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S U N D A Y , 2 1 J U L

## Misunderstanding veganism within the bodybuilding world

I will try my very best here not to make this sound like a personal attack, but I will be using one person as an example of the confusion that reigns within the meat-eating community of bodybuilders concerning the fact that some people choose not to use meat & dairy. At the moment marketer Vince Delmonte has started an attack on bodybuilders who choose not to eat meat or dairy. I'll put the links below:

He has also done a [blogpost here](#) I suggest you view the above & the article as you'll need those to see what he is claiming. I think you'll find it interesting how people are affected by words & how they can be confused by meanings to draw totally incorrect conclusions from sometimes correct ideas.

At the very beginning of the video he says that he, as a trainer, cannot help people gain muscle, lose fat or improve health using a vegan (or even vegetarian) diet. To paraphrase him he says "You are wasting your time & his time" by trying to achieve any of those goals. This statement is saying more about the trainer, than the actual possibility of training without meat or dairy. Let's look at these goals he cannot help if you eat plant-based:

1/ Health - wow! I do not know where to start with this one. The science is pretty clear that you have improved fat levels, improvement of multiple health-factors that positively effect health (if you want some references on general or specific health issues let me know in the comments), but think blood pressure, cardiovascular health, cancer risk....I could go on, but you get the idea, if you want a quick look at few of the benefits scroll through a few of [these pages on the messageboard](#) & check out some of the health benefits mentioned there.

2/ Losing fat. I do not know where Vince has been. I'm guessing that as he said he has not touched a trainee since 2002 unless they ate meat means he has also not seen the research since that time! Do I need links for this? Seriously if you want links to studies that show going vegan will help you lose bodyfat I have many, it can be done easily, in fact a wholefood vegan diet is probably a very easy way to eat & lose bodyfat.

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L A B E L S

"James Southwood" (1) "Off the hoof" (1) "Pat Reeves" (2) "vegan diet" (1) 000 cal (1) 100 push-ups (1) 2500 followers (1) 62 (1) 8 (1) acid reflux (1) age (1) aging (1) algae (1) analgesic (2) anaphylactic shock (1) animal abuse (1) Animal Aid Christmas fayre (1) antagonist (1) anti inflammatory (3) arm experiment (1) arm wrestling (2) B12 (1) bacteria (1) bagels (1) balance (2) BCAA (1) beans (1) bebo (1) beta alanine (1) better nutrition (1) Bill Pearl (2) bircher (1) bird dog (2) bob hoffman (2) body care (1) bodybuilding (7) bodyfat (1) bodyweight (8) bones (4) bread (1) breakfast (1) bridge (1) brighton (2) Bristol (1) brown rice (2) burger (1) calisthenics (4) carbohydrate (1) carbs (1) cardio (5) cardiovascular cardio (1) chicken style burger (1) chlorella (1) Christmas (1) cissus (2) Cissus

3/ Now let's look at hypertrophy & vegan diets. First off there isn't too much literature out there on the subject. But, there is some truth to the idea that if you eat the same amount of protein from either an animal or plant source, then you will get less muscle mass per gram of protein consumed (I thought I had better reference this one, [so here it is](#) there are a couple of others, but the few studies done on this have found similar results). This does NOT mean that results will be inferior when training for size, it just means you have to eat slightly more protein than you would as a meat eater to hold similar levels of muscle (I do understand that there are a few outliers who buck this trend, but the science, so far, says that you need a little bit more protein than the average meat-eater to achieve the same results). We will come back to the 'why' in a while (if that is ok with you) as I want to go through the written article Vince produced - it's interesting to see exactly how he goes wrong with his assessment.

#### Point 1 in his article "**Protein intake doesn't necessarily mean protein availability**"

As a rule you do need slightly more protein when eating a plant-based diet, than you do when eating a meat-based diet. Unfortunately Vince stops there. That's all he needs to know right? Well, actually no, what he actually needs to know is why as this is very, very important & actually effects muscle building, fat levels & numerous other factors. The main factor that appears to affect protein assimilation is fibre. The fibre stops a little of the protein being assimilated into the body, but it also does a number of other interesting things. It binds with toxins & takes them safely through the body, which is useful, as you become a less toxic individual, but fibre is also the main way that oestrogens are removed from the body. I'll go in this a little more deeply as I think you'll find this useful to actually understand the mechanism. The body dumps oestrogens into the alimentary canal all the time, females dump way more than males, but both sexes do the same thing. Generally speaking vegans have much higher levels of fibre than meat eaters, so yes, it does hold some of the protein as it passes through, but the fibre also grabs oestrogen, in fact fibre is one of the main methods of oestrogen removal the body has. The issue is that meat-eaters & their lower fibre intakes do not have enough fibre to bind the oestrogen successfully & so it simply becomes re-assimilated further down the alimentary canal. So, you get the nightmare scenario of the body trying to dump oestrogen but failing due to lack of fibre! So, is that slight loss of protein more important than that? Personally I do not think so. If you consider that by any standards western people consume well above any biological need for protein then you can see that the idea is quite odd....but, the argument may go, you may not have a biological need for these high levels of protein, but to achieve the maximum muscle mass possible for a human being then you may need supra-intakes of protein? There is some evidence that higher protein may increase muscle synthesis (or decrease muscle breakdown?), but if you really want more protein, then you can easily focus on protein rich plant-based foods, or even do what many meat-eating athletes do & drink some protein powder. A second point often raised is that plant-based protein sources do not induce the same muscle building effects as their animal-based equivalents. Again, there is some truth to this. Things like whey protein have higher levels of leucine than many plant foods. The good news is you can add leucine to things like seitan or rice & bring there muscle building activity to equal levels (see [this study with seitan](#) - sorry it's an animal study, but it's the only one we've got right now using seitan, also a study about [rice protein here](#) - it's not made clear but this study again balances the amounts of leucine, in this case by increasing dosage). So, adding leucine (or a high leucine food like yeast), can really boost the muscle building capacity of the foods you eat, so you should consider this when planning your goals. I will point out that although science at the moment suggests high protein diets seem safe, for the average person boosting protein is not necessary it is only those looking for maximising possible muscle gains that need to even consider it at all. Vince does mention one study where strength trained females have their muscle

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mass compared. I'm not sure which study that is, but the results are meaningless with the information given. We have no idea about build, starting weights, time training, the type of training done, nothing. This is correlation at it's worst. You'd not want to measure people, but compare results. If you want to be truly accurate then you'd also use people who have been on their diets for long enough that the microbiota in their alimentary canal has modified to their present diet (as vegan gut bacteria is different, [see here](#)). I also find some issues with studies that keep some people on their present meat-eating diet & then make others change their diet to vegetarian, vegan or similar. These are nearly always self-selective (you choose your own foods) & so you are expecting someone to make a transition to a completely new diet & then while the million & one changes are occurring internally & they are still experimenting with strange food that they make gains? I'd like to know the average westerner did if they suddenly went onto a traditional Eskimo diet (raw fish & seal meat eating the guts, eyeballs etc) or a Masai diet (blood & meat mainly). They may have not grown straight away & could have the odd digestive issue as well! This is inherent in any dietary change whether positive or negative & researchers should know this!

So, to round this off, yes you will need slightly more protein than a meat eater, you may need to consider your eating a little bit more, but you get less oestrogen in you & you generally have more phytonutrients (chemicals in plants thought to help the body fight disease & stay healthy), have less risk of cancer & less risk of cardiovascular disease. I think we've covered point 1 fairly well, let's move onto point 2.

#### Point 2 in the article "**Hormonal Imbalances Caused by the Vegetarian Diet**"

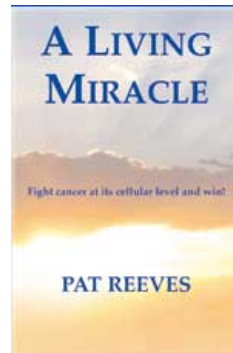
There is simply no evidence that vegan diets cause hormone imbalances? The literature does not say this, there is zero evidence of this. The only people who actually tout this idea are a group called the Weston Price Foundation. They are a lobby group for meat & dairy interests & have tried to mix in lumps of truth without outright lies to get their agenda pushed through various health & Government organisations. The one example he uses is soya (using another of the Weston Price Foundations favourite foods to attack). His claim is that the phytoestrogens in plants bind with oestrogen receptors & so act like oestrogen. I do not want to turn this into an article about soya. Vince has not really read up much beyond the Weston Price Foundation pages on this one. Most of the research actually points to soya being a form of adaptogen, that is if your levels are low it can act in an oestrogen-like manner, but if levels are high it acts like an anti-oestrogen & so actually blocks the receptors. This is still only theory, but here is [one study that looked at the research so far](#). I can tell you now where all the negative research has come from - rodents - rodents do not do well on soya so disregard any studies done not using humans (as there are loads of human studies now). One final point, there is one study using humans that does show marked decreases in testosterone in humans, the '[Goodin' study](#)' is used by most of the anti-soya lobby to prove their case. Unfortunately for those nay-sayers the study has a serious flaw. The whole drop in testosterone was caused by one male (probably coming off of steroids in my view as I can see nothing other than a life threatening disease causing that kind of drop). I cannot fathom how any scientist could have missed this effect, but they did & so got flawed results - [here is the rebuttal of that study](#), you can see clearly how it is flawed! I'll leave the soya there, if you want more (& even want to join in) there is a thread over on our [messageboard here](#) that covers many of the major studies, possible issues & other factors about soya. Needless to say I have no issues with a normal intake of soya in a persons diet.

Next up he covers cholesterol & seems to get confused. Vince says the body needs cholesterol (which is true), but humans make all the cholesterol we ever need, we do not need to ingest it? Vince appears to be confused about the need of cholesterol & the source? He then goes on to extrapolate that as vegans & vegetarians do not eat as much cholesterol, then they must have lower testosterone (as



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cholesterol is used to produce testosterone). You actually make cholesterol from saturated fat, this can be found in many, many plantfoods - coconut oil & palm oil are the most famous, but most plant oil has some saturated fat in it, even the much touted olive oil contains a reasonable amount! So, you need not worry. If your testosterone levels drop due to low levels of cholesterol & this is due to not eating enough saturated fat, then go eat some nuts, some olives or a coconut & you'll be getting more than enough saturated fat to produce adequate testosterone. Vince also misses an important point when it comes to testosterone, it is not actually total, or even free testosterone that affects results, unless you have massive gains or drops. The main factor is actually the testosterone:oestrogen ratio that is the real 'killer or winner' in the race for muscle size. Now think back to earlier in this piece...what was the one thing that a wholefood vegan diet does, that most meat-eating diets fail at? ... removing oestrogen from the body! So, even if testosterone is slightly lower the overall effect is actually positive! I'll include one study that shows free testosterone is similar between diets [here](#) & one that shows differences of both testosterone & oestrogen [here](#) as you can see this question has not been fully answered & is not just a simple 'measure the total' answer as lots of factors effect the final result.

Lastly Vince attacks vegetarian & vegan diets due to an imbalance in the omega-6:omega-3 ratios. In studies this has been shown to be true, but this is not an inherent aspect of the diet, but incorrect dietary choices people are making. Is he arguing that meat-eaters do not have to watch their diet? Most bodybuilders I know are very, VERY strict about their diets, eating unvarying, boring meals. A vegan does not have to go that far unless they are aspiring to be a bodybuilder, all they need to do if make sure they eat a source of omega-3 fatty acid in the morning (think flax, chia seeds, hemp, walnuts or even an algae-based DHA/EPA pill if you like) & do not go crazy with your omega-6 fatty acids the rest of the day. It is a non-issue, if you are eating a decent diet (if you'd like more about Essential Fatty Acids then let me know below & I'll put something together for you). Lastly he does point out that the only way to get enough omega-3 is through fish oil - this is incorrect as not only can you get omega-3 in the form of ALA & convert it to DHA/EPA (providing that fat is not competing with omega-6 fatty acids hence have your ALA, such as flax, chia or hemp first thing in the morning), but you can also get the oil directly from where fish get it, which is from algae, you can buy DHA/EPA oil pills that are the same stuff as fish have eaten, but as it is lower down the food chain, you have less risk of contamination than you have from fish oil. So, even if you want to take a DHA/EPA pill, then just buy algae-derived version & cut out the fish! I think we have worked our way through point 2 enough, so let's move on to point 3.

### Point 3 "Nutrient Deficiencies in the Vegetarian Diet"

With this one Vince has an uphill struggle as every major dietary organisation on earth (that I've heard of anyway) accepts that a properly planned vegan diet has no nutritional deficiencies, but let's see what Vince has to say! B-vitamins are actually not an issue with vegetarians or vegans, actually they tend to get more of all the B vitamins except B12. With B12 you should take a supplement or eat fortified foods. We have all heard of people who have survived without any obvious source of B12, but this is what I call an 'unnecessary risk factor' your risk of deficiency drops to very low if you just supplement, so why take an unnecessary risk with your health? Next up we have zinc, it is true that some studies show a lower overall zinc intake amongst both vegetarians and vegans, that is down to bad dietary choices, not the diet itself, just eat more foods that contain zinc, [here's a link](#) to some foods you can try to include in your diet...but Vince says even if you eat enough zinc (& other minerals) you damn plant-eaters are consuming all those nasty phytates - won't they block all your zinc & iron....well no they won't actually. If Vince had looked at the research since 2002 he would have seen that phytates have not only been seen to act differently within humans, but that they also have positive effects. I'll let you have two studies here to make my point, the first

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shows clearly that if the body adapts to phytates then it becomes a non-issue as your friendly bacteria deals with it, [click here for that study](#), next I'll include an overview of phytates & how they are not simply negative, but may also help prevent cancer & have many other positive aspects to this misunderstood component of food, [click here for that one](#). As I said all the major dietary organisations state clearly that a properly planned vegetarian or vegan diet has no nutritional deficiencies. Vince has not really proved his case with the above example, if those are his only evidence, then he is wrong.

#### Vinces final points

Vince sums up by saying that based on all the research (he must have read different research to me?) you need to eat meat, dairy & plants to be a bodybuilder. If you cannot you must supplement virtually everything (which isn't true, you really need to supplement no more than a meat eating bodybuilder does), you should avoid soya foods (I do not agree with this - I do not suggest you eat mainly soya foods, but having tofu on occasion or a little soya milk will not have any negative effects, just do not overdo any single type of food, that is just common sense-for more read the soya thread mentioned above). He would strongly recommend that no bodybuilder ever become a vegetarian or vegan.

He does mention one odd thing. He says "...Take a fish oil supplement, or if you can't, at least take an algae supplement, which isn't quite as good but is better than nothing...". The oil from algae-based DHA/EPA is not inferior to fish oil. If you want an actual breakdown, then fish oil is actually inferior as it does not contain only DHA/EPA, but a fare amount of unnecessary saturated fat (if you want extra saturated fat there are MUCH cheaper ways of getting it), there is also the possibility of toxic contamination as the fish used for fat extraction are near the top of the food chain than algae - which is at the very bottom. Algae-based DHA/EPA is the superior choice in terms of purity, amount of DHA/EPA per calorie & safety. His statement makes no sense - on what did he base that statement? - *For those interested here's an example using cod liver oil which is a fifth saturated fat.*

#### My thoughts.

Here are a few random thoughts. I've trained people for going on a decade now. I have had no trouble helping people gain muscle, lose fat or improve their health while eating plant-based? Infact I do not know of any other trainer who cannot do this except Vince? Then again, I associate with people who tend to continue their education as it is their passion, for myself I've not only increased my abilities to train people, but I've also taken many courses in nutrition (I became a clinical nutritionist some time ago, but I still take courses at universities around the world increasing my nutritional knowledge), I've also studied massage so it can help my clients recover better & as I know their bodies so well this synthesis can really help more than going to someone who doesn't understand your training & what you are going through. I don't do this for work, but as it is a passion to continue to learn & grow. I surround myself with like-minded people who love to search out knowledge & discover. So, unlike Vince who has not trained a vegetarian since 2002 we continue to advance our knowledge in the field.

I have nothing against Vince, I don't even know the guy, but I would ask you hold back from any vitriol or other attacks. I do encourage you to engage with him in a polite way, make corrections or offer suggestions to him about how he may modernise his knowledge in the field. Feel free to quote any of the above (in context of course). I really feel that this guy is somewhat confused about both diet & training, so would actually benefit from people helping, mentoring & advising him, not un-thought out attacks. It's a shame that in this day & age we still have people living with 20th Century ideas about training & diet.



### 3 C O M M E N T S :



David Jhon said...

I originally became vegetarian, and later transitioned to vegan. My reasoning started for animal rights: I wanted to stop participating actively in the injustice that is factory farming. I grew up with my mother and little sister being vegan, and I always looked down on their lifestyle. 5 years ago though, I felt a spiritual desire to start living the vocation of "earth stewardship" that my faith calls humanity to take part in. As I awakened and discovered the peace and calm of the mind and soul that came with my new lifestyle, I began learning more about the nutritional, economical, and ecological sides of veganism, and stumbled upon more faces of the lifestyle that keeps me never looking back. By finding multiple pillars to keep my passion strong, part of the foundation that makes me who I am, I have been solidified in standing up and refusing to take part in suffering of other beings. The added health and nutritional benefits are certainly a plus.

Racetams

9 D E C E M B E R 2 0 1 3 A T

Jiujitsuboy said...

As you, I had trained vegetarian people and yes, we can make them progress, but no to the same rate as an omnivore person. All your critics and suggesting relay on supplement the déficit that vegan or vegetarian diet leave, so for be more specific, you are saying that you can accomplish almost the same results, but it going to require more effort and money from your part. Yes, if you supplements all the déficits there is not different at some degree. But at very root of this topic, if you need to supplement your diet, is because your diet is not as quite as good as your think.

Be a vegan or a vegetarian is more a ethical or social ideal, that a healthy decisión. And if you compare vegan to a typical american diet, yes, off course, vegan is better, but we are talking here about proportional and well balanced omnivorous diet, not typical fast food american diet.

2 8 J A N U A R Y 2 0 1 6 A T 2



Vegan Bodybuilding said...

Hi Jiujitsuboy

It tends to be cheaper to eat vegan if you are happy preparing your own meals. I use things like legumes as a staple food and they are dirt cheap. If you compare the costs of beans per 100g of protein to meat, then you find beans are much cheaper per gram.

Supplementation is often used to either optimise recovery or hypertrophy (muscle growth). This does not equate to health! Most high level athletes actually wreck their health. You are confusing the reasons people supplement. People take steroids...not because it will improve their health, but to gain an advantage in their sport. The same is true of supplements. For health simply eating a rainbow of foods, taking a simple multi as insurance and being active is all you need. You need to consider other factors when you begin to consider maximum returns in your training, as it is a goal that does not include health, just performance.

Lastly, I have actually seen increased recovery as people improve their diets, cut out all the meat and introduce more

fruits and vegetables. Energy levels shoot up, so training improves. Actually, most studies find vegans to have better levels of virtually every nutrient than meat eaters, they also have better BMI levels and less chances of cancer and other chronic conditions. I believe it is a better diet from both an ethical point of view and a health point of view. You actually improve both by making the change. So my final statement is that you will tend to be healthier and make fantastic progress on a vegan diet, it takes a little planning and experimentation to find your perfect diet, but in the end you will perform as well, potentially for longer by changing to a vegan diet.

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