

▶▶ We all know that eating healthily will make us feel better but when you are racing to catch a tee time it is not always convenient to do so. Any gym or sports centre will offer a multitude of sports drinks and high-protein bars but a typical golf clubhouse will offer chocolate, crisps and bacon butties. These snacks can provide a quick fix and taste great when you're hungry, but can leave you feeling lethargic on the back nine.

Golf is viewed by many as simply a long walk hitting a small white ball along the way. But it is a game which demands physical stamina, mental sharpness and endurance over a sustained period of time.

Leading sports nutritionist Kathryn Bistany, managing director of Corpotential Limited, says, "Golfers are the forgotten athletes. Good nutrition should not be the preserve of aerobic sports. Keeping the mind fit, alert and positive is vital for a sportsman whose game can last for four days.

"To retain concentration at this level requires high degrees of physical and mental fitness – I firmly believe that nutrition offers the key to success."

FLUIDS FOR FOCUSING

Performance is presumed to be exclusively linked to physical training and natural ability, whereas every single physical function is reliant on nutritional support. At a professional level more golfers are taking interest in their nutrition, but good nutrition is equally important at amateur level – for both the physical and mental sides of the game, as well as long-term health.

Mental concentration is one of the most underestimated aspects of the game, and the first organ to be affected by poor nutrition is the brain. Mental focus is related to blood sugar



YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

Make it your New Year's resolution to not only watch what you eat, but make sure you're taking on-board quality food and you'll feel better both mentally and physically on the course, writes **Alicia Harney**

balance and hydration. Make sure you take on board enough fluids during a round – try to drink water on every tee box. Foods which are high on the glycaemic index, such as potatoes and bread, will give you a quick burst of blood sugar but can lead to an inability to concentrate.

Golfers need slow to medium burning energy found in proteins

and the good fats. Mixing a high glycaemic food with a low glycaemic one should give a moderate release of energy.

Take a tip from the professionals and pack snacks in your golf bag. Bananas with nuts (which contain protein and fats) are good, as are turkey (protein) sandwiches on wholemeal bread – these foods

will provide the required slow-burning fuel. Don't go for the mayonnaise-loaded triple decker sandwiches available from your local petrol station!

Try and avoid processed food on offer in the clubhouse – this will place stress on the stomach, which is sensitive to junk food and sugar, preventing it from absorbing nutrients. Food preservatives will also place a strain on the body and it will waste energy processing them.

THE GOOD FATS

Following a fat-free diet isn't advisable as the body needs some fat for certain biochemical functions. Depriving your body of fat will only make you irritable and give you a craving for a sausage sandwich at the halfway hut.

There are good and bad fats. Avoid anything man-made which has been transformed from a high fat to a low fat. These "trans fats" will harden the arteries. Polyunsaturated fats are good fats which are found in oily fish like salmon and mackerel. Monounsaturated olive oil, if cold-pressed and extra-virgin, is also extremely beneficial.

It's also important to remember that our bodies change on over the years. Indulging in a full English breakfast at 40 before a round isn't always as easy to digest as it is at 30.

If you feel constipated, bloated, constantly tired or you suffer from regular headaches your body may not be digesting or absorbing enough nutrients.

Corpotential can provide a full consultation, taking blood, urine and stool tests to find out what is going on inside.

Consultations with Corpotential cost £250. The initial consultation lasts for up to three hours. For more details telephone 020 8994 3701 or visit www.corpotential.com. 