

## Beetroot juice 'increases stamina'

Drinking beetroot juice can increase stamina, allowing keep-fit enthusiasts and athletes to exercise for longer, researchers have found.

By Kate Devlin, Medical Correspondent

Published: 7:00PM BST 06 Aug 2009

A glass a day of the vegetable juice helped men to work out for 16 per cent longer, a new study shows.

The scientists credit nitrates in the juice, which they say help the body to deplete less of its oxygen reserves, meaning those exercising feel less tired.



Drinking beetroot juice can increase stamina Photo: GETTY

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The effect on oxygen levels is more than can be achieved through training alone, they said.

Prof Andy Jones, of the University of Exeter's School of Sport and Health Sciences, who led the study, said: "We were amazed by the effects of beetroot juice on oxygen uptake because these effects cannot be achieved by any other known means, including training.

"I am sure professional and amateur athletes will be interested in the results of this research.

"I am also keen to explore the relevance of the findings to those people who suffer from poor fitness and may be able to use dietary supplements to help them go about their daily lives."

The team believes that nitrates in the juice could be turning into nitric oxide in the body, reducing the "oxygen cost" associated with exercise.

The team tested the benefits of the juice on eight men aged between 19 and 38.

All of the men were given 500ml per day of organic beetroot juice for six consecutive days before completing a series of tests, involving cycling on an exercise bike.

On a different week they were given a placebo drink of blackcurrant cordial for six days and then put through the same cycling tests as before.

After drinking the cordial the group were able to cycle for an average of almost 10 minutes.

However, after taking the Beetroot they cycled for an average of 11.25 minutes, 92 seconds longer, or an extra 16 per cent longer.

After drinking the beetroot juice the group also had lower resting blood pressure, the findings, published in the *Journal of Applied Physiology* show.

The researchers now plan to look at other foods which are also rich in nitrates and to test if they also have a beneficial effect on stamina levels.

Last year a study by researchers at Barts and the London School of Medicine and the Peninsula Medical School found that beetroot juice can reduce

blood pressure.

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