

# Nutritional OUTLOOK

Weekend warriors driving sports nutrition market: Page 2 of 3



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**Kimberly J. Decker**

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## **Don't Go Overboard**

Such lifestyle preferences are not lost on sports-nutrition brands, which “are getting savvier” about playing to their emerging audience, says Mallory Junggren, senior director of marketing,

Nutrition 21 LLC (Purchase, NY). “They’re observing this change in consumers and are investing in and producing products that are more natural, healthier, backed by science and—overall—more relatable to this evolving consumer.”

Relatability aside, formulators also recognize that weekend warriors’ nutritional needs diverge substantively from those of more traditional elite athletes, “and this is why we see a big difference in product offerings that cater to each group,” says Konstantopoulos.

For example, where an ultramarathoner or distance swimmer might struggle to consume *enough* calories, casual athletes aren’t so lucky. “Caloric control is an important driver for this group,” says Manuel, “with consumers wanting the right number of calories from the right sources.” Serving sizes should thus supply sufficient fuel without tipping into excess.

## Fueling that Fits

Beyond that, the differences grow starker. “Elite sports-nutrition products tend to focus on four areas: performance, endurance, muscle building, and recovery,” says Cliff Barone, global ingredient marketing, Lonza Consumer Health & Nutrition (Morristown, NJ). “But for weekend warriors, recovery is often key, as is support for joint comfort and mobility.”

In fact, weekend warriors—especially Millennial ones—have been “the driving force” for joint-health innovation, Barone says. “As Millennials have become more active and receptive to new sports trends, such as high-intensity interval training—or HIIT—they desire practical, on-the-go products that help prevent injuries and cartilage degradation while supporting muscle recovery and meeting dietary preferences.”

He claims that his company’s UC-II undenatured type II collagen has a leg up on ingredients like glucosamine and chondroitin because its “unique mode of action suggests that it triggers cell-signaling cascades, using the body’s own natural repair mechanism to help rebuild the cartilage that’s been eroded in the joints.” A randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study<sup>1</sup> from 2013 found that 40 mg of the product taken daily supported joint comfort in healthy subjects regardless of age group.

On the recovery front, Larry Kolb, president, TSI USA Inc. (Missoula, MT), emphasizes that for weekend warriors, “The need is faster recovery, less pain on Monday morning, and the ability to feel great and be ready to do it again the next weekend.”

But almost by definition, weekend warriors need more recovery support. “Untrained people, or people who train or work out only one to two times per week, have greater

exercise-induced muscle damage,” Kolb explains. “Because of their lower training level, exercise induces muscle-protein breakdown in weekend warriors to a level that we only see in elite competitors during overtraining.”

Hence the need for ingredients like myHMB—a branded form of beta-hydroxy beta-methylbutyrate, a leucine metabolite that the body produces in protein synthesis—which Kolb says “is known to reduce exercise-induced muscle damage and speed recovery.”

Lonza’s Carnipure L-carnitine tartrate can also ease recovery by ameliorating post-exertion oxidative stress, muscle tissue damage, and muscle soreness<sup>2</sup>, Barone says. Research<sup>3</sup> indicates that it can increase blood flow, while also reducing levels of metabolic-stress markers.

Junggren brings it back to the fact that sports-nutrition ingredients must meet individual athletes’ needs. “Elite athletes and bodybuilders are training for significantly longer periods in intense settings while working various muscle groups and body parts throughout every training session,” she says. By contrast, casual exercisers are “looking to get out, be active, perform, and have fun—but not necessarily to the level and intensity that elite competitors would.”

Given the focus, specificity, and duration of elite training, “they’re depleting a lot of critical nutrients,” she continues. “So it’s no surprise they’re more likely to take myriad supplements throughout the day, including a pre-workout, intra-workout, BCAA or EAA product, or protein. But a weekend warrior may need only a pre-workout to get started in their activity.”