Top 6 Sources of Omega-3s

Special Report

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Michael A. Roussell

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About The Author:

Mike Roussell is a consultant, author, freelance writer, and researcher. Mike received his bachelor of science in biochemistry graduating magna cum laude with high honors from Hobart and William Smith Colleges. From there he attended the University of Vermont Medical School before deciding to follow his passion of studying nutrition.

Currently, Mike is pursuing his doctorate in nutrition at Pennsylvania State University, studying the effects of diet and fatty acids on cardiovascular disease and emerging cardiovascular disease risk factors.

Mike's nutritional coaching is sought out by people from a variety of backgrounds ranging from collegiate athletes to business professionals to fitness enthusiasts.

Mike's writings can be seen in magazines such as Men's Health, Men's Fitness and on the web at Testosterone Nation and Bodybuilding.com. Mike also served as the nutritional consultant for the Men's Health Book of Power Training.

http://www.NakedNutritionNetwork.com – Massive FREE Fat Loss and Health Site. Articles, Podcasts, Videos, and More.

http://www.NakedNutritionNetwork.com/blog - Mike's Personal Blog

http://www.WarpSpeedFatLoss.com – Lose 10,15, or 20lbs in the next 28 days with the Complete Done-4-You Warp Speed Fat Loss Rapid Weight Loss Blueprint.

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Top 6 Sources of Omega-3 Fats

“Eat MORE Omega-3s”

That’s what everyone is telling you, right? Omega-3s will help you lose weight, reduce inflammation, reduce your risk of heart disease, improve your mood, reduce joint pain, improve your brain function, fight off aging and that’s just the beginning…

You might be taking a fish oil supplement or perhaps a couple flaxseed oil caps now and then but it is very important that you get in MORE omega-3s.

Most people need more omega-3s but may not know how to get it.

The Basics

First here are some basics on omega-3 fats. Omega-3 fats come in 2 ‘sizes’ long chain and short chain. The “money” fatty acids in fish oil are EPA/DHA; these are long chain omega-3 (n-3) fatty acids. Flaxseed oil contains the short chain n-3 fatty acid alpha-linolenic acid (ALA). These three fatty acids may seem similar because they are all omega-3 fatty acids but in fact they function very differently physiologically.

One cannot apply findings such as weight loss, triglyceride lowering, protection from sudden death, improvements in joint function seen with fish oil supplementation to flaxseed or ALA supplementation (or just increased intake). Many will argue (especially those that sell flaxseed oil and flaxseed oil supplements) that ALA can be converted to EPA and then DHA via the biochemical processes of elongation and desaturation.

Unfortunately science shows that this conversion is EXTREMELY poor, especially in men (estimated by some to be as low as 1-2%). The bad news is that the conversion gets even worse the older you get.

I commonly get emails from people saying that they don’t supplement with fish oil but instead supplement with flaxseed oil capsules. As you know from above exchanging fish oil for flax is not an equal trade. It is also very important to realize that these people are wasting a tremendous amount of money. When supplementing your diet with fats capsules are by far the most expensive way to go (because you have to pay for the capsules and the fatty acids). ALA is also readily oxidized (e.g. burned, turned into, etc) to energy. Studies have shown that up to 35% of ALA is immediately oxidized for energy - that’s expensive energy! Adding flaxseed oil and ALA to your diet is a wise choice just don’t use the capsules as it is NOT a very cost effective approach.

Now let’s look at 6 unique sources of omega-3 fats that you can add to your diet to improve your life.

Top 6 Sources of Omega-3 Fats

1. **Fish Oil/Fatty Fish** – This is probably the most popular source of the long chain omega-3s (EPA & DHA). Those of you that dislike fish will be happy to know that research has not found any difference in the effects of a fish oil supplement vs. eating fatty fish. A study published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition showed that whether subjects took fish oil capsules or ate fatty fish the results were the same. This 16 week study lead by researcher Dr. William Harris found that omega-3 fatty acid levels in the blood rose equally in both the fish and fish oil groups. This study reaffirms the notion that fish oil capsules as good of a way of getting your daily omega-3s as eating fatty fish.

Another study from the American Journal of Clincal Nutrition has shown that fish oil supplementation, when combined with exercise can aid in fat loss as well.

If you want to get it from actual fish then salmon, mackerel, and tuna (salmon has the most) are good choices or you can use a fish oil supplement.

2. **Algae** – That's right algae. While it is called fish oil – fish don't make the fatty acids EPA/DHA. Instead they get it from algae and concentrate it in their bodies for us to enjoy. For vegetarians and vegans getting EPA/DHA can be difficult since they don't eat fish. But there are algae based DHA supplements available. If you are a vegetarian or vegan then I HIGHLY recommend that you pick one of these supplements up and take it on a daily basis.

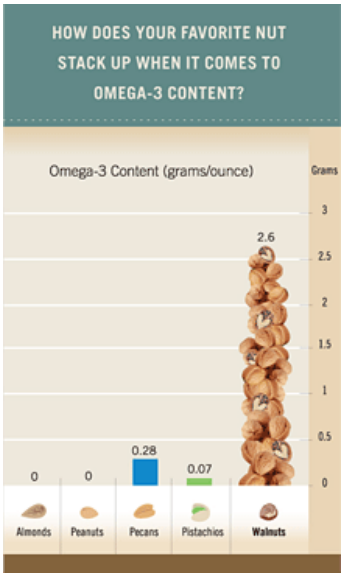
3. **Eggs** – While they may not seem like a likely candidate for containing omega-3s, eggs are an easy and convenient source of omega-3 fats. I'm sure you've seen them in the grocery store. Omega-3 Eggs are a little more expensive than regular eggs but definitely worth it. Omega-3 Eggs come in two different kinds – DHA eggs and ALA eggs. Both are good and the difference is just the fatty acid in the eggs.

4. Krill Oil - Krill oil may be new to you but look out as I think it will be making the news more as research on it continues to build. Krill oil is similar to regular fish oil in that it contains EPA/DHA but it is also slightly different as the molecular arrangement of the fats is tweaked to contain Astaxanthin (an antioxidant). This is pretty cool (in a science nerdy way). The addition of this antioxidant to the EPA/DHA party has caused some to claim Krill Oil's utter superiority to fish oil due it its 48x greater ORAC rating (a measure of antioxidant power). I'm not TOO excited about that as I don't take my fish oil for antioxidants – that's why I drink green tea and eat blueberries.

However, it seems as if the differing molecular structure of krill oil (compared to regular fish oil) may provide a benefit that fish oil cannot (for example krill oil has been shown to lower LDL-C, the bad cholesterol, while fish oil does not).

The glaring problem that I see with krill oil supplements is that there just isn't enough EPA/DHA in them. I do look forward to more research on Krill oil and as always - I'll keep you posted.

5. Walnuts - These may seem like an unlikely candidate for omega-3s but they have 2.6 grams of omega-3s per ounce! The omega-3 fats found in are the short ones (ALA) but as mentioned before they are full of health benefits.



6. Flax - Second to fish oil, flax/flaxseeds are probably the most well known source of omega-3 fatty acid. Like walnuts, flax contains the short chain omega-3 ALA. You can get your omega-3s via flax in two main ways - from the oil or from the seeds. Both are beneficial. Flaxseed oil contains more omega-3s on a per gram basis but if you use the flaxmeal (ground up flaxseed) then you will also get the benefit of added fiber.

Flaxseed oil does not have a pleasant taste so a great option is garlic-chili infused flaxseed oil. It is awesome on salads. You also do not want to heat or cook with flaxseed oil because it is very prone to oxidation.

This is going to conclude our look at the Top 6 Sources of Omega-3s. Make sure that you are getting both long and short chain omega-3s: EPA/DHA and ALA as they both have great health benefits.