

THE HEALTHY NUTS

A recent study proves that one of America's oldest snack foods is even healthier than we thought.

FORGET SHAKES, HERBS, AND HIGH-TECH ENERGY BOOSTERS: THE SINGLE best supplement for a guy's diet is a handful of nuts. Besides being known for helping fuel athletes through long days of climbing and skiing, nuts were shown in a recent Spanish study to help fight obesity and high blood pressure in those who added the snack to a high-veggie, high-fruit diet. But don't just reach for the peanut bowl: There's a science behind which nuts to eat and when to eat them. —JAMIE BECKMAN



▲ **ALMONDS** have the most calcium of any nut, a lot of vitamin E, and "heart-healthy" fat. They also keep the gastrointestinal tract in balance. "They're a more manly version of yogurt," says dietitian Julie Upton. We like the Blue Diamond brand, which has recipes at bluediamond.com.
When to grab a handful: Whenever. Almonds are considered to be one of the healthiest nuts.



◀ **WALNUTS** are very high in omega-3 alpha-linolenic acid, which helps stop inflammation in the body and prevents coronary heart disease.
When to grab a handful: With a steak dinner. "They've been shown to reduce the injury that a high-fat meal does on your arteries," says Dr. Robert Vogel, chief medical director at Pritikin Longevity Center & Spa.



▲ **MACADAMIA NUTS** have the most saturated fat of all nuts, but 80 percent of their fat content is monounsaturated, which has been shown to lower triglycerides and have beneficial effects on LDL and HDL cholesterol.
When to grab a handful: At breakfast. "They contain fiber, protein, and healthy fats, meaning they will help your breakfast stick with you for longer-lasting energy," says Upton.

▼ **PISTACHIOS** are particularly good for keeping your eyes healthy, thanks to significant amounts of the carotenoids lutein and zeaxanthin, which are stored in the retina and help maintain good vision.
When to grab a handful: Postworkout. Besides helping eyesight, pistachios are loaded with protein, which helps muscles recover. "An ounce has as much protein as an egg," says Upton.



◀ **PEANUTS** have ample amounts of protein and fiber — and that's about it. "They don't have cholesterol-lowering properties, and they're not high in vitamins," says Vogel.
When to grab a handful: Preworkout. "You're getting energy with little fat and fiber," says Upton. "Peanuts only have two grams of fiber and 14 grams of fat per serving."

Rules to Snack By

- **The recommended serving size for nuts is about a handful, roughly one ounce.** This is also all you need to get the energy-boosting and nutritional benefits.
- Although nuts are high in calories, they actually raise metabolism slightly with regular consumption. In one study, resting expenditure increased by 11 percent. **If you're counting calories, reach for pistachios if possible and avoid high-cal macadamias.**
- **To avoid sodium, stick to plain, raw, or shelled nuts.**