Caffeine for Sports Performance

Caffeine is a powerful stimulant. It helps us feel like we have more energy. It is also used to improve strength and endurance in athletes. It works in the body by blocking adenosine, which causes sedation and relaxation. This makes us feel alert and awake.

Athletes will use caffeine as a ergogenic aid to training. Working with a Sports Dietitian who will manage a specific does around 4-6mg/kg of body weight. This would usually be in the form of a pill or powdered does for them.

The human body does build a tolerance to caffeine, meaning that you will feel the need for more to have the same effect. Think about when you first started drinking coffee, one cup did the trick and after months or years of drinking coffee and energy drinks, you now feel the need for more. Biggest piece to understand here - For healthy adults, up to 300-400 mg/day is considered safe. People with cardiovascular health issues should limit caffeine intake.

You may need to consider cycling caffeine usage – especially for training purposes, try 4-6 weeks of caffeine use as a pre workout and then cycle off for 3-5 days.

Please note, caffeine does increases the adverse effects of many stimulant drugs (Ritalin, Conerta…) and can counteract the anti-anxiety effects of medications.

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| **Drink** | **Size in ounces (ml)** | **Caffeine (mg)** |
| Brewed coffee | 8 (237) | 96 |
| Brewed decaf coffee | 8 (237) | 2 |
| Espresso | 1 (30) | 64 |
| Decaf espresso | 1 (30) | 0 |
| Instant coffee | 8 (237) | 62 |
| Instant decaf coffee | 8 (237) | 62 |
| Black tea | 8 (237) | 47 |
| Black decaf tea | 8 (237) | 2 |
| Green tea | 8 (237) | 28 |
| Cola soda | 8 (237) | 22 |
| Energy drink | 8 (237) | 29 |
| Energy shot | 1 (30) | 215 |