

Should I take magnesium for cramp?

This seems to be a common question asked by our athletes: “

“If I increase the amount of magnesium in my diet (eg. Take tablets from supermarket), will that stop me from cramping”.

Catherine from Eatfit has given us some answers:

The exact cause of muscle cramps is unknown but theory is that it is related to poor flexibility, muscle fatigue or doing new activity. Other factors associated with muscle cramps include exercising in extreme heat, dehydration and electrolyte depletion. The reason cramps are more common in races or extremes is there can be a higher sweat rate (sweat carries away electrolytes). Athletes are more likely to get cramps in the pre-season or pushing to extremes that the body is not used to when the body is not conditioned and therefore more subject to fatigue.

Cramps are circumstantial so it will depend on electrolytes in the blood at the time of cramping and what was happening before the cramping occurred. It could be helped by the type of food eating during exercise. Taking magnesium as regular practice during diet may not have a beneficial effect as salts are regulated depending on daily activities.

So to answer this question would be very hard without learning more about the person suffering the cramps and assessing their diet and learning about their training programme or was it in an event? The following are some tips about how to stop the muscle from cramping once it has already started and further on is some advice on prevention.

To stop a cramping muscle

- Stop the activity that causes the cramp.
- Gently stretch and massage the cramping muscle.
- Hold the joint in a stretched position until the cramp stops.

To prevent muscle cramps

- Improve fitness and avoid muscle fatigue
- Stretch regularly after exercise
- Warm up before exercise

If the muscle cramps are frequent, severe constant or a concern, recommend the person see their doctor