

Building Muscle? Protein Blends That Include Soy May Be Advantageous Over Single Proteins

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A novel finding that soy protein and whey protein increase the size of different types of muscle fibers suggests that a combination of these two proteins may be a more optimal approach for producing gains in strength in response to resistance exercise training than either protein alone.

The notion that a blend of proteins may be superior to a single protein is not a new concept. Reidy et al.¹ found that a blend consisting of whey, casein and soy protein extended muscle protein synthesis for a longer time than whey protein alone. This effect was attributed to the relative digestion rates of three proteins as whey and casein are considered to be fast and slow-digested proteins, respectively, whereas soy is thought to be intermediate between the two.

Follow-up research by Reidy et al.² showed that the increased muscle protein synthesis in response to the blend of proteins translated into greater increases in whole body lean mass.

Although no differences were seen at specific sites, the trend at each site was in the direction favoring the blend. Whey protein is considered the gold standard when it comes to building muscle in response to resistance exercise training. This reputation is borne out by acute studies (