
The 2012 London Paralympics saw worldwide coverage and spectator support for this growing area in sport especially at the elite level, in athletes with various impairments. Many previous records were broken and Paralympic athletes are well trained, managed and experienced in competition. There is growing interest in all areas of sports science and medicine for athletes to gain a competitive edge and to maximise the benefits of training and competition, with sports nutrition one of these key areas. Involvement in physical activity and sport is recognised for the many benefits for the person with impairments and undergoing rehabilitation (medical, psychological, social and physical improvements) from injury. There is an advancing body of knowledge in this area and increasingly research is being published in peer review journals.

Sports nutrition is changing and evolving constantly and adapting sports nutrition principles in impairments (amputee, visually impaired) may require minimal change while for other disciplines with impairment additional issues including medical conditions or constraints provide more challenge and care, with a highly individual focus. Sports nutrition practices are no longer just an adjunct to rehabilitation following injury or therapy.

This 230 page referenced text pulls together the information from experts in sports nutrition specific for athletes with the range of impairment performed at the Paralympic Games into one volume. Details of the unique challenges these athletes face and also for the sports nutritionist working individually with these athletes with a range of impairments (amputees, hearing and visually impaired, spinal cord injuries, intellectual impairment and injuries) and the various classifications within each category are all highlighted.

Broad is an experienced and skilled practitioner in Paralympics and in addition to contributing specific knowledge areas in the text has joined with internationally recognised experts in sports nutrition (Louise Burke, Greg Cox and Nanna Meyer) and specialists in the Paralympic field (researcher Vicki Goosey-Tolfery and UK Dietitian Jeanette Crosland) to produce a comprehensive volume. The key benefit of this text is the knowledge provided in sports nutrition when working with athletes with a range of impairments, and the holistic view and complexities in incorporating sports nutrition support into practice. Chapters on unique aspects of gastric emptying, chronic and complex medical issues, thermoregulation, as applied to the Paralympic athlete grow the understanding of the athletes impairment on performance, health and individual requirements.
Key is the applied knowledge of sports nutrition to the specific population group and the commentary boxes containing quotes from Paralympic athletes and experts adds personal perspectives to the content.

Use of various supplements is a growing area of interest in this sporting population and is well covered in Chapter 11 including the expense, adverse health consequence, contamination and doping concerns. Case studies provide valuable insight and examples for young practitioners working in the field particularly in the area of supplements. The information is not limited to the Paralympic athlete wishing to compete on the international stage but for those who wish to become active and those desiring to enhance their health and performance at any level.

A special chapter on Les Autres (the others) which includes the impairments not classified by the main categories – dwarfism, muscular dystrophy, poliomyelitis, severe arthritis, congenital limb deformities (club foot) and several other impairment types is insightful. The technical support provided in the chapter on body composition in challenging environments and with the range of impairments illustrates the advances in technology and practice. Table 12.2 on interpretation of skinfold and body mass results will assist many practitioners both able and impaired athletes.

This text is a valuable resource for experienced sports nutrition practitioners and key reading for new practitioners in the area and anyone with a general interest in the application of sports nutrition to challenging and rewarding environments and athletes. It is inspiring to read and to know the immense advances in knowledge and also to appreciate the work still to be done. Application of the information in this text will aid sports nutrition practitioners to raise the level of care and impact on performance for Paralympic athletes.

Topics covered include:

- Classification and body composition assessment
- Spinal cord injuries – including cooling strategies and hydration status
- Cerebral Palsy and Acquired brain injuries – physiology, terminology, energy expenditure and sweat rates
- Amputees – chronic medical conditions, injuries, body composition and nutrition priorities
- Vision and hearing impairment – various classification and practical aspects working with these athletes
- Intellectual Impairment – Down syndrome, Autism and Phenylketonuria and challenges to the ability to eat, chew and swallow
- Medical Issues, Drug and Nutrient Interactions – medical concerns such as pressure ulcers, urology, Hygiene, nutritional deficiencies, use and impact of medications such as antibiotics, anticoagulants, herbal and NSAIDs (nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs)

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