

Fitness Article:

HOW MY PHARMACY BACKGROUND MAKES ME A BETTER ATHLETE – AND HOW YOU CAN BENEFIT TOO.

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As a Faculty of Pharmacy, UiTM alumni and a practicing pharmacist at Hospital Melaka, I'm also actively involved in competitive fitness. I have participated in **national-level bodybuilding competitions** such as **Mr. Enrich 2024** under the **Smart Body** and **Men's Physique** (24 years old and below) categories.

I would like to share how my background in **pharmacy and health** has helped shape me into a better athlete and how others can apply these principles to reach their own fitness goals more easily and safely.



Pharmacy Knowledge: A Key Advantage in Fitness

Having a pharmacy degree allows me to understand the science behind health supplements, which plays a crucial role in any fitness journey.

In my opinion, if you don't have the knowledge to choose **which supplement is best**, which brand has the **highest quality**, or **what ingredients are safe**, it becomes very easy to fall for **unregulated products** like whey protein spiked with nitrogen, unregistered supplements, or those containing **illegal or harmful substances** (NPRA, 2016). If we're lucky, the worst outcome is just wasting money. But in some cases, these mistakes can lead to **long-term side effects** that can harm our health.

That's why I always recommend consulting a **pharmacist who has a solid background in health and fitness** to guide your supplement choices based on your individual goals, rather than relying on marketing claims.





Learning from Experience: Respecting the Seniors and “Otai”

Even with all my academic background, I always **respect the experience of senior gym-goers, professional athletes, and competition judges**. I consistently seek their guidance, ask questions, and learn from their feedback.

I believe that the **vast experiences** of these individuals when combined with **pharmaceutical knowledge** can shape me into a more complete athlete, while also allowing me to **help others in the community to improve their health and fitness in a safe and informed way**.



Two Things I've Learned from the Competitions

1 *The Importance of Tracking Macros and Micros Nutrients*

Macros determine **how you look** (energy balance, body composition, and health outcomes) (Espinosa-Salas, 2023), while micros determine **how you feel** (energy-yielding metabolism, DNA synthesis, oxygen transport, and neuronal functions) (Tardy et al., 2020).

If you're trying to **lose weight**, you need to monitor your calories to ensure you're in a **calorie deficit** (Kim, 2021). Without proper dietary tracking, you might train hard but see no results on the scale.

Micronutrients are just as important, neglecting vitamins and minerals can lead to fatigue, poor recovery, and reduced performance, no matter how good your workouts are.

2 *Training Smart, Not Just Following Trends*

Nowadays, workouts with full routines are easily accessible via TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram. But without proper experience or understanding, many people follow trends that actually **waste the gains they worked hard for** in the gym.

A solid workout doesn't have to be flashy. It just needs to **effectively target the muscles** you want to grow with enough **sets and reps**.

To grow muscle efficiently (Baz-Valle et al., 2022):

Aim for **12–20 sets per muscle group** per week for optimal gains.

Even **4 sets per muscle group weekly** can produce good results for beginners.

What matters most is a consistent effort, proper muscle targeting, and progressive overload.



Final Thoughts: You Don't Have to Compete to See Results

You don't need to stand on a stage to build a great body. What you need is:

- ✓ A little science understanding,
- ✓ A structured plan,
- ✓ Safe and effective supplementation, and
- ✓ Guidance from the right people.

When **science meets** experience, you get real, lasting progress whether you're aiming for a gold on stage or just trying to be the healthiest version of yourself.

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