

# PRE-WORKOUT SUPPLEMENTS



Pre-workout supplements are designed to give a sudden energy boost to compliment gym workouts. The energy boost is derived from their caffeine content - similar to energy drinks and coffee but without the feeling of nausea during exercise. Caffeine is a stimulant proven to temporarily improve physical abilities simply by making you feel more energetic. It does this by expanding the blood vessels of the working muscles which enables more fuel to be utilised and faster removal of waste. It also increases heart rate allowing more blood to be circulated through the body and more oxygen to the brain for improved concentration and focus.

Although this sounds great, having the heart and muscles working harder than normal can increase the risk of heart complications (like stroke). This occurs when the heart cannot keep up with the extra demand of pumping more blood and having to pump it faster. A particular danger in high intensity running where heart rate is already increased dramatically. Stimulating the heart to pump faster than physically capable can cause major complications.

**Pre workout supplements are designed to give you a sudden energy boost to fuel your workout. But are they a good idea?**

The other components in pre-workout supplements generally produce a placebo effect; where the psychological belief in the product will improve physical ability rather the ingredients themselves. BCAAs in particular are often added to pre-workouts for recovery but have very little scientific backing. That tingly feeling you get acts as a signal to suggest the pre-workout has kicked in; the ingredient itself does not affect performance.

Pre-workout can be a great tool for getting excited for the gym but should be used with caution; take the appropriate serving size for your body size and remember that most pre-workouts are not FDA approved (Food & Drug Administration). FDA approval means that the benefits of the product outweigh the risks.

Be careful and don't overdo it – all pre-workout supplements should be taken at your own risk.

