

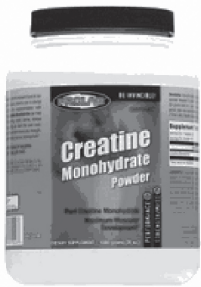
TRAINING TIP OF THE WEEK

CREATINE: DOES IT WORK? IS IT SAFE?

Supplement use by athletes has become ever more popular in the past few years and increasingly so in high school athletes. Studies have shown that close to 10% of high school athletes are using creatine, and their use starts as early as 6th grade and increases with age.

Creatine is a natural amino acid that is produced in the liver and stored in muscles. Creatine helps replenish ATP, which is the major energy source for muscles so the belief is that athletes will gain a greater amount of strength and energy with use. Most athletes taking creatine gain 2-10 lbs of muscle mass and appear bigger, but most of the gain is due to water retention in the muscles. Creatine is effective at increasing power in short bursts of near maximal or maximal exertion so it may be useful in sports like ice hockey, gymnastics, swimming, football, sprinting, and weightlifting. Side effects are usually minimal, the most common being dehydration, muscle cramps, abdominal pain, and diarrhea. Recent polling of creatine users revealed that upwards of 33% were taking

it incorrectly. It is always advisable to check with a medical professional knowledgeable in exercise supplements prior to starting one.



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