like-an-nrl-player/0fcd2fed-de14-40d9-8137-cbd52783f7a6) that contains that supplement.
* For each substitute outline the benefits of eating the whole food instead of supplementation?

##### Activity 5: I used to think… now I know…

Students:

Consider your response at the start of the lesson

* “Supplements are a part of a healthy balanced diet”
* Complete the statement; I used to think…. Now I think….

##### Activity 6: Adopt a role

**Teacher note:** eHeadspace is an online chat space where young people can access support from qualified counsellors. Many young people are accessing help online due to the benefits of affordability, reducing social stigma and convenience of access. In this activity, students are asked to apply their knowledge.

Students:

* Adopt the role on an online counsellor and create a transcript between a counsellor and a young male.
* When responding, apply your understanding of supplements and the marketing strategies that are used to draw young people in and the perception of the image of masculinity.

Eheadspace counsellor:

Hi, my name is Lee. I’m a trained counsellor. I have worked here for the last 4 years now. Is there something I can support you with?

Sam:

Hi, I’m in year 9. I am the skinniest and smallest in my year. I was dropped from my rep soccer team this year. All the other boys got bigger over preseason and I didn’t. My mate who is shredded told me that he has this protein drink before school and before he goes to the gym. It worked for him. Should I get some?

## Resources

### See, think, wonder.

Look at this image. ([i2.wp.com/i.dailymail.co.uk/i/pix/2015.jpg](https://i2.wp.com/i.dailymail.co.uk/i/pix/2015/08/07/09/2B2C28AB00000578-3187724-Cristiano_Ronaldo_has_unveiled_his_new_underwear_range_by_showca-a-11_1438935429311.jpg))



Complete the following;

3 things you see

2 things you think

1 thing you wonder

### The image that sells

Watch this clip: [CR7: Driven to Perfection](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J7Cr-lV03K0) (duration 1:30)

Who is the sponsor of this commercial? What product are they promoting?

What techniques do they use to promote their product? For example, language.

Consider an underlying message that Herbalife are promoting regarding their product?

### Unpacking the message

Watch this clip: [Cristiano Ronaldo: The Interview Part II](http://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/learning-areas/pdhpe/pdhpe-7-10) (duration 1:36)

Describe the message being sold in this clip?

Who is the target audience?

What does this clip suggest regarding nutrition?

How might that message impact teens?

Watch this clip: [Cristiano Ronaldo- KFC](https://coach.nine.com.au/diet/how-to-eat-like-an-nrl-player/0fcd2fed-de14-40d9-8137-cbd52783f7a6) (duration 1:00)

Describe the message being sold in this clip?

Who is the target audience?

What does this clip suggest regarding nutrition?

How might that message impact teens?

### Decoding nutritional information

Let’s look at Cristiano’s advertised product in more detail



Use the internet to research:

1. What percentage of recommended daily intake (RDI) is in each serving (500ml) for:

Sugar?

Fibre?

Salt?

1. What foods are vitamin B12, Thiamin, magnesium naturally found in? Are they a part of a normal healthy diet?
2. Which websites did you use for your information? How did you know they were reliable?
3. Create a list of pros and cons for the use of this product:

Pros

1.

2.

3.

Cons

1.

2.

3

.

In your opinion:

Is the product suitable for teens? Why/ why not?

Write a response to the following letter

Hi,

I want to be the next Cristiano Ronaldo. I saw him taking a post-workout drink, it seemed like that was the secret to his success. Where can I get it from? Will it make an impact on my performance?

cheers,

future\_star07

### The messages we receive: Supplements messages table

Compare [How to eat like an NRL player (nine.com.au](https://coach.nine.com.au/diet/how-to-eat-like-an-nrl-player/0fcd2fed-de14-40d9-8137-cbd52783f7a6)) and [Food for your sport (sportsdietitians.com.au)](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/learning-from-home/teaching-and-learning-resources/7-10-resources)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Questions | Source 1: Nine.com.au | Source 2: sportsdietitians.com.au |
| What is the source? |  |  |
| What is the URL? |  |  |
| Are there any visual cues?  |  |  |
| Does the story make you want to get a second opinion? |  |  |
| Does the story draw out irrational emotions that cannot be explain? |  |  |
| What is the type of Language used? Technical, humorous, sensationalised |  |  |
| Is the language difficulty to decode? Does it make you want to stop reading? |  |  |
| Does the amount of content influence the messages being given? |  |  |
| Image of messenger: What is the image of the author/seller? Does this influence the authenticity of the message? |  |  |
| Why might young people connect with one message more than others? |  |  |

### The messages we receive- Venn diagram

Compare the articles:

1. [How to eat like an NRL player (nine.com.au](https://coach.nine.com.au/diet/how-to-eat-like-an-nrl-player/0fcd2fed-de14-40d9-8137-cbd52783f7a6))

2. [Food for your sport (sportsdietitians.com.au)](https://www.sportsdietitians.com.au/factsheets/food-for-your-sport/food-for-your-sport-rugby-league/)

Design your own Venn diagram to highlight the similarities and differences between the articles.



Why do you think the two articles would differ in their information?

Who is the target audience for each article?

Which article is more reliable? Why?

### The messages we receive: Article 1

#### How to eat like an NRL player

By Stuart Marsh, 2016

Tips and tricks from Balin Cupples, the head of athletic performance at the Vodafone Warriors.

**Have you ever wondered just how NRL players get so damn big? Sure, hitting the gym and training most days helps a lot – but the real secret lies in what they eat. And, to tell the truth, it's probably more sensible than you might think.**

[Balin Cupples](http://www.warriors.kiwi/team/profiles/balin_cupples.html) is the head of athletic performance with the Vodafone Warriors, and it's his job (along with a whole team of training, nutrition and physio staff) to make sure the players are in tip-top shape before taking the field. Cupples says that if you want to look – and most importantly, perform – like an NRL player, you've got to make sure you're getting the big three.

"It may sound basic however correct nutrition, rehydrating and ensuring quality sleep is the most valuable," Cupples tells ninemsn Coach. "Nutrition is a vital part of a performance program. Athlete education on the benefits of effective nutrition including assisting recovery, immunity, sleep, body composition and attaining physical goals is vital."

**Follow the 90/10 rule**

When players are getting paid up to and beyond [a million dollars a season](https://i2.wp.com/i.dailymail.co.uk/i/pix/2015/08/07/09/2B2C28AB00000578-3187724-Cristiano_Ronaldo_has_unveiled_his_new_underwear_range_by_showca-a-11_1438935429311.jpg), it's not unreasonable to think that every last morsel they put into their mouths has been weighed by a team of scientists.

But the reality is far more sensible – players are allowed a bit of flexibility in their diets provided they've ticked almost all of their nutrition goals. "Overall we promote a 90/10 rule where if players eat responsibly most of the time they are able to enjoy the foods they like also," explains Cupples.

The 90/10 rule – where you eat clean, wholesome food for 90 percent of the time and take a diet "splurge" 10 percent of the time, is popular amongst athletes as the degree of flexibility allows them to relax without significantly compromising performance.

This of course, as Cupples explains, is dependent on the individual player – where a front rower might be given some leeway a fullback might not, or vice versa.

"This is highly individual based on body composition and performance targets with certain individuals needing more assistance and/or come under higher scrutiny than others," says Cupples.

"We aim to educate the players with practical information to encourage ownership over their nutrition regimes."

**Eat protein at every meal**

There's simply no getting around it – if you want to add slabs of muscle onto your frame like an NRL player you've got to make sure you're getting adequate protein. But what's the best way to do this? Simply take a look at every meal, and see how you can add a dash of muscle-building fuel.

"We promote high quality sources of protein at every meal including breakfast. We do not prescribe based on grams per day," says Cupples.

"If players are following the suggested 90/10 rule above adequate functional protein levels would be reached."

A great example of this would be adding eggs to your breakfast, chicken or salmon for lunch and a healthy serving of red meat at dinner. But that's not all – you also need to make sure you're recovering optimally after training, and for that Cupples has the players turn to protein shakes for their convenience and nutrition they bring.

"On top of our "food first approach" we also incorporate easily digestible protein supplements post training like a high protein, high carb blend from [IsoWhey](http://www.isowheysports.com.au/products/protein/isowhey-sports-high-protein-high-carb-chocolate)," says Cupples.

"It’s important to look for a good quality protein powder, particularly for athletic performance, that works for you."

**Match your nutrition to your training level**

When it comes to bulking up, you can't just shovel everything you see into your mouth to get enough calories to put you in a daily surplus. Because [as we've covered on Coach before](https://youtu.be/i7yIG1fuCZU), while this will add muscle, it'll also add a fair whack of body fat too.

What Cupples suggests is matching how much you eat to how much you train. Traditionally in rugby league the off-season (a few weeks over summer) is the perfect time to eat big and increase muscle mass, while the in-season period is all about maintaining performance.

"During the season overall training load decreases when compared to the preseason. Individuals must adapt their nutrition habits and amounts to this change," says Cupples.

"It is the simple reinforcement of the energy intake and expenditure equation. Overall it is maintaining the quality, daily routines and timing of nutrients whilst being mindful of quantity to ensure body composition targets are maintained."

**Time your carbs to perfection**

Whether it's some bloke on a reality TV show or your next door neighbour, everybody has it out for carbohydrates as some dastardly food group that only wants to make you fat. But the truth is, to dominate the park like a professional league player, you do need a moderate carb intake to perform at your peak.

"Carbohydrate intake is crucial to high intensity performance. In line with current research we promote a moderate carbohydrate program encouraging players to cycle carbohydrate intake based on the training week, stage of the season and competition schedule," says Cupples.

So then the question changes from whether you should you eat carbs at all, but when you should eat them. And that, as Cupples explains, takes some experimenting on your part. "For example, on a micro level we promote digesting more carbs later in the day to assist with sleep, build carb intake in the 2-3 days leading into a game, increase carb intake immediately post competition, and limit early in the week around recovery when training load is reduced." But it’s not all sweet potatoes and rice, because another crucial element of the player's diets is the way they consume "good fats". It’s been [proven in research](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/what-should-you-eat/fats-and-cholesterol/) that unsaturated fat in your diet won’t affect your cholesterol levels and are beneficial to building a high-performing body. "Fats are also essential to optimal performance so differentiating types is key," says Cupples. "Good fats including natural sources of saturated fat (in quality meats), polyunsaturated (fish and nuts) and moderate monounsaturated fats (avocado) are included in our player’s nutrition plans."

**A typical NRL player's diet on game day:**

**Breakfast:** Porridge, Mixed berries, Eggs, Spinach, Avocado and Sourdough toast

**Lunch:**Lean meat protein choice-chicken, steak, fish, green vegetables such as broccoli and beans, sweet potato mash, potatoes, rice, salad types.

**Pre-game snack-**Smoothies, eggs, nuts,toasted sourdough sandwiches

**Pre-game:**Black coffee,[IsoWhey Sports Pre-Workout](http://www.isowheysports.com.au/products/pre-workout/isowhey-sports-pre-workout-fuel) supplement, Melon fruits, IsoWhey Sports Energy gels

**Post-game:**Post match shake including the [IsoWhey Repair and Rebuild](http://www.isowheysports.com.au/products/post-workout/isowhey-sports-refuel-rebuild), [IsoWhey Glutamine Powder](http://www.isowheysports.com.au/products/post-workout/isowhey-sports-glutamine-powder), cream, berries, banana, yogurt.

**Post-game meal:** Roasts meats, baked vegetables, mashed sweet potato, and green vegetables. Increase carbs.

Sourced from Nine.com.au [coach.nine.com.au/diet/how-to-eat-like-an-nrl-player/0fcd2fed-de14-40d9-8137-cbd52783f7a6](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/pdhpe/pdhpe-syllabus-implementation/pdhpe-communication)

### The messages we receive: Article 2

#### Food for your sport: rugby league

The following information is presented as a fact sheet from the [Sports Dietitian Australia](https://www.sportsdietitians.com.au) website

Rugby League is a popular Australian sport played by both professionals and amateurs. Forwards usually weigh between 90-110kg. They need to be heavier due to their involvement in the scrums and tackling. Backs usually weigh between 80-95kg. They need to be more agile and so tend to be smaller and leaner.

**About Rugby League**

Rugby League is a popular contact ball sport played at both a professional and amateur level. Teams have 13 players, with 6 ‘Forwards’ and 7 ‘Backs’. Each team also has 4 substitute players – up to 8 interchanges can be made over a match at professional level in Australia.

Forwards are typically larger and more muscular than backs – they usually weigh between 90-110kg. Their position relies on their strength and size to be successful in their involvement with scrums and tackling. Backs are typically smaller and leaner – they usually weigh between 80-95kg. Backs are more involved with play making and are their position requires greater agility and evasiveness to break defensive lines, avoid tackles and score tries.

In Australia competitive season usually runs from early March to October with one game per week – usually on a weekend. Match start times depending on the level of the athlete and vary between early mornings for junior players to late evening matches at the professional level.

Rugby League matches are played over two 40-minute halves, plus additional injury time separated by a 10-minute break. GPS data from Australian NRL games shows that players cover between ~5-8km per match with backs covering more distance in a match than forwards. Much of this distance is covered with low-intensity activity (walking or jogging) with high-intensity burst and sprints interspersed throughout. Glycogen stores have been shown to reduce by ~40% over a professional competitive rugby league match. Interestingly, research has found that at the elite level, match performance was more dependent on technical performance than match running or physical collisions.

At the amateur level, players typically train 2-4 times per week. At the professional level, players usually training 6 days per week, most often twice per day. Training sessions include strength training, conditioning and fitness work, skill development, tactical preparation and match simulation.

**Training diet for rugby league**

Many rugby players have large energy, carbohydrate and fluid requirements due to their size and the physical nature of their training. Three meals and regular snacks throughout the day to ensure a high nutritious energy intake that will sustain the body’s requirements for training and competition.

The training diet of a rugby league player should consist of:

* Quality wholegrain carbohydrates – cereals, bread, fruit, dairy, quinoa, rice, pasta, potato, legumes etc. These fuel the muscles and help muscle growth.
* Protein-rich foods – lean meat, chicken, fish, lamb, kangaroo, dairy products, eggs, legumes, etc. These foods help muscle growth and repair.
* Adequate “healthy fats” (unsaturated fats) found in oily fish, avocado, some nuts and olive oil.
* Plenty of vegetables and fruit, high in antioxidants and fibre for immune health and gut function.
* Minimal alcohol and take-away foods. These lead to poor recovery, can slow recovery from injury and contribute to excess weight gain.

Rugby is a professional career at an elite level, however many amateur players also have work and study to manage around their training and matches. This creates a very busy lifestyle and if good nutrition habits are prioritised this can make a huge difference both on and off the field by aiding with recovery and reducing fatigue.

**Hydration needs**

The fluid needs of rugby players are generally high due to the ‘stop-start’ style of the game which can result in high sweat rates. Since dehydration negatively affects speed, agility and decision making it is important for players to start all training sessions and matches well hydrated.

Producing clear urine is a useful indicator of good hydration status before exercise. Strategies to improve hydration levels include having fluids with all meals and snacks, carrying a water bottle throughout the day, drinking 200-400ml of fluid soon before the start of training or competition and drinking sufficient fluid to replace sweat losses after training or matches.

**What to eat before games**

It’s important to start training and games well-fuelled. Each athlete is different and the start time of the match will determine the timing of the pre-game meal, but players will often eat a pre-game meal ~3 to 4 hours before the start. This meal should contain some carbohydrate for fuel as well as some fluids for hydration. A small amount of protein in the pre-game meal is also useful, as it can help to prevent hunger during the game.

Some suitable pre-game meal ideas can include:

* Wrap or sandwich with chicken and salad
* Bowl of muesli with yoghurt and berries
* Pasta with beef mince in tomato-based sauce
* Poached eggs with baked beans on toast
* Chicken stir-fry with rice or quinoa

Many players will also have a small snack 1-2 hours prior to the game. This should be light, rich in carbohydrate but relatively low in fat and fibre so it is easy to digest. Some suitable pre-game snack ideas include:

* Yoghurt with fruit salad
* Banana and a handful of almonds
* Peanut butter on rice cakes
* Toast with vegemite

Players who struggle to eat solid food before a match because of nerves or poor appetite, may find liquid carbohydrates (e.g. fruit smoothie) more appealing.

**What to eat and drink during games**

Opportunities to eat and drink during matches are limited so players should make the most of any breaks in play (e.g. try conversions, half time, stoppages).

While water is the priority fluid during training and for hydration during the day, and in most matches, sports drinks may be useful during a game for players identified as having high energy requirements or heavy fluid losses as they can deliver some carbohydrates and electrolytes.

Players should work closely with an Accredited Sports Dietitian to trial nutrition strategies during training and matches to find which foods work best for each player.

**Post-game recovery**

There are three main considerations when it comes to recovery nutrition:

* Refuel muscle glycogen (carbohydrate stores)
* Repair muscle (for function & development)
* Rehydrate (replace fluids lost through sweat)

Recovery meals and snacks should therefore contain a combination of carbohydrate (fuel), protein (for muscle repair and development) and plenty of fluids and electrolytes to replace sweat losses.

A recovery meal or snack should be eaten soon after training or competition, particularly when the next training session or game is the next day. Some recovery food suggestions include:

* Ham, avocado and salad sandwich
* Dairy-based fruit smoothie
* Yoghurt + muesli with nuts and seeds
* Burritos with chicken, cheese, avocado and salad
* Baked potatoes with minced beef topping
* Tofu and vegetable curry with rice

Sourced from: Sports Dietitian Australia [www.sportsdietitians.com.au/factsheets/food-for-your-sport/food-for-your-sport-rugby-league/](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-07-09/teenagers-health-in-danger-as-sports-supplement-trend-grows/5585576)

### Adopt a role

Young people seek help for many reasons. eHeadspace offer a free online service targeting young school aged people. The service is private and confidential and the online counsellors are trained.

Below is the introduction shared between Sam, a male in year 9, and the online eHeadspace counsellor.

Demonstrate your knowledge of male body image, supplementation use and marketing strategies.

* Guide Sam with reliable information about nutrition and supplementation use, and give him tips on how to access other reliable sources of information for the future.

Eheadspace counsellor:

Hi, my name is Lee. I’m a trained counsellor. I have worked here for the last 4 years now. Is there something I can support you with?

Sam:

Hi, I’m in year 9. I am the skinniest and smallest in my year. I was dropped from my rep soccer team this year. All the other boys got bigger over preseason and I didn’t. My mate who is shredded told me that he has this protein drink before school and before he goes to the gym. It worked for him. Should I get some?