

Guide To Pre-Workout Supplements

As you gear up for each workout that's set to come your way, you want to be doing everything you can to foster a peak performance. This includes making sure that your pre-workout meal before exercise is optimized, making sure that you are doing a brief warm-up before you hit the weights to get the blood pumping to the muscles, and ensuring that you are doing something to get into the fierce and focused mental state that will allow you to hit a new PR.

In addition to all this, it's also worthwhile to consider some of the supplements out there designed to **help you take your performance up to the next level**. With a wide range of pre-workout options, you can have your pick based on what it is you most hope to achieve.

Let's walk you through some of the basic need-to-know information about which pre workouts will help and which will only hinder your progress – **if not put you at risk for serious side effects**.

[Click Here](#) to see our Top 3 Choices For Pre-Workout Supplements.

The Most Commonly Seen Pre Workout Ingredients



The first thing you must know when it comes to pre workout products is that most will be 'stacked supplements'. What this means is that very rarely will you see a product that contains just one ingredient. Instead, it's a combination of ingredients, which will have a synergist effect, **giving you multiple benefits at once**.

By understanding what each unique ingredient does, you can better put together the whole picture and decide whether that supplement is a smart one for you to be using.

Here are the most common ingredients to know.

Beta Alanine

The first ingredient to note is beta-alanine, which is a non-essential amino acid that can help to boost the level of performance you show in the gym. It'll **help to enhance mental focus and concentration**, delay the onset of fatigue, help to improve your overall endurance level, and can also help you generate more power for any explosive movements you may be doing.

Potential Side Effects:

The most noticeable side effect of beta-alanine is a pins and needles feeling that generally occurs 15-20 minutes after ingesting it. This can also create a burning or itching sensation, **which some**

individuals may find rather uncomfortable. Taking around 800 mg will cause this sensation to occur for about 60-90 minutes, while taking dosages of 3 grams or more of this ingredient can cause severe sensations that are more significant. It's recommended not to consume more than 800-1200 mg of beta-alanine a day when first starting to assess your tolerance. Eating food with the supplement will also help to reduce this side effect, however can also lower the overall stimulant response that you achieve from it.

L-Arginine

L-Arginine on the other hand is another amino acid that is primarily used to help produce nitric oxide in the body. When this substance is present, it will have a vasodilation effect, which dilates the blood vessels and increases the rate of oxygen, blood, and nutrients flowing to the muscle cells.

This in turn does two things. First, it will help give you better muscle pumps, which indicates your muscles are filling with blood and second, it can delay the onset of fatigue as well.

You'll notice a decreased rate of lactic acid build-up when using this product, which can help you squeeze out a few more reps during those highly intense sets.

This ingredient may also help to boost your recovery rate, so you can get back into the gym again after that workout is completed.

Potential Side Effects:

L-Arginine is considered generally safe for most people however some may experience unwanted side effects such as abdominal pain, bloating, diarrhea, and low blood pressure if higher dosages are taken.

Caffeine

Most people have at some point or another consumed caffeine, **so you may have a pretty good idea what this one is all about.** A great energy boosting ingredient, caffeine can also help to increase the rate of fat oxidation taking place, speeding along fat burning results.

It may also have slight metabolic enhancing effects, meaning you'll burn more calories for a few hours after using it. If fat loss is a goal, caffeine can give you that extra edge you need when energy levels are low due to reduced food intake.

Another herbal ingredient that is very similar only stronger to caffeine you may also see used is called Guarana.

Potential Side Effects:

Because caffeine is a nervous system stimulant, it comes with a long list of potential side effects. These include increased feelings of anxiety and jitteriness, difficulty sleeping, increased heart

rate, increased blood pressure, and with ongoing use, it can also lead to central nervous system burnout. As it is an addictive substance, many people who use higher dosages daily will also become dependent on it and experience strong withdrawal headaches and fatigue if their dose is missed on any given day.

Yohimbe

[Yohimbe](#) is another product that is especially geared toward those who are aiming to burn fat. It can help to increase the rate of fat oxidation during periods of high blood flow to fat tissues (such as during exercise), so is typically taken best during the pre workout period.

Note however that high insulin levels (such as if you had a very carb-dense pre-workout meal) will blunt the effects of yohimbe, so this supplement is best taken either on an empty stomach or after a light pre-workout meal containing no more than 20-30 grams of carbs.

This ingredient may also boost your mood, which for anyone who's ever been on an intense diet before, **knows you can definitely use.**

Potential Side Effects:

Possible side effects you may see while using this supplement include increased blood pressure as well as increased heart rate, therefore anyone with pre-existing heart or blood pressure issues should take caution before using this ingredient.

In addition to this, some people will also experience increased feelings of nervousness or anxiety, irritability, insomnia, headaches, nausea, diarrhea, palpitations, increased sweating rate, dizziness, and skin flushing.

Due to the high number of possible side effects associated with this product, many people do choose to forgo any pre workout supplements containing it.

Vitamin B12

A natural vitamin that you will take in through your every day diet, vitamin B12 can significantly boost energy levels. Most people are not taking in concentrated enough dosages however through their daily diet, which is where supplementation comes in.

Vitamin B12 may also help to enhance the nervous system, which can mean you put forth more intense workouts each and every time you hit the gym. Finally, it also supports a healthy metabolic rate, **so is key for enhancing the fat burning response.**

Potential Side Effects:

Side effects with this ingredient are very rare and only occur during high dosages. Should they occur, they would include mild diarrhea, anxiety, insomnia, difficulty breathing, experiencing chest pain, itchy skin, heartburn, as well as possibly back pain.

Creatine

The next ingredient you may find in some pre workout products is creatine. Creatine is the precursor to the high energy compound ATP, which will provide energy for intense muscle contractions to take place.

When your natural creatine stores run out, ATP production will slow and the intensity of your workout will decline. By supplementing, you go in with fully saturated stores, you'll be able to push through each set, **doing more reps than you otherwise would.**

Potential Side Effects:

The most common side effect associated with creatine use is increased water retention, which may occur if one does a loading period. As most pre-workout supplements only contain smaller dosages of creatine (not the 20 gram loading dose prescribed), this should be a very small concern. Most people will tolerate the level of creatine used reliably well.

Taurine

If you're looking for a mental energy boost, taurine is your solution. **This amino acid will increase focus and concentration**, while also improving your overall energy levels.

It also has positive effects on protein absorption, so will ensure that your body is using the protein from that pre-workout meal to the best of its capabilities.

Potential Side Effects:

As taurine is a natural amino acid, few side effects will ever be seen from regular use. In very high dosages, some individuals may experience diarrhea along with increased stomach acid, **which could potentially lead to stomach ulcers.** If you use as instructed, you should never experience these negative side effects.

Citrulline Malate

Citrulline Malate has similar effects to that of L-Arginine as it actually supports Arginine production in the body. So if your supplement doesn't contain L-arginine but does contain Citrulline, take comfort in knowing you are getting virtually the same effects.

Potential Side Effects:

Most people tolerate this supplement fine with no side effects, however few people may experience mild stomach cramping upon use.

BCAAs

Branched chain amino acids are another important part of many pre-workout products. These are particular amino acids that move directly into the muscle cells where they can be used for energy boosting purposes as well as to help improve performance.

They will also help to prevent muscle tissue breakdown, which can then mean improved recovery during the post-workout period.

Potential Side Effects:

As these are naturally occurring amino acids, **no side effects should be seen with regular use.**

Niacin

Finally, niacin is also another common ingredient added to pre-workout products. It's a B vitamin that will help to transport enzymes that help to break down the foods you eat so that you can put them to use for energy production.

In addition to that, it also helps to support both your immune system as well as your nervous system function, both of which are key for optimal exercise performance.

Potential Side Effects:

In dosages of greater than 50 mg may cause some flushing, **which is a sensation of warmth due to the dilation of blood vessels.** This should pass within 30 minutes or so of onset.

So there you have a brief run-down of all the key ingredients found in most pre-workout products. They will usually have some combination of these, so it's up to you to assess which ones they contain and choose the ones that you feel most comfortable using.

A Note On Stimulant Versus Non-Stimulant Pre-Workout Supplements

One additional thing to note is that you can purchase both stimulant and non-stimulant pre-workout products. The difference here would be that the non-stimulant pre-workout products will not contain Guarana or caffeine, so will be less harsh for the central nervous system.

As many people do not react well to caffeine or are already taking in multiple cups of coffee per day and don't want to add any additional to their regime, **non-stimulant pre-workouts would be the best bet.**

These will keep side effect risks lower and can be used for a longer period of time without a break.

For those who are using stimulant based pre-workouts, taking a break for 1-2 weeks after every 8-12 weeks of continual use is a wise idea to ensure that your body doesn't build up a tolerance

to the caffeine (which would then mean you need to keep increasing your dose to get the same energy boosting effects), as well as to simply give your nervous system a break from the ongoing effects of caffeine.

Dangerous Pre-Workout Supplements: Steer Clear

Finally, no pre-workout guide would be complete without discussing some potentially dangerous ingredients to steer clear of.

Some ingredients take things a little too far and the **risks associated with them outweigh any potential benefits and should therefore be avoided.**

In some cases, particularly ingredients are outright banned due to their safety concerns, so getting them will be much more trying. There's no reason to ever put your health at risk using these supplements simply for the sake of an added boost to your workout and fat loss progress.

The primarily ingredients to be aware of include:

- **N,alpha-DEPEA** (found in OxyELITE Pro amongst other products) – has been linked to liver failures and possible death
- **Ephedrine** (found in a variety of older version fat burners and can also be called bitter orange) – has been linked to cases of heart attacks and death
- **1,3-dimethylamylamine (DMAA)** (found in products such as Jack3d and 1MR) – has been associated with increased risk of heart attacks

If you come across any products containing these three ingredients, steer clear. They are not proven to be safe and **you will be putting yourself directly at risk by using them.**

So there you have the main points to know about pre-workout products. By choosing carefully, you can find the best pre-workout supplement that will help you improve performance and achieve those long term goals you have set for yourself.

Our Top 3 Pre Workout Supplements



Our #1 Choice For Pre Workout – [Crazy Mass Cutting Stack](#)

Best Price: \$185 / one month supply



[Read My Full Review Here](#)

We all know that stacking supplements is the way to go when you want to get the best results. I often recommend a wide variety of stacks to visitors on my site, but usually its a big mix up of supplements from various companies. [Crazy Mass](#) changed all of that with their new Cutting Stack Formula.

Made up of 4 different supplements, this Cutting stack works great for guys looking to reduce stubborn belly fat, and pack on lean, hard muscle. The formula includes Paravar, Winsitrol, Clentrimix, and Testosterone Max, and they all work in conjunction to help increase energy, improve recovery, and help build muscle.

[Click here](#) to read my official review and learn more.

Our #2 Choice For Pre-Workout – [Nitrocut](#)



Best Price: \$124.99 / 3 month supply



[Read My Full Review Here](#)

Nitrocut is actually a supplement I have been using for quite sometime now, and I have been recommending it to all of my friends. It contains a potent blend of L-Arginine, Energy Boosters, and natural aphrodisiacs which all work together to give you a huge boost of energy for the gym, help to get you ripped, as well as increase your libido.

So why is [Nitrocut](#) our #2 supplement? Well, unlike many of the competitors out there such as Force Factor who just use L-Arginine, Nitrocut has taken it a step further by injecting Vitamin B6, B12, and other energy boosters. These vitamins are most commonly found in energy drinks, as well as a few other supplements.

Our #3 Choice For Pre-Workout – Force Factor VolcaNO



Best Price: \$69.99 / 1 month supply



[Read My Full Review Here](#)

[VolcaNO](#) is a pre-workout supplement designed by the guys over at Force Factor, and is essentially a follow-up to their original brands. The key to Volcano's superior formulation is a new generation of nitric oxide boosters that work much more effectively than a simple amino acid.

Instead of a simple L-Arginine blend, VolcaNO also includes a strength complex of ingredients including the muscle building power of high quality creatine.

The Primary Benefits of VolcaNO include:

- A Ripped and Toned Physique
- Increased Lean Muscle Mass
- Harder, Longer lasting pumps in the gym
- Soaring Energy Levels

The best part about **VolcaNO** is that it does not contain any harmful stimulants that can be found in many other pre-workout supplements. A lot of competing products use caffeine, [yohimbe](#) , and Niacin, so essentially they are selling you a very expensive energy drink/pill. Xtreme NO takes it to a new level by helping to get the most out of your workouts.

We recently had a chance to test out Force Factor VolcaNO, learn more [about it in our official review here](#).