

Meet Chrissy Barth

Written by Sarah Love



As an award-winning expert in the field of nutrition, fitness, and wellness, for Chrissy Barth it is all about balance. Not only does she focus on the balance of her health, but also balances being the founder and CEO of Live.Breathe.Nutrition., and spokesperson and consultant to sports teams, health clubs, local television news programs, and more. Chrissy Barth is certainly a motivational mentor and role model, encouraging residents and professionals to “live” and “breathe” nutrition.

Arizona Foothills Magazine: What exactly do you do in the field of nutrition? What are your daily responsibilities?

Chrissy Barth: I am an entrepreneur, a registered dietitian, yoga teacher, and media and communications expert in the field of holistic nutrition. I am passionate about teaching others about optimal health and performance by “taking the confusion out of nutrition.”

I am the founder and CEO of Live.Breathe.Nutrition., LLC, a nutrition coaching and consulting practice in Scottsdale, Arizona where I serve as a media spokesperson and nutrition consultant to sports teams, eating disorder programs for teens and adults, medical and training facilities, health clubs and spas, corporations, and local and national media outlets. I am also an Adjunct Faculty member with the Maricopa Community Colleges where I teach sports nutrition and serve as a mentor to many aspiring future dietitians and dietetic technicians. I am also the newsletter editor for “Ventures,” a newsletter for the Nutrition Entrepreneurs Dietetic Practice Group of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

My daily responsibilities vary and often include answering and returning emails and phone calls with colleagues, clients, and other health professionals; writing blog entries and nutrition articles; working with the media - print, television, and radio; leading nutrition groups and individual coaching sessions for clients with eating disorders; presenting to athletes and coaches on various sports nutrition topics and meeting with individual athletes for nutrition coaching, as well as being a guest speaker presenting on various nutrition topics.

AFM: Were you always a health nut? How did you get into this industry?

CB: Not always. I was an athlete growing up and saw firsthand the important role that nutrition played in my sports performance. For example, when I cut my calories too low, I cramped often and had no energy to support my athletic events. I realized then that nutrition is a vital component to a sports performance diet. Live and learn!

AFM: What do you advise as far as having snacks throughout the day?

N: Prepare and plan ahead. Go for the optimal combo of a fiber-rich carbohydrate paired with a lean protein source. Some examples include: a handful of trail mix; natural peanut butter in a whole grain sandwich thin with a 1/2 sliced banana on top; low-fat chocolate milk with a piece of fruit; string cheese and a portion of whole grain crackers; a granola bar with peanut butter or glass of low-fat milk; Greek yogurt with berries; or 1/2 cup low-fat cottage cheese with fruit. I also enjoy the individual serving portion bags of Popchips (especially the new flavor - sweet potato) paired with string cheese.

AFM: What are the best and worst sources of carbs?

CB: There are no “good” vs. “bad” foods, including carbs. I preach my 80-20 guideline. As part of this guide, I encourage people to choose nutrient-rich foods and beverages 80 percent of the time. This consists of fiber-rich whole grains, a rainbow of fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy products, lean proteins and heart healthy unsaturated fats. These offer an array of vitamins and minerals for optimal health and performance.

For the remaining 20 percent, I believe people should feel comfortable enjoying the foods and drinks they like, including those sweetened with sugar. I counsel my clients that a mini can of soda or a slice of cake can be a part of a healthy diet, if they also drink water and eat other nutrient-rich foods.

AFM: What is the biggest key to success in losing and maintaining your weight?

CB: Asking yourself, “why do I want to lose weight?” Successful weight loss requires a lifestyle change rather than a quick fix or fad diet, which usually leads to deprivation and then the all-too-common yo-yo dieting effect. I encourage people to work closely with a registered dietitian and to be honest with both themselves and the dietitian. Food is personal and the goal for most is to improve one’s relationship with food. Food is not the enemy. Weight maintenance is probably more difficult - however, when being committed to a lifestyle change while positively changing behaviors and habits, the maintenance phase can be better achieved. Food, fitness, hydration, sleep, and stress management are key components to a healthy and balanced lifestyle.

AFM: How do you get children to be healthy?

CB: Focus on the foods and beverages kids need first - the nutrient-rich ones followed by the less nutrient-rich foods. See my 80-20 guideline previously mentioned. I also believe family dinners are vital! Get the kids involved and communicate!

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AFM: What are the worst foods for you? What can you substitute instead?

CB: The worst foods are moldy foods, trans-fats, and any food that one is allergic or intolerant to. Trans-fats (also known as partially-hydrogenated vegetable oils) are found in many processed foods found in the center aisles of most grocery stores. Trans-fats are preservatives used to prolong the shelf life of foods. With this being said, aim for a whole foods approach when it comes to your nutrition game plan for the majority of the time. I often tell my clients that when reading the ingredients list on the food label, if one cannot pronounce a word or if the list is a laundry list of ingredients, better to do without.

AFM: What's the easiest thing we can do to be healthier?

CB: Be mindful of food portions and the proportions of food on your plate. Increase fruits and veggies; stay hydrated with water; eat breakfast daily - making sure to include a lean protein source; move each day, obtain quality and adequate sleep, and manage stress.

AFM: How can you speed up your metabolism?

CB: Eat breakfast; stay well-hydrated with water and green tea; incorporate spices into your diet rather than using the salt shaker; eat your fruits and veggies full of vitamins and minerals that act as "spark plugs" that help metabolize the foods we eat more efficiently; fuel roughly every 3 hours or so throughout the day (i.e. think 3 meals and 2-3 snacks daily rather than 3 large meals).

AFM: What's your favorite healthy food? What's your favorite unhealthy food?

CB: Favorite healthy food: organic crunchy peanut butter

Unhealthy food.... anything with mold on it!

AFM: What does fitness and health mean to you?

CB: Fitness and health mean living a vibrant and fulfilling life. I am honored to be living my dream of being a registered dietitian helping many people make peace with food. I also enjoy athletes getting the message that nutrition is an integral role to their success and sports performance.

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