

**UNCERTAIN ABOUT WHICH ONE TO CHOOSE?** YOUR GUIDE TO BUYING THE BEST MILK FOR YOUR PHYSIQUE.

# Milks for your consideration

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**REMEMBER THE DAYS WHEN MILK**

was just moo juice and a nice little sidekick to Oreos? In a world of allergies, intolerances and ever-expanding variety, milk now means a lot more than just the stuff from cows. Options are plentiful, but while some can really help you meet your body-shaping goals, others may not. Here, your guide to help pinpoint the best carton for your needs.

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PERCENT DECLINE IN CALORIES FROM MILK THAT AMERICANS CONSUMED, WHILE ADDING 135 PERCENT MORE CALORIES FROM SODA POP AND FRUIT DRINKS SINCE 1977.

**COW'S MILK: Best for muscle building**

Easily overlooked as old nutrition news, cow's milk has proven to be one of the most effective beverages for building and maintaining lean muscle tissue. Canadian researchers at McMaster University found that women who drank milk after their workouts gained more muscle and lost more fat compared to those who drank sugary energy drinks. The protein in cow's milk is highly effective in repairing muscle tissue damage. The key seems to be the unique combination of whey protein, which acts

rapidly on the muscles to launch the recovery process, and casein, a slower-acting protein that supports sustained recovery. Combined, the two types of proteins help your body repair and regenerate hard-working muscles long after you finish even your toughest workout. While milk does naturally contain 12 grams of sugar per cup, the glycemic response (impact on your blood sugar) is actually quite low. That, combined with the satiating protein content, makes cow's milk a useful tool for fat loss, too.

**Fit Tip:**

Try low-fat chocolate milk when recovering from an intense series of workouts, or if training twice daily. The extra carbs help replenish the depleted fuel (glycogen) stores in your muscles.

**Lactose-free milk:**

**Soothing for the stomach**

Think of lactose-free milk as cow's milk, but without the side effect of belly bloat. If you're lactose intolerant, that means your body can't break down lactose, the main sugar found in cow's milk. The end result is that the undigested sugar travels to your large intestine, and is happily feasted on by bacteria, producing gas as a by-product. The addition of lactase (the enzyme responsible for the breakdown of lactose) to lactose-free milk allows for all the benefits of milk, but without the discomfort. While lactase is naturally found in your small intestine, its effectiveness tends to decline with age, especially for those of non-Caucasian descent.

**TASTE BONUS:** SINCE LACTOSE IS A BITTER-TASTING SUGAR, LACTOSE-FREE MILK PRODUCTS TASTE NATURALLY SWEETER. SLIMMEST OPTIONS INCLUDE LACTOSE-FREE SKIM MILK OR 1%.

**SOY MILK: Your muscle-building alternative**

If allergies or simply an aversion to animal products means that cow's or animal milk isn't your thing, then a soy beverage (a.k.a. soy milk) is a good alternative. While soy protein may not be as effective for muscle recovery as milk protein, the comparable seven grams of protein per cup is still a

significant amount, so consider adding soy into your rotation. But keep an eye on the sugar content, as the amount can vary widely by brand and flavor. Some brands pack up to 160 calories per cup, due to the added sugars. Bonus: studies also indicate that drinking soy milk may support breast health.

**FIT FACT:** SOY MILK IS DERIVED FROM THE LIQUID RESIDUE OF COOKED SOYBEANS, MAKING SOY MILK A COMPLETE PROTEIN SOURCE.



**Fit Tip:**

Their comparable taste makes it easy to swap cow's milk for soy milk in any recipe. Try it with your high-fiber cereal for breakfast or in protein shakes.

*Options are plentiful, but while some milks can really help you meet your body-shaping goals, others may not.*

**Goat's milk: For the cow's milk intolerant**

Some people find that cow's milk simply doesn't agree with them. While research in this area is not conclusive, those who believe that drinking cow's milk is causing them undesirable side effects, such as congestion or eczema, sometimes find that switching to the milk of a different animal can be helpful. While it can be a little harder to find (and more costly) than cow's, goat's milk has a virtually identical nutritional profile, including its protein content. So you can still obtain the same muscle-building benefits without the discomfort.

**RICE OR ALMOND MILK: Low-protein choices**

While cow's milk and soy milk retain the lion's share of the milk market, most of the growth in recent years has come from rice and almond beverages. Popular among alternative health enthusiasts, these non-dairy drinks are an option for those with food allergies or

intolerances to milk or soy. The catch is the lack of protein: most provide just one gram of protein per serving, and do not contain all the essential amino acids your muscles need for growth and repair. Since protein also plays an important role in our feeling of satiety, rice and almond beverages

may leave you feeling hungry sooner. Many are also higher in calories than one-percent or even non-fat cow's milk, so be sure to check the food labels. Some unsweetened varieties of rice or almond milk can run as low as 40 calories per cup, which makes them a good choice for fat loss.

**Fit Tip:**

Bump up the protein content of a rice or almond milk-based breakfast by adding almonds, walnuts, chia or hemp seeds to your cereal, or egg whites to your oatmeal. For recovery shakes, try adding whey, rice or soy protein powders, depending on your tolerance or preference.

**Fit Tip:**

Blend a few cherries with almond milk for a sweet preworkout shake.



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