

148 ERGOGENIC AIDS: NUTRITION

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It has been an endless pursuit of sportspersons and coaches to adopt various means to boost performance. Anything perceived to have a potential benefit is readily tried with a hope to gain a margin of victory. Such practices can be traced back to 450 BC, when muscle meat was consumed to improve muscle strength and hearts of brave animals were eaten to gain bravery. With passage of time, however, these items and various other substances and devices have been put to scientific analysis and the effective aids have been segregated from those with mythical value alone. Collectively these 'substance or devices used to improve sports performance' have been termed as 'ergogenic aids'. The science of nutrition has brought forth many dietary substances, micro and macro nutrients which when added or manipulated in the diet, bring about

the desirable effect of boosting performance. These 'nutritional ergogenic aids' fall into three categories – macronutrient manipulation, micronutrient supplementation and addition of other dietary substances. In conclusion, the age old practices of using dietary sources for that extra sport in the performance are not all in vain. Many nutrients have emerged as holding some sort of promise and yet others require to be tested adequately. Research on nutritional ergogenic aids is going on the world over, to add to this list of nutrients for the sportspersons to get the maximum advantage for a margin of victory.