

# Why Superfood Nutrition Provides Golf's True Competitive Edge



**By KC Craichy**

Becoming a winner on the golf course is increasingly about obtaining a competitive edge—both physically and mentally. Even with all of the available top-of-the-line equipment and expensive swing coaches, competitive golfers know all too well that a single stroke can mean the difference between winning and losing a tournament. That is why it is so crucial to be able to maintain the mental focus and physical stamina required to perform at your very best throughout the entire course of play.



It then becomes apparent that the most important factors in the game of golf are actually the intangibles: sustained energy, clarity of thought and the ability to minimize and quickly recover from the physical rigors of training and competition.

Being able to play consistently from the first tee to the 18th green depends heavily on mastering these intangibles in order to gain that competitive edge. However, unlike learning to hit a 1-iron, this task is easier to accomplish than you might think.

As a performance nutrition specialist, I have had the privilege of working with world-class athletes in many different sports to help them gain a competitive edge. Among these are professional sports all-stars and Olympic medal winners. Believe it or not, their success is easily translatable to athletes in any sport where consecutive days of play are part of the competition. Golf certainly fits that description, since playing well requires maximum levels of fitness, endurance, focus and recovery.



The biggest problem is that a desire for increased energy levels often causes golfers to load up on energy bars, drinks and supplements comprised of cheap ingredients, high sugars and stimulants, which actually result in a dreaded crash and fatigue after providing only a short peak in energy. Some of these same products can even disrupt a person's sleep pattern, which further decreases the amount of vital energy available to them throughout the course of the day.

Ultimately, the real secret to preserving your energy includes hydration, nutrition, exercise, stress management, and proper amounts of sleep. But proper education explains that it is only the combination of the above ingredients that gives you a competitive, physical edge. While most golfers know the importance of staying physically fit, a study published in *The American Journal of Physiology* states that nutrition may be even more important than exercise, and we all know the importance of exercise.

One of the biggest mistakes many golfers make is to load up on empty carbohydrates. According to a study published in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, researchers at the University of Sydney discovered that a single serving of refined carbohydrates given to a lean, healthy young adult is enough to triple



their inflammatory response to the surge in blood glucose. This finding reinforces the long-held notion that high glycemic/refined carbohydrates (such as table sugar and white bread) have virtually no nutritional value. In fact, eating such foods can be dangerous to a person's health in the short-term, and can increase aging and produce disease when consumed over time.



Snack carts and clubhouse restaurants generally serve extremely unhealthy, pro-inflammatory “filler” foods that provide virtually no nutrient value. The menu at your favorite golf course probably includes entrees such as sandwiches, baked goods, cookies, crackers, donuts, French fries, hot dogs, ice cream, pizza, potato chips, waffles and other processed foods that contain vegetable oil, refined flour, sugar and many other health dangers. These types of foods are actually the enemies of

sustained energy, recovery and performance. In fact, according to Dr. Nicholas Perricone, author of *The Perricone Promise*, these foods can accelerate the aging process, and should be avoided at all costs.

Most people tend to consume too many “filler foods,” but golfers and other athletes actually comprise one of the fastest growing segments of the malnourished population. Unfortunately, competitive athletes tend to believe that exercise can override dietary deficiencies, and that the consumption of designer sports supplements replaces the need to eat high quality foods or take foundational supplements. Nothing could be further from the truth! Long-term nutrient deficiency is literally a form of silent starvation, and it results in sub-optimal performance and shortened athletic careers.

So, regardless of your handicap, golfers at every level should beware of the foods and drinks offered on the snack cart and in the clubhouse. Filling up with soda, sports drinks or candy bars disguised as energy bars can have a negative impact on your levels of energy and concentration. A pit crew would not think about filling up a race car with cheap gas, so why would anyone fill up their body with anything less than the healthiest of fuels? Instead of grabbing a beverage that contains sugar, alcohol or high levels of caffeine, opt for the very best sports drink out there: H<sub>2</sub>O.



As you surely know, tournament players have the option of carrying 14 clubs in their golf bag during a competition. And no golfer in his right mind would carry any less. Likewise, science has identified more than 50 essential nutrients that the human body must have in order to function at its peak. Since the body cannot produce a single one of these nutrients, each one must be obtained by food sources, dietary supplements and exposure to sunshine. You could not play well in a tournament without carrying your putter, but a deficiency in just one of these essential nutrients is like doing just that.



The most powerful way to accomplish peak performance is by using a system called The Four Corners of Superfood Nutrition. This is an extremely healthy approach that combines the most nutrient dense superfoods with all of the best foundational supplements.

Listening to your swing coach is extremely important, but you can only perform well when you get everything your body needs. The Four Corners of Superfood Nutrition is an integrated approach that combines four of the most clinically validated areas of nutrition science including

eating fewer calories while increasing nutrient density, minimizing sugar intake and high glycemic response foods, increasing antioxidants and getting the right fats.

## The Four Corners of Superfood Nutrition

### 1. Eat Nutrient-Dense Foods

Eat the most nutritious, nutrient-dense foods available while minimizing sugar, processed food and junk food. This will naturally reduce your overall calorie intake and increase the nutrient value ingested by your body. Include a daily high-quality multi-vitamin/mineral/nutrient/antioxidant formulation for optimal benefits. There are more than 2,000 research studies that suggest this approach alone extends life, delays disease, optimizes weight, improves mental clarity and enhances performance.



### 2. Maintain Healthy Blood Sugar Levels



Manage your glycemic response by minimizing sweet drinks, grains, breads, starches, and sugar, which all quickly elevate blood sugar levels and set up the dreaded back-nine energy crash. This will also minimize excessive body fat, fatigue and blood sugar imbalances. Maintaining healthy blood sugar levels and avoiding the blood sugar and insulin roller coaster is the key to sustained energy.

### 3. Consume High-Antioxidant Superfoods & Supplements

Think of oxidation as rust on metal, or the browning of a sliced apple, as aging itself. Antioxidants are anti-rust, anti-browning and anti-aging nutrients. Be sure to eat your greens, brightly colored vegetables and berries. These types of foods contain high levels of many types of antioxidants that protect every cell in the body and promote excellent health, vitality, recovery and longevity.



#### 4. Eat and Supplement with Superfats



Essential fats such as omega-3 fatty acids found in cold-water fatty fish, grass-fed beef, eggs, certain nuts, chia seeds and flax seeds are absolutely necessary nutrients for the health of your immune system, heart, skin, endocrine glands, brain function, nervous system and energy levels. EPA/DHA (eicosapentaenoic acid/docosahexaenoic acid) are the omega-3 fatty acids derived from fish and fish oils. The best source for EPA and DHA is cold-water, oily fish including salmon, herring, mackerel, anchovies and sardines (avoid farm-raised fish). Other superfats include almonds, coconut, macadamia nuts, olives and avocados.

You have to combine many different elements in order to produce a great golf swing. Likewise, a clinical research study published in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* suggests that the combination of all Four Corners of Superfood Nutrition magnifies the positive results of each corner individually, causing them to work better together.

So, add the power of Superfood Nutrition to your game. Instead of relying on the nutritional myth of “carbo-loading,” start the day with a complete and balanced superfood smoothie breakfast. A high-protein superfood smoothie is highly digestible, plant-based liquid nutrition with balanced amounts of protein, carbohydrates, fiber, fats and the full spectrum of essential nutrients. This includes vitamins, minerals and antioxidants that, because it is in liquid form, are efficiently delivered into the bloodstream to boost performance, energy, mental clarity and recovery. You can build a basic “super smoothie” by starting with your favorite smoothie recipe using mostly water (with or without ice) in a blender, but cutting the amount of high sugar fruits and juices by 75 percent. Now, add 25-35 grams of a high-quality protein powder along with 5-10 grams of a plant-based soluble fiber powder.

The result will be a lower-calorie, low-glycemic, highly nutritious meal that will stabilize your blood sugar levels and help control your appetite. There are plenty of other high impact healthy ingredients you can add later, but this is a super healthy start.



You wouldn't play a round of golf without a game plan, would you? The next time you tee off, add proper nutrition to your pre-shot routine. That way, you won't leave yourself open to the unhealthy foods available on the snack carts or in the clubhouse. Pack healthy snacks such as nuts, seeds, hard-boiled eggs and fruit, and bring your favorite low-sugar protein energy bar or protein powder with you to the course. That way, you can maintain proper momentum by avoiding junk fuel, and eating quality foods including “superfats” (almonds, coconut, chia seed or macadamia nuts) during a round.

It is a well-known fact in athletics that digestion competes with performance, so consider having a superfood smoothie instead of a burger or deli sandwich

at the turn. Many brands of bottled water have been found to be unsafe, so you may also want to bring your favorite brands of bottled water with you. That way, you won't have to rely on whatever they serve at the course.

Golfers, you are now armed with the ability to gain that intangible, competitive edge both on and off the course by taking the Superfood Nutrition approach to health. Not only will your handicap decrease, but even more importantly, your quality of life will skyrocket.

This article was originally published in Golf Fitness Magazine. KC Craichy is one of the world's foremost experts in the area of performance nutrition and is the best-selling author of *SuperHealth - 7 Golden Keys to Unlock Lifelong Vitality* and *The Super Health Diet: The Last Diet You Will Ever Need!*. He is also the founder and CEO of Living Fuel, the leader in Superfood Nutrition. To learn more, visit [www.livingfuel.com](http://www.livingfuel.com).



  
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