

Supplements: Are You Using Them for the Right Reasons?

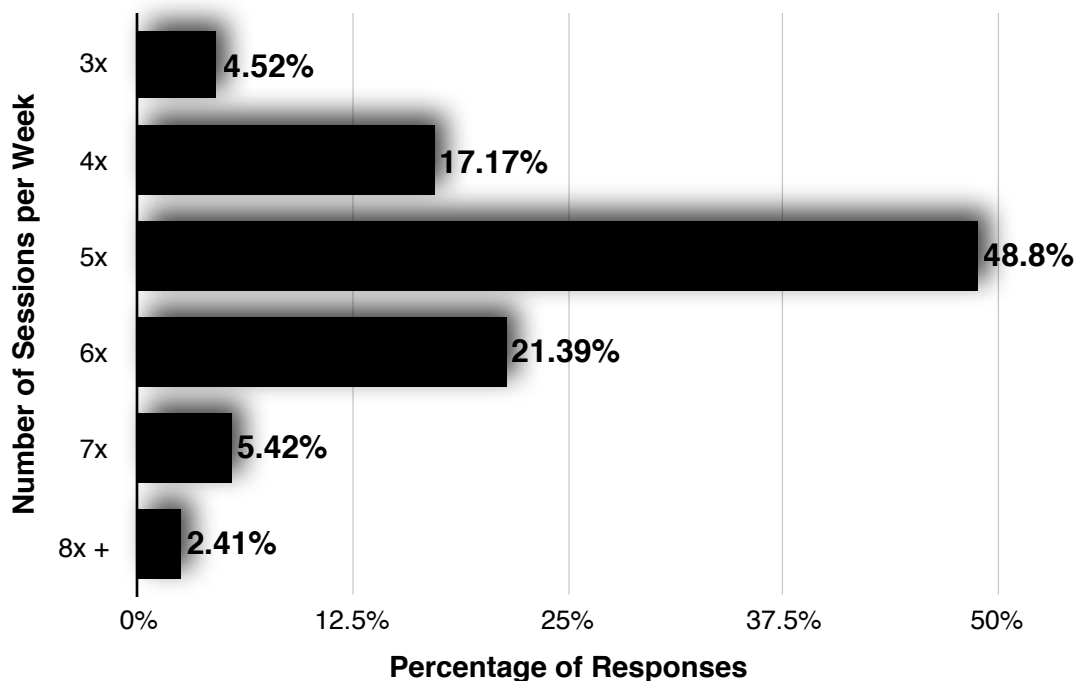
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The supplement industry is quickly growing “producing about \$32 billion in revenue for just nutritional supplements alone in 2012, it is projected to double that by topping \$60 billion in 2021 according to the Nutritional Business Journal.” (1) With that said, we recently conducted a survey based on the use of supplements by our athletes and followers.

The aim of this study was to determine when, why, and how athletes use supplements, and to assist us in guiding the direction for our next study. As you will see with the information we gathered, athletes use supplements for a wide array of reasons based on their training needs.

The overwhelming majority of our respondents train 5-7 sessions per week, with a handful that said they train multiple times per day throughout the week.

How Often Athletes Train



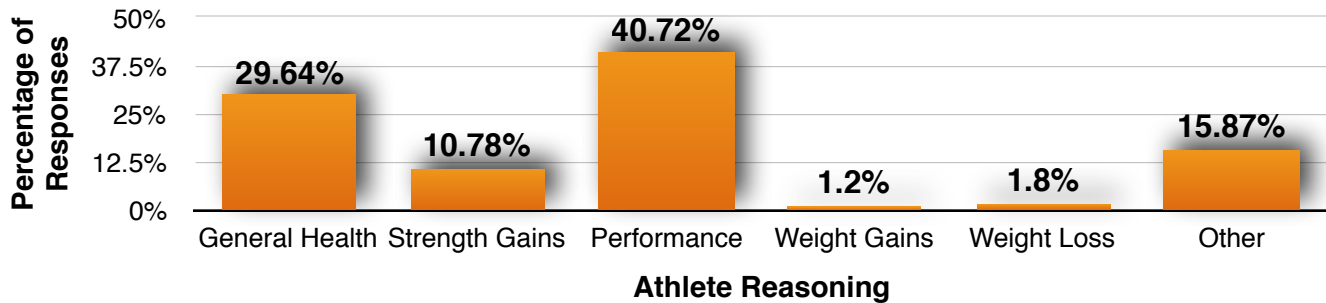
How often do you train per week?

“Morning and evening sessions multiple times a week”

“5 days a week, 4 are 2x a day”

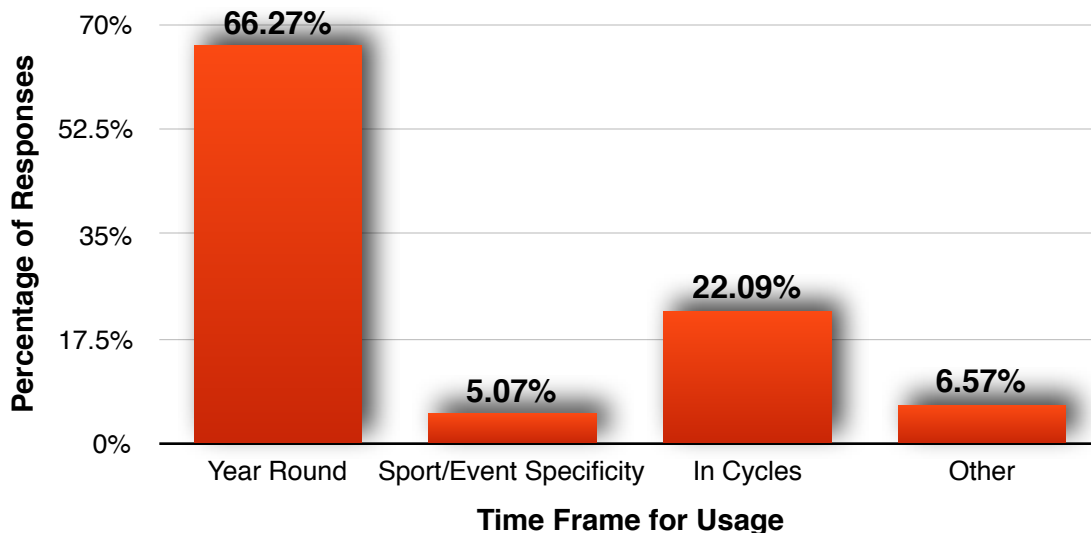
We asked this because the volume of training athletes undergo is often a determining factor in supplementation. In many instances, a typical 2,000 calorie diet does not provide a sufficient source of fuel for athletes training multiple times per week. Additionally, the ability to eat multiple meals throughout the day or larger portion sizes is not always realistic for tactical and mountain athletes on the go.

Why Athletes Use Supplements



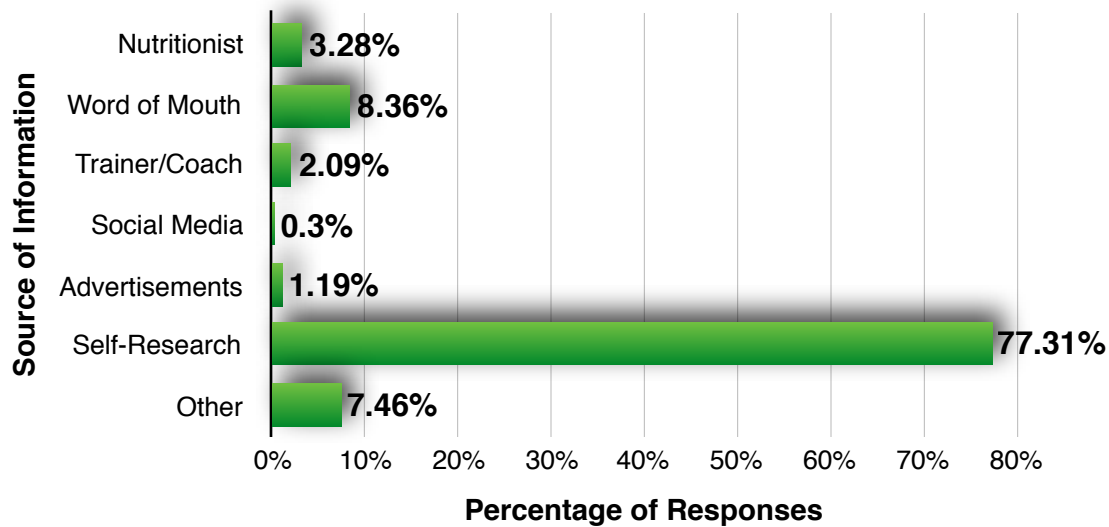
The reasoning for the use of supplements varied across the spectrum, but the overwhelming majority use them for general health, likely in order to maintain diet standards, or to improve performance. Another aspect of this is when during their training do athletes choose to incorporate supplements into their diet. Surprisingly enough, many athletes insist on taking supplements year round, while others take them based on their current training cycle.

When Athletes Use Supplements



Quite possibly the most interesting information gained from this is the supplements that athletes choose. We reserved that for the purpose of our own study in selecting the supplements we will likely use in the study, but how athletes determine this draws into question the necessity for supplementation.

How Athletes Choose Supplements



As you can see many athletes suggest that they select their supplements based on self-research. However, with the supplements selected and typical responses we received throughout the survey, many athletes are potentially taking supplements for the wrong reasons. Examples of these responses include:

Do you use a recovery/post-workout supplement?

"Protein powder (various) whatever is good quality but on sale at the time."

Do you use a performance/event supplement?

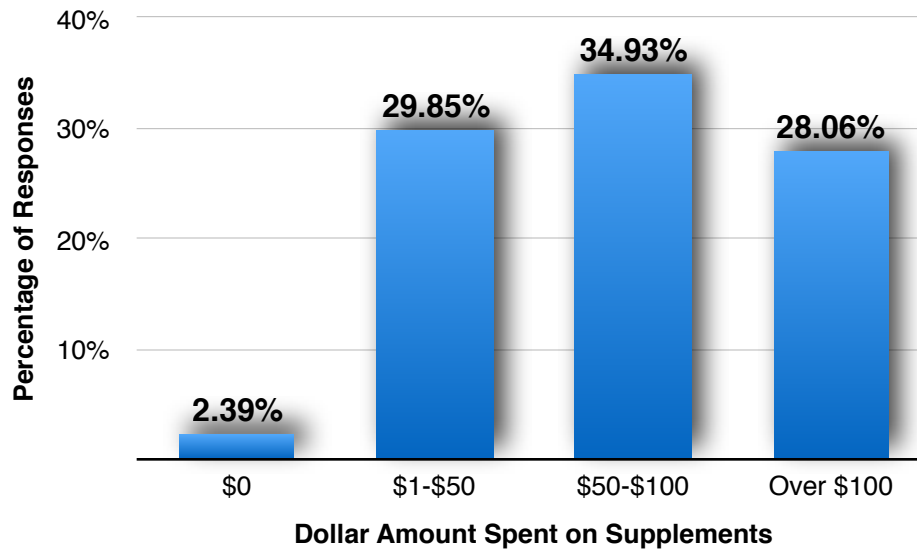
"...I rotate between all natural highest rated companies monthly"

Do you use a pre-workout supplement?

"I have been using [Pre-Workout], I don't think it works very well but its ok for high intensity workouts."

Lastly, this leads us to our final question, *"How much money do you spend on supplements per year?"* The results were rather average across the board as far as which category athletes fell under. However, the biggest question left unanswered is how many athletes received supplements from sponsors, or have them provided by a training staff.

Monthly Amount Spent on Supplements



In closing, supplements can assist athletes in achieving their performance goals, maintain proper levels of macro- and micronutrient intake, and ensure recovery from training sessions. While the use of many supplements on the market is subjective, it is important to research based on the contents of the supplements, and not rely solely on reviews or the statements and recommendations of others. Simply understanding “why” and not just “how” will allow athletes to properly inform themselves, and incorporate supplements more effectively.

References

(1) Lariviere, D. (18 Apr 2013). Nutritional supplements flexing muscles as growth industry. Forbes SportsMoney. Retrieved from <http://www.forbes.com/sites/davidlariviere/2013/04/18/nutritional-supplements-flexing-their-muscles-as-growth-industry/>