

**Interview**

The following is an interview with Jon Stead, who is a professional footballer and currently plays for Bristol City as a Striker.

1. **What has been the best piece of advice you have received?**

The best advice I have been given is regarding nutrition: think of food as fuel and always fill your body up before and after training, even if your not hungry, to keep your levels as even as possible at all times.

1. **How important is nutrition to your success and performance?**

Its hugely important to performance. I think it affects individuals very differently and I think a lot is trial and error to understand your body’s needs and realising what helps you best. If I do not prepare nutritionally I will suffer in my performance up to 10% which at this level is a huge amount.

1. **Please could you outline what you eat during a normal training day and then on a match day?**

8am, cereal,skimmed milk or dry toast with poached or scrambled egg, Protein shake. 1pm, chicken or fish, pasta or rice, beans and salad or veg, fruit and yogurt. 3 to 4pm. Granola bar or mixed nuts, protein shake. 6 or 7pm, same as lunch but would have less carbs unless it’s a day before a match which I would have a large carb load, such as spaghetti bolognaise etc.

Match day morning, 9am, porridge, toast with jam, banana. 12pm pasta, scrambled egg, beans, maybe chicken or salmon but small amount as it will take longer for the body to digest so don’t want it sitting in my stomach by 3pm kick off. 6pm, protein bar and recovery drink, 7pm, pizza or chinese or curry. Foods rich with carbs and some fats to replace lost in the game.

1. **Please could you outline a normal day of training and what you do?**

9am till 10am, activation and weights in the gym. Specific to any stiffness or continuous rehabilitation for any problem areas or old injuries. Balance work and lunges etc to activate glutes and legs in general ready for training. 10.30am, 15 to 30 min warm up. Average of 1.45 minutes of ball work. Day before game a lot less and maybe more if we have a day off the following day.

1. **What advice would you give to anybody wanting to get fit and improve their health?**

I would say exercise is the most important bit. I find the more I exercise the better I feel and it means I eat the right things as I don’t want to ruin the hard work. Plus you will see results much faster if the exercise is structured correctly along with a healthy diet. If its just nutritional I find your eating habits have to change so much. It can be much much harder to stay on track.

1. **Do you set yourself goals/objectives to aim for and if so how e.g. write them down, think about them etc?**

I don’t really set goals but I do tend to keep strict with my habits during the week and before matches but if I have a day off on a Sunday I will let everything go and eat and drink what I want within reason, I find this gets my cravings out of the way ready for the start of the week again.

1. **From your experience, for instance pre-season training, have you got any tips on how to stay motivated when the training gets tough and challenging?**

This is a tough question to answer as I really think you are motivated or your not, its very difficult to change that in a person. I would say that I enjoy being tested and receiving results eg. Body fat tests, muscle sizes, speed and endurance tests etc, this way I can physically see my improvements and it really makes me want to beat them and work to improve. I often have to press the staff at my football club to print out info of my heart rates during training and games and my gym data, jump tests etc to give me something to beat.

1. **What has been the highlight of your career?**

I enjoy playing football every day and have many highlights, I would say signing my first pro contract at Huddersfield Town. Getting my caps and scoring a goal for the England U21s. Scoring the winner against Manchester United at Ewood Park whilst playing for Blackburn Rovers in the Premier League.

I would like to say a big thank you to Jon for taking the time and effort to answer these questions, it is much appreciated. I am sure that it will provide a useful insight into the life of a professional sportsman and help you to pick up some advice and tips that you can use to help you achieve your health and fitness goals.

“Together, we’ll achieve your goals”

Matt Swierzynski

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