

# CORE TRAINING: Prebiotics, Probiotics and Fiber for the Win!

By: Leslie Bonci, MPH, RD, CSSD, LDN



*Sure, sculpted abs look great, but you'll need to look beyond your physique to stay your peak. Gut health happens from the inside out. A strong core may optimize athletic performance, but a healthy gut supports better performance from the inside out.*

To be a member of the good gut club, you need to do some training from the inside out. That means putting just as much effort into what you eat as you do your abs and crunches. Doing so supports your microbiome – a collection of microorganisms that live in our gastrointestinal tract.

These “good bacteria”, along with millions of other microorganisms that live in our gut have a big job to do, including:

- Supporting the digestion of carbohydrate to provide energy for the cells and exercising muscles
- Supporting the manufacturing of vitamins
- Aiding in defending the body from bad bacteria
- Supporting a healthy immune system

So, how do you nourish your microbiome to have it flourish? You go for the **triple play!** That means incorporating prebiotics, probiotics and fiber into your daily eating plan.

## WHAT ARE PREBIOTICS?

Types of carbohydrates that act as a source of fuel for beneficial or good gut microbes

### POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Feel fuller longer
- Improve calcium absorption
- Help with bowel function
- Aid in blood glucose regulation
- Help maintain healthy blood cholesterol and triglyceride (fats) levels

## WHAT ARE PROBIOTICS?

Good or friendly bacteria that are found naturally in our gut and in some foods

### POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Support the immune system
- Support digestion by breaking down food
- Help decrease the presence of bad bacteria
- Help manufacturer vitamins and minerals that help us absorb nutrients
- Aid in calcium absorption

## WHAT IS FIBER?

Non-digestible carbohydrate derived from plants that can be used by the gut as a source of fuel

### POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Support healthy bowel habits
- Aid in blood glucose regulation
- May improve cholesterol
- Feel full longer
- Support the immune system

Most Americans fall far short of our daily fiber needs. **How much fiber do YOU need?**

**Children/Adolescents up to age 18:** Add your current age plus 5 for total grams a day

Women age 18-50	25 grams a day	Men age 18-50	38 grams a day
Women > age 50	21 grams a day	Men > age 50	30 grams a day

**BOTTOM LINE** To treat your gut well, you need to consistently prepare, repair and pair foods that deliver on good gut health. If your gut doesn't feel well, you won't feel well. To give your microbiome a healthy home, be sure to provide it with the nutrients it needs. The variety and diversity in your bowl or plate may be the key to helping you look and feel great.



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# Shopping for Prebiotics, Probiotics and Fiber

There are plenty of foods that naturally contain prebiotics, foods where live and active cultures are added, and/or they are fermented to allow them to be probiotics. Fiber is in abundance in fruits (skin and pulp), vegetables, beans, nuts, seeds, and certain whole grains. The following chart gives a sample of what foods are considered sources of prebiotics, probiotics, fiber and those that are fermented.



While fermented, foods like Kombucha (a fermented tea) and kimchi (fermented cabbage) may not contain live active cultures, so their probiotic properties are not as concentrated as yogurt, which contains live and active cultures naturally. Kombucha may be popular, but yogurt and kefir a more reliable source of probiotics. Remember that prebiotics can be added to foods during processing too. It is typically identified in the ingredient list as inulin, which is derived from chicory root fiber.

## SHOPPING LIST FOR GUT HEALTH

FOODS	PREBIOTICS	PROBIOTICS	FIBER	FERMENTED
Fruits			✓	
Vegetables			✓	
Legumes	✓		✓	✓
Some Sauerkraut		✓	✓	✓
Kimchi		✓	✓	
Onions	✓		✓	
Garlic	✓		✓	
Bananas	✓		✓	
Chicory root	✓		✓	
Yogurt with live active cultures		✓		✓
Kefir		✓		✓
Kombucha			✓	
Whole grains	✓			

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### WAYS TO PREP YOUR PLATE FOR GUT HEALTH:

- Yogurt parfait made with fruit and whole grains
- Smoothie made with milk and frozen fruit
- Greek yogurt dip made with veggies and bean chips
- Lentil salad with labneh (a Middle Eastern savory yogurt)

## WHAT ABOUT SUPPLEMENTS?

Think of prebiotics and probiotics as best friends. Prebiotics provide a fuel source for probiotics, helping them thrive in your gut. That way, your microbiome has a healthy home. When it comes to probiotic supplements, it is important to remember that not all strains perform equally. More is not always better, and it's important to look for the strain identification (ID) on the label. The strain ID will be displayed as a unique letter and number code following the genus and species name (e.g. *Lactobacillus acidophilus* La-14.) Although you can buy fiber supplements, it is tastier and more economical to eat fruit, vegetables, beans, nuts, seeds and higher fiber grains. This will ensure that you also get the advantage of fuel in your diet (aka calories) for an active lifestyle.



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