

Mindful Nutrition: Nine Nutrition Strategies for Peak Cognitive Performance

Syllabus

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Course Duration: About 9 weeks, or more if needed

Class Location: Online

Office Hours: By request

Course Description:

Mindful Nutrition is a comprehensive course designed to help individuals optimize their cognitive and physical performance through evidence-based nutrition strategies. This course covers hydration, energy management, food selection, portion control, and the impact of dietary habits on brain function. Through interactive lessons, journaling exercises, and practical applications, students will develop sustainable nutrition habits to fuel their minds and bodies effectively.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Recognize nutrient requirements throughout the lifespan and their role in cognitive health and performance.
2. Evaluate the safety, legality, efficacy, and quality of dietary supplements relevant to cognitive function and athletic performance.
3. Develop personalized nutrition care plans to optimize energy, hydration, and cognitive function in various performance settings.
4. Identify and mitigate the impact of cognitive inhibitors such as poor dietary habits and environmental stressors.
5. Establish sustainable nutrition habits that promote lifelong brain health.

Course Outline:

Lesson 1: Hydrate for Mental Clarity

- Importance of hydration for cognitive function
- Adjusting hydration for activity and environment
- Identifying hydrating vs. non-hydrating beverages
- Activity: Calculate hydration needs
- Journal Prompt: Reflect on your first food memory

Lesson 2: Establish Eating Routines

- Maintaining steady blood sugar levels
- Recognizing low energy availability
- Planning for consistent meal timing
- Activity: List meals and snacks on average days
- Journal Prompt: Challenges and barriers to eating enough daily

Lesson 3: Enjoy Every Food Group

- Brainpower Plate: Produce, starches, and protein
- Identifying favorite foods within each group
- Activity: Complete the Brainpower Plate chart
- Journal Prompt: Applying the plate formula when eating out

Lesson 4: Boost with Brain Foods

- Nutrient-dense foods for brain health (Omega-3s, antioxidants, vitamins)
- Avoiding marketing scams
- Activity: Identify nutrient-dense food swaps
- Journal Prompt: Reflect on your food environment and support system

Lesson 5: Pick Portions for Energy

- Understanding energy demands and portion sizes
- Adjusting intake based on energy needs
- Activity: Assign energy levels to daily activities
- Journal Prompt: Reflecting on times of over- or under-eating

Lesson 6: Eat Well on CPE Day

- Preparing for cognitive performance events (CPEs)
- Test day meal planning and backup strategies
- Activity: Write a test day routine
- Journal Prompt: Reflecting on past high-performance events

Lesson 7: Limit Inhibitors of Brain Function

- Identifying common inhibitors (sugar, alcohol, fats, metals)
- Strategies to reduce their impact
- Activity: Brainstorm habit replacements
- Journal Prompt: Challenges in unsupportive environments

Lesson 8: Select Safe Supplements

- Understanding dietary supplements and their regulation
- Recognizing third-party certifications and necessary lab tests
- Activity: Research and discuss supplement ads
- Journal Prompt: Evaluating supplement advertisements

Lesson 9: Find Flexibility and Focus

- Developing a balanced, flexible nutrition approach
- Overcoming perfectionism and diet culture
- Activity: Daily affirmations and self-talk improvement
- Journal Prompt: Reflecting on plans that didn't go as expected

Course Materials:

1. Lecture slides and handouts
2. Recommended readings provided in each module

Additional Resources:

- [The Lab](#) (Free): Self-guided experiments for cognitive nutrition improvements.
- [Membership](#) (\$): Personalized coaching and assessments.