

# 7 SUPERFOODS FOR VEGAN ATHLETES



# Introduction

Veganism is a concept that deals with abstaining from the consumption of animal-based products such as milk, eggs and meat. Vegans follow a strict vegetarian diet minus dairy products. Vegans are only allowed to consume vegetables, fruits, grains, legumes, nuts and seeds.

Now you might think that this does not sound like an ideal diet for athletes to follow, as most of them rely on animal protein like meats and eggs to develop a strong body. However, the world of veganism can offer several superfoods that are not only great to develop a strong body but also capable of increasing an athlete's vitality.

If you are a vegan athlete, then you have come to the right place, as we will look at 7 such superfoods that can be incorporated into your daily diet.

Let's begin!

# Chapter 1: Berries



Kick-starting the list of vegan superfoods are berries! Berries happen to be one of the most recommended foods for athletes and for good reason. Berries can offer the body several benefits that are highlighted as shown below:

## **Muscle recovery**

Berries are credited for increasing muscle recovery. This means that they help in reducing the time taken by your body to recover from muscle tears and soreness. According to an experiment conducted on athletes, where they were given blueberry smoothies

before their workout, they were able to recover better from muscle soreness 60 hours after their session.

## **Oxidative stress**

The same experiment also found that berries greatly reduced oxidative stress as blood samples drawn 60 hours post workout showed less cell damage. An athlete releases more free radicals into the body after a workout session. Berries, being rich in antioxidants, have the power of reversing oxidative damage to a large extent. This is quite important when it comes to maintaining not just muscle health but overall wellness.

## **Fat cell development**

Berries help in inhibiting fat cell development. Fat cells need to be controlled in order to prevent fat deposits from accumulating in the body. As per studies conducted on mice, those that chewed on polyphenols- a nutrient present in berries- saw a 73% decrease in their lipids. This goes to show that berries can truly help in curbing fat deposits in the body.

## **Metabolic syndrome**

Berries are said to help in the fight against metabolic syndrome. This syndrome can induce reduced metabolism, inflammation, glucose intolerance, insulin resistance etc. Those who are unable to exercise long hours will see a marked improvement in their stamina after consuming berries.

Here are some berries to add to your daily diet.

- **Acai berry**

Being rich in antioxidant properties, Acai berries are great for athletes. Most athletes suffer from immense pain after a workout session owing to the buildup of lactic acid. Berries help in cutting down on this acid thereby reducing the pain.

- **Blueberries**

Blueberries are said to be the king of berries and are a must for all athletes to include in their diet. Blueberries come with extreme anti-oxidant content and a chemical known as Lactate dehydrogenase that helps in reducing oxidative damage. This, in turn, helps in enhancing muscle health and help athletes' recover faster from muscle tears and soreness.