

# Flaxing

## Your Muscles

by Jade Beutler, RRT, RCP

### Build Your Muscles

Just like vitamins and minerals, the fatty acids in flaxseed oil are essential nutrients. They are the starting material, or the mortar and bricks, for manufacturing all other fatty acids and hormone precursors necessary to support and build strong lean muscle, while prolonging stamina required for endurance sports.

So what's all the hype surrounding flaxseed oil anyway? I'll tell you what all the hype is about: it is the fact that flaxseed oil has been found to be essential for optimum health and athletic performance. Yes, "essential," meaning that flaxseed oil contains special fatty acids (Omega-3s) that are required for optimum health and must be ingested directly through the diet.

So what's the big deal? Most Americans are deficient in these critical nutrients. Athletes and bodybuilders may easily fall into this category due to an increased demand and utilization of nutrients, and a tendency toward fat phobia.

### Fuel Your Body

"Okay, so Omega-3 in flax oil is essential and I may be deficient; why are they so important anyway?" you may be thinking. Because the essential Omega-3 fatty acids in flaxseed oil are ultimately converted in the body to hormone-like compounds that influence literally many biological processes including...

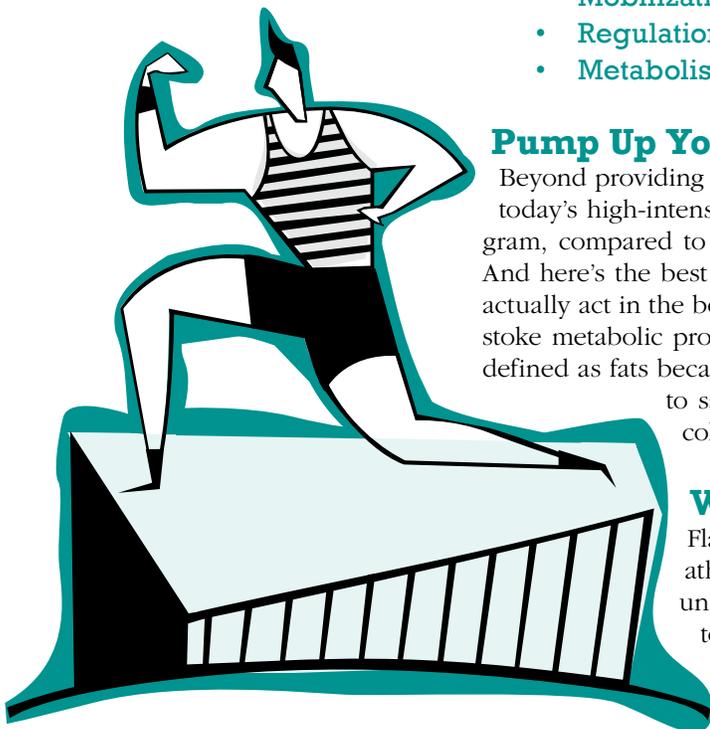
- Stimulation of steroid production
- Synthesis of hormones
- Mediation of immune response
- Direction of endocrine hormones to target cells
- Regulation of smooth muscle and autonomic reflexes
- Construction of healthy cell walls
- Transportation of oxygen to body cells
- Mobilization of saturated fats in the blood stream
- Regulation of nerve transmission
- Metabolism of energy for the heart muscle

### Pump Up Your Metabolism

Beyond providing essential nutrients, flaxseed oil delivers valuable fuel required by today's high-intensity athlete. In fact, flaxseed oil provides 9 calories of energy per gram, compared to only 4 calories per gram for carbohydrate and protein sources. And here's the best news – while the fatty acids in flax oil are defined as fats, they actually act in the body as anti-fats. Instead of contributing to unsightly body fat, they stoke metabolic processes in the body that speed fat loss. Omega-3s are technically defined as fats because of their molecular structure; however, they are the antitheses to saturated fats in the body – as black is to white, and as hot is to cold.

### What's the Word on the Street?

Flaxseed oil has received an overwhelming response from the athletic and bodybuilding community. The consensus is that unlike many of the "fad" products on the market, flax oil is here to stay due to its profound health benefits. An article entitled "Best of the Best", published in the bodybuilding and health enthusiast magazine *Muscle Media 2000*, claims flaxseed oil is



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“the hottest idea in bodybuilding” and “a surprising new category of bodybuilding supplements.” In his “Ask the Guru” column featured in the same magazine, Dan Duchane ranked flaxseed oil as the number one bodybuilding supplement. Bodybuilding columnist Jay Robb also praised flax oil. In an article published in *Exercise for Men*, Mr. Robb cites the many important roles of Omega-3 fatty acids in flax, including serving as primary building blocks of healthy cells; maintaining cholesterol levels that are already in healthy range; forming nerve and brain tissue; helping regulate the cardiovascular, immune and digestive systems; promoting healing and helping to burn calories.



### Top Athlete's Secret

Do you really need this stuff? If you are walking, talking, eating and breathing, the answer is yes. In fact, flaxseed oil is as important, if not more important, than the prevailing popular products on the market such as creatine, protein powder, and chromium in sustaining, maintaining, and excelling in athletic performance. Most athletes find it easiest to work flaxseed oil into their daily regimen by simply blending it with their daily protein drink. The general recommendation is about one tablespoon per every 100 pounds of body weight. Flaxseed oil is quickly losing its status as a “best kept secret” among bodybuilders and athletes, as everyone is rushing for a bottle of what has become known as liquid dynamite!

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### Athletes report these benefits with flaxseed oil:

- ◆ Enhanced athletic performance
- ◆ Shortened recovery time from athletic events and strenuous workouts
- ◆ Increased energy without increasing body fat
- ◆ Reduced muscle soreness after strenuous workouts
- ◆ Increased uptake and utilization of oxygen
- ◆ Improved stamina and endurance

**These benefits are just a few of the 1,000 biological actions of Omega-3 fatty acids.**

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