

# EASTON

FALL 2023



vOL. 1



## FROM EASTON'S PRESIDENT

As we immerse ourselves in each passing season, I reflect on the unique journey we share at Easton. Our love for martial arts transcends any weather or activity, and through this unwavering dedication, we stand out amid the vibrant Colorado community.

From mountain biking to rafting, fishing and camping, the adventures here are endless. Yet, while outdoor wonders beckon us, the allure of the mats remains constant. They patiently await our return, and for many of us, they are a cherished second home. And just like the mats, our community and the wonderful people within it adapt and embrace us through every stage of our lives.

The beauty of Easton lies in its ability to shift and deliver precisely what we need at any given moment. Whether you are young or old, a hobbyist or a competitor, Easton will always be an integral part of your personal journey. I extend my deepest gratitude to all of you for making this organization a beautiful reality.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike T".

Mike Tousignant  
CEO of Easton Training Center



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## AMAL EASTON: A SEED THAT SPROUTED A COMMUNITY

The name “Easton” has become synonymous with Brazilian Jiu Jitsu (and now Muay Thai) across Colorado since the school’s doors first opened in December of 1998. Then, Jiu Jitsu was virtually unheard of.

Amal Easton had just moved to Colorado after spending the last three and a half years training with the renowned Gracie family in Brazil and, due to his own obsession, launched a school of his own. A long-time practitioner of Thai boxing and a multiple time competitor, Amal also included Muay Thai in the school’s curriculum shortly after opening it.

With his skills and ability to teach the art of BJJ endorsed by Carlos Gracie, Jr. and legendary competitor and instructor Renzo Gracie, from whom he received his black belt, Amal became the first American Black Belt National Champion in 2002. He holds multiple wins as a Pan American and Worlds Masters champion.

From the mats of what became Easton Training Center when co-owner Elliot Marshall came on board in 2012, Amal has helped develop high-level grapplers and mixed martial arts fighters such as Shane Carwin, Elliott Marshall, Brendan Schaub, Nick Klein, Nathan Marquardt and countless others.



## HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Born and raised in Santa Fe, New Mexico to parents who left the East coast to live off-grid, Amal spent the first years of his life in a teepee. As a kid, he fell in love with skiing and also got hooked on Thai boxing. However, he didn't love school. So instead, he graduated at 16 and moved to a ski town to chase his dream of skiing every day.

Amal did later attend University of New Mexico, where he studied Anthropology and Photography, as well as Environmental Studies at Montana State University, where he moved to ski. After returning to New Mexico, Amal received his Masters in Traditional Chinese Medicine, with a focus on acupuncture.

Amal's interest in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu sparked in 1992 in Santa Fe after rolling with a blue belt, Marcos Gonzales, taught by the Machado brothers, cousins to members of the Gracie family. The former Navy Seal showed Amal the effectiveness of grappling in a combat situation.

Amal was hooked -- he moved right to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the heart of the Jiu Jitsu action. Amal lived, trained and competed out of the original Gracie Barra Academy for three and a half years, studying extensively with Roberto "Gordo" Correia, Rillion Gracie, Eduardo "Veio" De Lima. There, Amal earned his blue and purple belts before returning stateside.



## GROWING EASTON

The academy grew rapidly, Amal teaching classes everyday, promoting the school (and sport) with flyers around town. He traveled to Brazil regularly to stay current with his Jiu Jitsu, as well as NYC to train with Renzo Gracie, alongside Matt Serra, John Danaher, Ricardo Almeida, Shawn Williams and more.

By 2011, he had three academies: Boulder, Denver, and Centennial. That year, professional UFC fighter and Amal's longtime student Eliot Marshall came on board, and Easton grew from three schools to eight across the Colorado Front Range.

Amal continued to compete, conquering numerous titles at the Pan American Championship as well as at the prestigious International Masters & Seniors tournament.

Today, Amal continues to live in Boulder, Colorado with his two children, Ella and Nash. When Amal is not on the mat, he enjoys spending time outdoors dirt biking, mountain biking, surfing, kayaking, and skiing!







## TRAINING HARD? 6 WAYS TO RECOVER

It's easy to get carried away with a training obsession. When we add something new to our athletic repertoire, we need to make sure we're creating time to help our body adjust. This doesn't mean just initially; this means infinitely.

We have to remain vigilant when it comes to breaking up our workout routines, creating time for a combination of work and recovery. If we don't look mindfully after our bodies, we risk becoming disconnected from them and sustaining an injury.

People who train in combat sports have to develop ways to keep themselves coming back. They know that recovery makes up a vital part of successful training, and they create specific regiments to help maintain their physical and overall health. These tricks help keep them training for years to come.

## **STRETCHING**

Stretching relieves pain, improves flexibility and mobility and decreases the risk of injury. It also increases blood flow, boosts oxygen levels and helps to deliver nutrients to our muscles.

A good stretch can help decrease tension and loosen any tightness that may have built up and, of course, relax us. Three important times we should be stretching include: before/after training, on rest days, and before bed every night.

The athletic world has two kinds of stretching: static stretching and dynamic stretching.

Static stretching often comes to mind first when we imagine stretching – the act of holding a pose. This sort of stretching introduces elasticity into our muscles, but done before an explosive activity like Jiu Jitsu or Muay Thai, it can also lead to injury, as muscles aren't meant to begin stretching from a cold state.

On the other hand, static stretching after training, while still warm, helps us get even more benefit out of it, since we've already increased circulation to those muscles and joints.

Dynamic stretching represents a form of stretching that incorporates movement. Walking toe-touches, egg rolls with your chin and knees tucked, and leg swings against a wall all constitute dynamic stretching. These movements create openness in a more gentle way through repetition, allowing you to wake up your muscles and expand flexibility in a charged and useful way.

## **MASSAGE**

Along with reducing pain, tension and muscle soreness, massage increases blood and lymph circulation, and even improves our energy and alertness. It aids with the relaxation and normalization of the soft tissue (muscle, connective tissue, tendons, ligaments) which helps release nerves, and the relaxation helps lower our heart rates and blood pressure.

If you can't afford the time or service of a massage therapist, an at-home massage tool like a Theragun can do wonders!



## **SAUNA**

If stretching warms up muscles and prevents injury, saunas are like supersonic power machines for your body. Typically set between 150-170 degrees Fahrenheit, these heated rooms enhance muscle recovery by increasing blood circulation, carrying oxygen-rich blood to our oxygen-depleted muscles. Saunas promote detoxification, increased metabolism, improved cardiovascular and immune function, and pain reduction. Saunas have also been associated with reduced risk of cardiac, all-cause mortality, and skin rejuvenation, improved sleep and stress management.

## **COLD SHOWER**

On the flip side, regularly exposing ourselves to harsh cold and shocking the body has as much benefit for us as sweating it out in a sauna. Cold showers help improve circulation, lower stress levels and reduce inflammation. Scientists have shown that the cold boosts our immune system and causes our bodies to metabolize fat and fire up our metabolism. Cold showers have also been studied as a potential treatment for depression.

## **YOGA**

Yoga forces us to slow down and spend time with and in our bodies, outside of the usual adrenaline-pumped space of the gym. It allows us to relax and turn inward, which in turn helps alleviate stress and restores our energy levels. Yin yoga and hot yoga specifically make great recovery tools, and they reflect the cold/hot approach of saunas and cold baths. Yin Yoga focuses on the deep connective tissue through a slow cooling process, whereas hot yoga can help you burn calories, build bone density and boost your cardiovascular fitness.

## **DRY NEEDLE**

Dry needling helps reduce pain, inactivate trigger points and restore function through the treatment of muscle tissue. By inserting an acupuncture-like needle into trigger points, we can relax the muscles, boost blood flow, reduce inflammation and prompt a healing response. Based on human anatomy, dry needling focuses on using strong stimulation on the muscles to get them to release.

A portrait of Allie Readmond, a young woman with long brown hair, wearing a black t-shirt and a necklace with a purple square pendant. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is blurred with red and blue lights.

## **ALLIE READMOND: EASTON'S HOMEGROWN STUDENT TAKES ON THAILAND WITH TEAM USA**

Allie first came to Easton Training Center in March of 2017, having never taken a striking class. This year, Allie Readmond from Easton Boulder earned a spot on USA's Muay Thai World Team and competed in Thailand at the IFMA World Championship.



## CREATING YOUR OWN SAFE SPACE

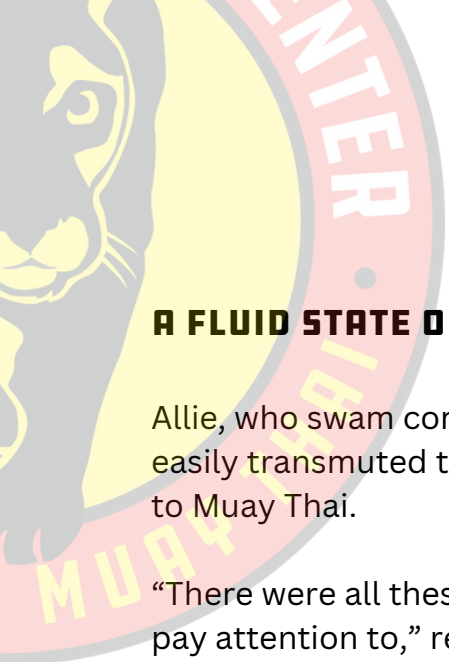
Allie's journey in martial arts began in college, having just returned from freshman year in Seattle. She had been assaulted at a frat party, and once she came home to Boulder she decided she didn't want to go back. She enrolled at CU, but soon her grades began slipping. Allie found herself in a constant state of high alert. No matter what she did, she felt like she couldn't pass a test, and the constant fight-or-flight mode fried her nervous system.

“How am I supposed to feel safe in the world now?” Allie asked herself, as many of us do who have encountered a similar experience that rocked our sense of security.

When a counselor at CU suggested she learn how to defend herself, Allie took to Google to research local Kickboxing classes and found Easton.

Though at first Allie was terrified, she quickly found herself hooked. She stuck with it. She made friends, grew in confidence, and now physically safer, finally felt capable of tackling the knots in her mental spaces.





## **A FLUID STATE OF MIND**

Allie, who swam competitively as a teenager easily transmuted that fluidity into her love to Muay Thai.

“There were all these little things you had to pay attention to,” recalls Allie, “so much technique, from breathing between strokes, when to change it up, how to make the rhythm between the feet and the hands.”

The ability to tease out details and individual pieces of technique, understand how to string them together becomes tantamount in Muay Thai, and her natural propensity helps Allie break down the overall problem at hand and solve it.

“Muay Thai is very beautiful,” says Allie, “and when watching it, I can notice body kick placement, knee placement, where the hit falls on the target. It’s so detailed, and I can tease out the nuance.”

## **FLOW TO INTENTIONALITY**

Having coaches who care and keep bringing you back can make all the difference. In many ways, it became this flow that led Allie through the many levels of her path: she showed promise and talent, and her coaches continued to encourage her to step outside her comfort zone.

This was how she ended up doing her first fight camp and smoker as she was learning how to spar. After her first smoker, she leaned into the process, and opportunities continued to arise for her. However, it wasn’t until the last couple of years that Allie found herself taking a more intentional approach to her competitive path.

Getting through the brutal training process and the fight itself became a metaphor for pushing through a briary, messy forest to see the clearing on the other side.

Each time she did a fight camp, Allie would tell herself, “Maybe this is the last one. I don’t know if I can go through this again.” And then, right after the fight – win or lose – in that moment of getting through it, everything feels worth it.



## **STAYING CALM IN THE FIGHT**

No matter what it is, we're fighting something our entire lives. Whether it's death, natural disasters, sickness, sorrow, other people's projections, when we're in the thick of it, we can easily forget what we're even fighting for. When we have the grit to get through the grunt work and see the fruits of our labor, we reach an apex where we can see everything with clarity – even for a moment.

These are the moments that allow us to step back down and put our nose to the grindstone, knowing the work is worth it. And these moments, as we have all found, do not stop at training and fighting – they seep into every aspect of our lives, from school to family to work, such as with Allie's job at the ER in Boulder.

After every fight camp, Allie still has the voice that says “maybe it'll be the last time,” but then she takes it to the finish line and each time realizes, “There's no way in hell I could ever give this up.”



# BENEFITS OF FASTING FOR A HEALTHY BODY, MIND AND LIFE



By Mike Phipps

Picture this: It's 8pm and you just finished eating a delicious dinner. You feel full and content. Then you realize, your next meal won't be until 12pm. Or maybe even 8pm tomorrow. Or 8pm the day after tomorrow. Are you ready?

Fasting has become a hot new fitness and dieting trend popular among athletes and fitness enthusiasts. Unlike many trends, fasting actually provides serious benefits.

If you're anything like me, you appreciate food as one of life's greatest pleasures. Which means the idea of not eating for 12, 16, 18, or 24+ hours sounds like one of life's least greatest pleasures.



Yet, the many benefits of fasting cannot be overstated. Who knows, you may find that you appreciate food more when you spend extended periods of your days abstaining from it.

## **THE MYRIAD BENEFITS OF FASTING**

I've practiced various forms of fasting for the past six years. Most frequently, I confine eating to an 8-hour window within my day, meaning I fast for around 16 hours on most days. This type of fasting is known as intermittent fasting.

I first started intermittent fasting as a way to help regulate my diet and cut weight for an MMA fight.

I would still consume the same amount of calories throughout the 8-hour feeding period that I would have without fasting, but I found that a set timeframe for eating made it easier to halt cravings and avoid the type of late night snacking that hinders weight loss. Plus, I felt an added benefit working out in the morning while still fasted from the night before.



I didn't realize this at the time, but fasting has way more benefits than simply helping to regulate unwanted snacking. Some of the main benefits of fasting include:

- Boosts in cognitive function
- Reduced inflammation
- Decrease in metabolic diseases
- Positive effects on longevity

Ultimately, I just felt better when intermittent fasting. Without stopping to eat in the mornings, I had more time to get things done. It was easier to think and problem-solve when I was fasting than when I didn't. Whenever I fell off protocol, I would feel heavy and sluggish; I found I couldn't get back to fasting fast enough.

## TYPES OF FASTING

One of the interesting things about fasting is all the various protocols available to choose from. With the extensive variety of protocols, fasting is something that you can adapt to almost any lifestyle.

For the most part, I practice intermittent fasting using either a 16/8 or 18/6 protocol, meaning I eat in a 6-8 hour window and fast the rest of the time. I've settled on these two protocols because they're what works best for me.

If you want to try fasting, but are afraid of how you'll feel after 16-18 hours without food, you can dip your toes into the fasting waters with a 14/10 protocol.

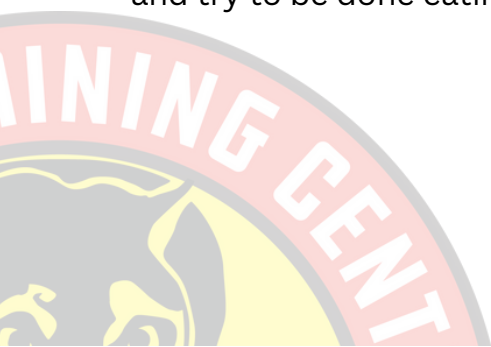
This means you could break your fast around 9am each day and finish your last meal by 7pm. If you find this easy, extend your fast until 10am and try to be done eating by 6pm.

These simple approaches can help you to get started, but by no means are these the only protocols.

I've tried OMAD (one meal a day), and alternate day fasting, which means every other day I fast the entire day. I also frequently do 24 and 48-hour fasts. These can be tougher to get through, and may not make the best entry point if you want to give fasting a try.

I've also fasted for 3-5 straight days, consuming nothing but water and some coffee. Obviously, this is an extreme way to fast and you should consult your doctor before attempting any fasts longer than 48 hours. Some extended fasting protocols allow for minimal calorie intake daily, while others require that you only consume water for the duration of your fast.

Why would someone choose not to eat for 3+ days? Put simply, with extreme fasting protocols also come extreme benefits, including decreases in visceral fat, cellular clean up, decreased blood glucose and insulin, as well as many restorative effects.





## **TIPS TO GET STARTED**

Don't over eat: when it's time to break your fast, especially after extended fasts of 24 hours or more, you may want to indulge in all the delicious foods you've been missing. However, this harmful temptation threatens to undo all the net benefits you received from fasting. Plus, you'll just feel bad after cramming a bunch of high-sugar, high-carb foods into your mouth. Keep it simple, break your fast with some protein and fat and a small bit of carbs. The longer you fast, the more precise you have to be with how you break it.

Don't be too hard on yourself: The beautiful thing about intermittent fasting is its flexibility. Maybe you're only eating between 10am and 6pm, but it's Friday night and your friends or colleagues want to go grab a late dinner. You don't have to turn them down just because you're fasting. You can always break your fast later in the day or simply restart the protocol again tomorrow.

Find the protocol that works for you: this depends on your lifestyle, your goals, and the health benefits you're seeking. Maybe you're someone who would benefit from the occasional 24-72 hour fast instead of daily intermittent fasting.

Plan ahead: fasting is flexible, but it will be infinitely easier if you have a plan. If you're breaking your fast at 12pm, know what you're going to break your fast with. If you start to feel hungry in the early morning, having a plan and knowing when and how you're going to break your fast can help get you past the hunger threshold.

## **START SIMPLE**

If you want to try fasting but aren't sure you're ready for it, begin with an easier protocol. 14/10 very closely mimics how most of us eat on a daily basis without thinking about it. If that doesn't work, try 12/12 and go from there.



# THE BEST STRETCHES FOR MUAY THAI

By Marika Dasbach

While Muay Thai focuses heavily on technique, conditioning, and sparring, the martial art also requires strength, agility and flexibility, which plays a vital role in maximizing your performance, preventing injuries, and achieving overall body balance. Try these stretches specifically tailored for Muay Thai practitioners!

## HIP FLEXOR STRETCH

Muay Thai heavily relies on power generated from the hips. The hip flexor stretch is essential for maintaining flexibility and mobility in this crucial area. Start by lunging forward with your right leg, keeping your left knee on the ground. Push your hips forward while keeping your upper body upright. You should feel a gentle stretch in the front of your left hip. Hold for 20-30 seconds and repeat on the other side.

## GROIN STRETCH

The groin muscles play a significant role in executing powerful kicks and maintaining balance. To stretch the groin muscles, sit on the ground with your legs spread wide apart. Slowly lean forward, reaching towards the ground. You should feel a deep stretch in your inner thighs. Hold the stretch for 20-30 seconds, gradually increasing the intensity with each rep.



## **HAMSTRING STRETCH**

Achieving high kicks and maintaining proper posture requires keeping your hamstrings flexible. You can stretch your hamstrings with several specific movements, but one simple and effective stretch is the standing toe touch.

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and slowly reach down to touch your toes while keeping your legs straight. If you cannot touch your toes initially, go as far as you can and hold the position for 20-30 seconds. With time and practice, you'll notice increased flexibility.

## **SHOULDER STRETCH**

Maintaining flexibility in the shoulders becomes vital for executing these techniques like punches, elbow strikes, and clinches effectively and preventing injuries. One of our favorite shoulder stretches is the cross-body arm stretch. Extend your right arm across your chest and use your left arm to gently pull it closer to your body. Hold for 20-30 seconds and repeat on the other side.

## **NECK AND UPPER BACK STRETCH**

The neck and upper back often become tense and tight due to the repetitive striking and defensive movements involved in Muay Thai. Stretching these areas helps to alleviate tension and maintain optimal posture.

One effective stretch is the neck side tilt. Tilt your head to the right, bringing your right ear towards your right shoulder. Hold for 20-30 seconds and repeat on the other side. For the upper back, interlace your fingers and reach forward, rounding your upper back while extending your arms away from your body. Make sure to keep your shoulders down so they don't scrunch up!





**STAND-UP COMIC + BJJ  
BROWN BELT BEN ROY:  
CROSSING LINES AND LIVING  
LIFE UNDEFINED**

There's a misconception out, spawned by popular 80s and 90s movies like *Breakfast Club* and *Freaks and Geeks* that featured divided groups of jocks, nerds, and artsy kids, and nurtured by our adolescent desires to fit in. If you're a band geek, you can't be a jock. If you're a punk, you can't sing opera.

Then you get thrust into the post-grad real world and discover that none of those labels matter, or even exist. What does matter is what we do with our time and what we bring to the table. You don't have to choose between arts and sports if both bring you joy.

Ben Roy – a two-stripe brown belt and BJJ Fundies coach, and also a stand-up comedian, actor and musician – is an individual that reminds us we can have both.



You may recognize him from his stand-up routines or TruTV's show "Those Who Can't," which he co-produced and starred in.

Ben joined Easton in 2019. He first heard of the academy while still living and filming in LA from his friend Jeff Ake, former GM of Easton Arvada. At the time Ben was training BJJ with Alberto Crane – an old friend of Amal's, having lived together with the Gracie family in Brazil. When Ben would come back to Colorado from Los Angeles to visit, he'd train with Jeff Ake at Easton.

Today, Ben teaches BJJ Fundamentals at ETC Arvada Monday through Thursday at 5:30PM, and continues to run a full career in the entertainment industry.

## **REWIRING OUR LIMITATIONS**

Like every kid growing up in the 80s, Ben was obsessed with karate. His parents cut a deal with him: if he attended summer camp, he could take class. Unfortunately, Ben had to leave the camp early and never got to take karate, but it stuck with him.





Ben played in punk and hardcore bands as their front person since he was 15, and around the same time became very active in his high school theater. His grades in almost every other subject were terrible, but music and theater gave him purpose.

“I was always afraid of going to the gym,” Ben admits, “because I was afraid of being a jock or a meat head, and those were the people I didn’t like.”

“I realized, we’re giving all those people the best stuff. Working out doesn’t make you a jerk.” Exercise releases endorphins, and everyone deserves to feel good.

Ben started going to a functional strength training gym called Blunt Force, and in 2003 he found Japanese Jiu Jitsu. This led him to a BJJ academy, and Ben was hooked. He met the nicest, sweetest people and discovered, as we do, that even high level fighters are nerdy.

“I realized I had formulated opinions,” says Ben, “based on false perceptions. As I started getting into it, I found a lot of good people.”

## **SWITCH THE ADDICTION**

Ben shares openly about his struggle with anxiety, depression and substances. This May 23rd marked his 13th year of sobriety!

Discovering our body’s and mind’s resilience and capability through strength training and BJJ not only gave him the confidence to step into his life more fully, but literally helped save it.

He recognized that as the pathway for him – something new that wouldn't keep him shackled to prescription medication. And it also gave him something to obsess about, which could help guide his addictive personality in a healthier direction.

“Athletes and artists share a certain style of obsessiveness,” says Ben, “and truthfully, that’s what addiction is.”

Be it chemicals, substances, or activities, addiction stems from obsessive compulsive behaviors and it doesn't disappear – it just jumps.

It leaps from one part of your life to another,” says Ben. “As someone with an addictive personality, I have to find that thing I become obsessed about, and I need that in my life.”



BJJ became that thing. With its ever-evolving technique, it represents a deep reservoir to dig into – something never-ending. Even when you hit black belt – if you don't constantly train and keep up, you won't evolve and your game will become obsolete.

As Ben says, “the carrot is always dangling.” By making the sport his self-care practice and personal obsession, he found a way to strike a balance between his creative, professional life and his personal and professional athletic practice.

Along with teaching classes, Ben usually trains four to six times a week. (Proof for those of us who sometimes feel we can't pour our energy into one art and also grow another.)



## TRANSFORMATION THROUGH MOVEMENT

While Ben's background in theater, music and stand-up comedy has helped him on the mats and as an instructor, he has also seen transformation go the other way.

“People go from being shy to more outgoing as they get involved,” he says. “I’ve definitely seen a few particular students who were socially in a bit of a shell, and then they found their community with Jiu Jitsu.”

Being shy can mean we're afraid we don't have commonality with others, and going into foreign territory like a martial arts academy can feel especially intimidating. If we stick with it, overtime Jiu Jitsu and Muay Thai provide that bridge – something to talk about until you're joking around and sharing about your life.

The physical intimacy in close-contact sports like Jiu Jitsu and Muay Thai accelerates the bonding process. Some people fear being physically close will emasculate them but quickly learn otherwise. We're working, sweating and suffering together but also just remembering how to play and have fun.

“I have a lot of friends where when we're flow-rolling,” Ben says, “there's a lot of laughter and it's kind of childlike – we're just joking around and [it's a] bonding kind of wrestling.”

Even during training, you have moments when a person has you pinned in a submission, then lets you go and pats you on the back.

While the fears that come associated with close contact definitely exist, much of the power in the lesson lies in how we face them. Ben has seen people have panic attacks under the pressure of someone, or freak out in claustrophobic positions.

“You have to confront some very rational fears,” says Ben, “like not breathing, and it can bring shit to the surface. It's having people around you doing it with you and helping you confront that in a safe manner that really bonds you.”

When we vet through some of our darkest spaces with another person and trust them to keep us safe, that sort of trust becomes a real bonding weight and human connection.





## KICK THE SUGAR, OPTIMIZE YOUR TRAINING FUEL AND FEEL BETTER

Let's be honest. We've all gone through periods where our eating habits suck. We're talking – handful of gummies on your way out the door, Skittles for dinner, RedBull chugged five minutes before class.

Sometimes we simply don't have time – or energy – to prep meals the way we'd like, and shortcuts feel like the only option to just get something in. Still, what we eat doesn't just fuel our mind and emotional state; it really does have an impact on our physical, day-to-day well-being.

If you frequently train in high-intensity sports like Jiu Jitsu and Muay Thai, you'll want to make sure you fuel your training as sustainably as possible so you feel better and don't burn out. When you've trained for long enough, you eventually figure out what works for you and can ramp it up during higher-intensity seasons.

We all know the basics: a steady stream of whole foods and veggies, proteins, fast-burning carbs and avoiding refined sugars when possible, but how can you tweak your plan for better performance?

We asked Easton community members to share some of their natural fuel secrets!

## **EMBRACE MICRONUTRIENTS**

These little guys don't get enough credit. Macronutrients include your carbs, fats and proteins, but micronutrients are the vitamins and minerals that our bodies need in small amounts, and not getting enough can cause big problems.

Think – citrus, leafy greens, garlic. Vitamins, minerals and antioxidants support cardiovascular and nervous system functions, produce enzymes and hormones, and have anti-inflammatory effects.

## **SMOOTHIES**

If you're not the best at eating veggies but still want to fuel up, smoothies are a great way to pack in some micronutrients. Easton Boulder GM Matt Bloss shares the smoothie recipe that helped him daily after training sessions:

- Beets
- Chia + Hemp seeds
- Greek yogurt
- Natural honey
- Grass-fed protein powder
- Microgreens

Matt relies on whole, natural foods and uses Kion supplements like their Natural Aminos, Omega 3 and some of the tryptophan sleep supplements!







## JUICE

Along with smoothies, juice makes a great alternative to eating whole fruits and vegetables. It's cleansing, easy on digestion, and delicious.

Coach Ashley Dunn from Easton Longmont used to own an organic juice bar in Memphis, and she loves juice for helping us get the natural probiotics and prebiotics found in fruits and veggies

One of her favorites is a simple green juice:

- 2 cucumbers
- 2 apples
- 1 lemon
- a few ribs of celery
- a hunk of ginger

Ashley also recommends adding in fermented drinks like kombucha for gut health!

## SUBSTITUTE HEALTHIER OPTIONS

For Easton Social Media Manager Luma Murib, creating a food lifestyle which avoids foods like dairy, gluten, lectins and inflammatory oils, has become vital to her daily health and training.

Instead, Luma builds her diet around lots of egg whites, natural peanut butter, dark leafy greens, an assortment of colorful vegetables and lots of berries. She also opts for high protein, 40 grams with each meal, like chicken breasts, ground turkey, steak, and fish twice a week.

"If you're hungry for snacks," Luma says, "you're not getting enough protein!"

The way we consume sugar also has a high impact on our gut health. Rather than going for high-sugar drinks like Gatorade, lemonade, and Redbull, Luma tries to substitute healthier drinks like Kombucha, Olipop, Celsius – all of which have natural sugars, are low in added sugars, and are great for gut health.

If your gut is sensitive, you may also want to try swapping some of your oils. Instead of canola, soybean or sunflower oils, try avocado oil, olive oil or flaxseed oils.

Some of Luma’s favorite healthy snacks:

- [Simple Mills](#) GF crackers and cakes
- [Chomps](#) for a clean beef jerky
- [Blake’s Seed-Based](#) Birthday Cake crispy treats
- [Siete Foods](#) Grain Free Cookies – Mexican Chocolate
- [Drink Wholesome](#) Chocolate Protein Powder
- [Primal Kitchen](#) for clean salad dressings – like their delicious no-dairy clean Buffalo sauce made with avocado oil!



## TO MEAT OR NOT TO MEAT

Nick Mavrick, GM of Easton Littleton, relies on a high-fat diet, which makes fasting, training fasted and cutting weight easier.

“For March, I did mostly meat and berries,” Professor Nick tells us, “which helped me cut weight for competition. I eat a lot of venison and other game meat.”

Coach and personal trainer River Mayfield from Longmont also leans into red meat like bison, as well as some leaner meats like chicken, turkey and fish. He’s also a huge fan of nuts and nut butters, and eats a lot of fruit, oats, sprouted grains and rice.

On the other hand, Professor Huddleston avoids pork altogether, rarely eats beef, and instead opts for fish and other lean proteins.



## REPLENISHING YOUR TANKS

When it comes to fuel for training sessions, personal trainer and nutritionist Joey Yaman focuses on hydration in addition to food. Beforehand, Joey makes sure to have some form of protein like a Greek yogurt and a piece of fruit, like an apple or berries.

If Joey stacks Jiu Jitsu on top of a heavy strength and conditioning workout, he'll sip on some water with a half teaspoon of a quality salt and some lemon, or use a flavored salt packet by LMNT. Both of these drinks are loaded with electrolytes and help keep his muscles from cramping up.

Coach River also recommends LMNT electrolytes, as well as supplements like Ladder Hydration and those by Bare Performance Nutrition (BPN.)

When it comes to energy, River is a big fan of nootropics for later-in-the-day Jiu Jitsu training sessions/competitions. He also recommends JOCKO Fuel's JOCKO GO energy drink as an alternative to sugary ones like Redbull and Monster.



## BOOST ENERGY WITH SUPPLEMENTS

If Joey needs an extra boost of energy, he likes to take a drink called Update. Rather than caffeine, it contains Paraxanthine – a new energy source isolated and refined from the caffeine compound.

“It really gives you a different kind of focused energy,” says Joey, “and improves your mood too. I mix it up between that, a mushroom coffee or a pill that contains the cordyceps mushroom.”

The mushroom coffee, from Four Sigmatic, contains a blend of coffee, chaga, & cordyceps mushroom, and the capsule alternative Joey takes when he doesn't feel like drinking the coffee comes from Shroom Tech Sport.

The pill does contain some caffeine, but the mushrooms balance it out, making it a much cleaner form of energy, and Cordyceps helps increase VO2 max (the maximum amount of oxygen that an individual can utilize during intense or maximal exercise) and overall endurance.

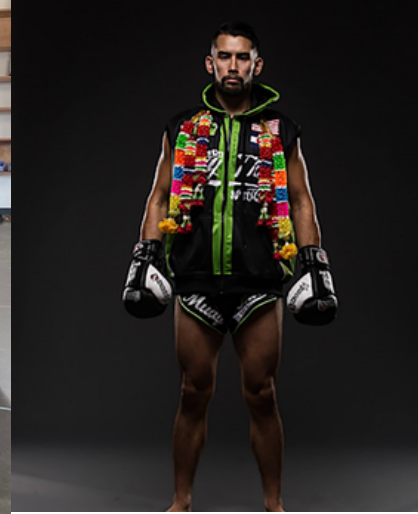
Essential amino acid supplements like Kion Aminos help with overall energy, stamina and muscle repair, and Creatine supports muscle mass and strength as well as reduces post-exercise fatigue.

## **TRAINING SUPPORT**

For additional training support if he feels he needs it, Coach Ezra will opt for an apple or banana with a little honey, and a spoonful of natural peanut butter – something light in the stomach but good for natural energy.

If Ezra decides to do a heavy lifting day with slow movements and not much cardio, he'll eat something like white rice and a protein an hour or so before that heavy lift day.

Coach Sean Madden prefers quick-burning carbs before Muay Thai sessions – nothing that sits too heavy.



Foods like fruit, rice, rice cakes, honey, etc, make for a good fuel source for high-intensity training. Professor Alex Huddleson is a big fan of beets, with their positive impact on the cardiovascular system.

## **TRAIN FASTED**

Many people, like Coach Ezra Cox from Longmont, find that their bodies actually react better training on an empty stomach, when they've mostly fasted during the day.

“I stop eating at night around 5pm,” says Ezra, “and break my fast around 9 or 10 with a couple of cheese sticks. Then I train around lunch time, either Jiu Jitsu or kettlebells at home. I always follow up with a protein shake with creatine!”