

“WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR PROTEIN?”

It’s the question all vegans get asked, but should we worry about protein? James Staring takes a look

If you’re not vegan, a high protein meal might conjure images of steak, eggs or chicken, but for vegans, protein needs to be found from non-animal sources. Let’s first look at why protein is important in the first place.

Protein contains amino acids, the building blocks that are necessary for muscle growth and maintenance. Additionally, protein is also an important contributor to a healthy metabolism, efficient nutrient transport throughout the body, as well as to maintaining a healthy immune system.

Why is protein important when exercising?

When you exercise, you create little tears in the targeted muscles you’re working on. Following exercise, your body gets to work on repairing and rebuilding those targeted muscles to come back stronger. This is nothing to be concerned about – it’s all part of your body’s natural recovery process.

After exercise, your body will start the recovery process where it heals and rebuilds the little tears in the muscle tissue. As proteins are the building blocks for muscle tissue, it plays an important role in this process. By consuming protein on a regular basis, both before and after workouts, the next time you exercise, those targeted muscles will rebuild stronger and more capable of adapting to the demands that you’re placing on them.

Myth busting

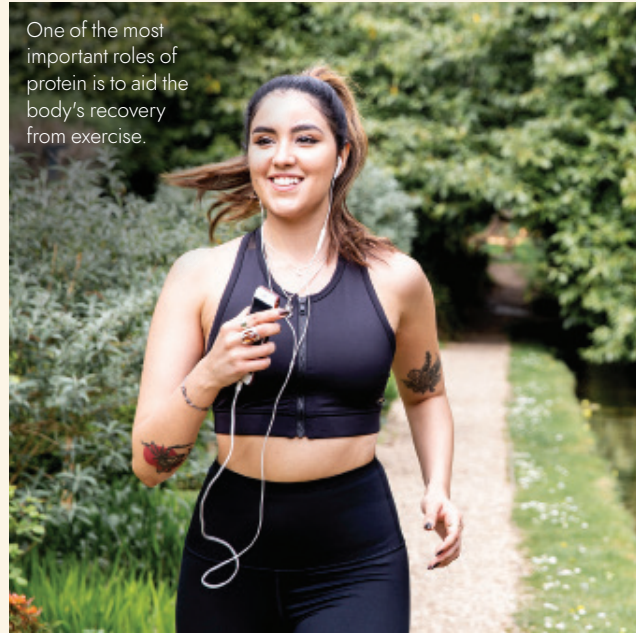
There’s a common misconception that plant-based diets lack protein. However, there are numerous plant-based,



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One of the most important roles of protein is to aid the body’s recovery from exercise.



protein-rich sources that provide a sufficient alternative, including soy, tempeh, edamame, quinoa, barley, plus a wide range of seeds.

The key to consuming enough protein on a plant-based diet is to diversify and not rely on one source. By ensuring you get a healthy combination of soy options as well as varied legumes, grains and seeds on a weekly basis, you will tick those protein boxes and get everything that you need.

Supplementing with plant-based protein powders

Protein powders are an excellent way to supplement your protein intake. While you always want to try and get your protein through more natural sources, protein powders are effective at topping things up to provide you with a consistent intake.

Sometimes plant-based protein shakes can have a grittier texture than whey protein powder. This is because plant-based protein powder contains more fibre from actual plants. This can make the texture grittier. If you prefer a smooth texture to your plant-based protein shake, try adding the liquid before the powder, before blending fully. ♥

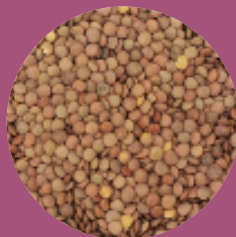
PLANT-BASED PROTEIN SOURCES



Seitan: this is made from wheat gluten, has a very similar texture to cooked meat and can be adapted to a variety of recipes.



Tofu, Tempeh and Edamame: these soy-based options all contain between 12-20g of protein per 100g serving.



Lentils: at 18g of protein per 100g serving, lentils of any sort are an excellent source of protein.



Quinoa: this grain contains 8g of protein per 250g serving. It’s also a great source of fibre and iron, and makes an excellent alternative to rice.



Green Peas: at 9g per 160g cooked cup serving, these little beauties are also loaded with fibre.