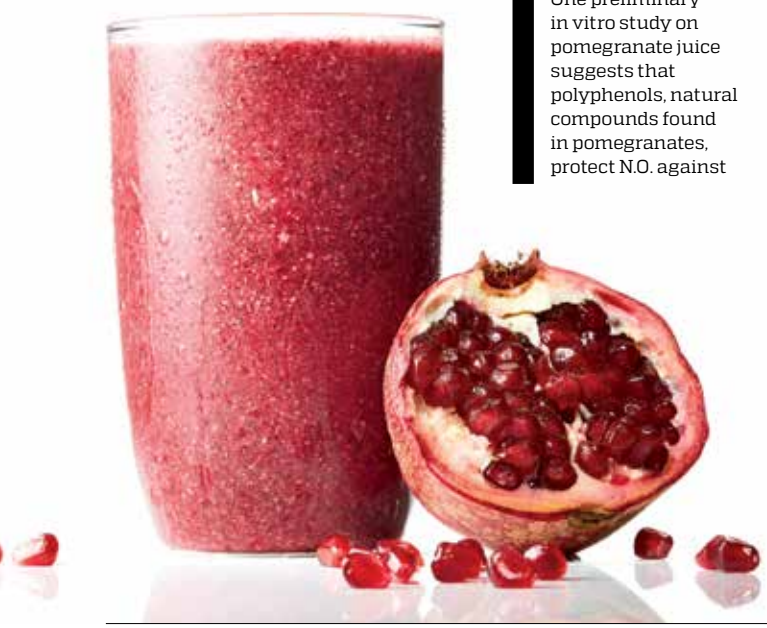
Pomegranate power

Three reasons to get juiced about this superfood.

By Joy Ronson
Photograph by Christopher Testani

The transition from summer to the cooler weather of autumn can kick-start your workouts, because reduced heat enables you to go harder for longer. That means new PBs in the gym and faster muscle building all round. With new physical challenges come new fuelling demands in your body, and there's an ancient superfood that meets them – the pomegranate. Its juice boasts three properties that make it an ideal and tasty addition to your workout.



Nitric Oxide (N.O.)

During exercise, your muscles need additional blood flow to improve the delivery of oxygen. Additional oxygen is critical during aerobic activity and anaerobic exercise (such as lifting). Nitric oxide, aka N.O., is a natural compound in the body that dilates blood vessels so they can carry more oxygen to working muscles. One preliminary in vitro study on pomegranate juice suggests that polyphenols, natural compounds found in pomegranates, protect N.O. against oxidative stress, thereby increasing its biological activity. Preliminary research into N.O. suggests that pomegranate polyphenols from pomegranate extract may even help enhance exercise efficiency.

Natural Sugar

Like most fruits, pomegranates are naturally sweet, offering a near equal ratio of glucose and fructose. And the glycemic index (GI) rating for the juice is a low 53 (on a scale of 0 to 100). Low-GI foods are more slowly digested and absorbed in the stomach, resulting in gradual blood sugar changes compared with foods with higher scores. Everyone, from weekend warriors to serious athletes, can benefit from the sustained energy levels that come from low-GI foods, which can help you avoid the blood sugar crashes often experienced after eating high-GI foods such as biscuits or softdrinks. In fact, in a meta-analysis of 12 research trials published in the scientific journal *PLOS One*, researchers found that various fruit juices do not significantly raise blood sugar. Watch out: Many juice drinks have processed sugar added in for extra sweetness, but 100% pomegranate juice does not, as pomegranates have a naturally balanced sweet and tart taste.

Potassium

If you're a runner, you know the importance of electrolytes. Potassium is one of the most important, helping muscles to contract and regulating fluid and mineral balance in the body.

Just 240ml of pomegranate juice provides 17% of your daily potassium — about the same as a medium banana. Drink it regularly to help support your exercise routine.

Additional research is needed to establish the cause-and-effect relationship between pomegranate polyphenols and N.O. levels and to evaluate the effect of fruit juice on blood sugar.

Smoothie moves

Add this beaut pomegranate blend to your training table.

INGREDIENTS

- 4 tbsp chia seeds
- 1¼ cups PomLife pomegranate juice
- 1 banana, frozen
- 1 tbsp coconut chips
- 1 tbsp cacao nibs or carob chips
- 2 slices raw beet

DIRECTIONS

Blend all ingredients until smooth and drink immediately.

EXTRA BENEFITS

Chia seeds provide fibre and healthy fats that promote fullness, while beet juice has been linked to greater N.O. levels.



PomLife
Enriched by Nature

One of nature's superfoods, PomLife's large Pomegranates are grown in the Goulburn Valley, Victoria. Rich in antioxidants this superfood is laden with juicy arils. PomLife® delivers ready to eat fresh arils in punnets, as well as Australian grown IQF (frozen) arils year round.

PomLife also produces Freshly squeezed 100% Australian grown Pomegranate juice for the food industry.



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