

Pressure, pills and powder:
Use of dietary supplements among young consumers (13–24 years)

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Introduction



Background and objective

Children and young people are exposed to large amounts of advertising from influencers. According to the <u>Norwegian Media Authority</u>, more than half of those aged between 13 and 18 have received advertisements for products to lose weight or gain muscle.

The Norwegian Consumer Council believes that children and young people are poorly protected against marketing of products such as dietary supplements, protein supplements and some fortified foods.

The current self-regulation mechanism does not result in less body-image pressure, and therefore does not have the desired effect.

In this survey, we mapped the use of dietary supplements by <u>children and young people</u>, what they use, and why they use it.

We have also asked this group about body-image pressure, use of social media and whether they are aware of the current self-regulation mechanism for influencer marketing.

We would like to thank the Norwegian Olympic Committee,
Antidoping Norge and the Healthy Sport Project for their input to
the questionnaire.

Dietary supplements



In this report we classify several product groups as 'dietary supplements', e.g. protein powder, pre-workout products, sports drinks and energy drinks, as well as capsules containing plant and herbal extracts and such like.

The term is used in a broad sense and differs from the Norwegian Food Safety Authority's definition.

We have partly adhered to <u>Antidoping Norge's use of the term</u> and have also based it on <u>FIM's product list</u>.

Use of energy drinks is presented in detail in a separate report.

Consumer challenges with the use of dietary supplements

Consumers spend money on products that are ineffective or unnecessary.

People are exposed to misleading advertising that is based on body-image pressure.

Dietary supplements may contain illegal substances. Illegal substances have previously been found in products that are marketed as performance enhancing and fat burning.

Pre-workout products in particular may contain more than is stated on the packaging (source: Antidoping Norge).

There may be health risks associated with the use of dietary supplements, e.g. interactions with medications taken for a health condition.

Questions in the survey

How widespread is the use of dietary supplements among children and young people, and when do they start using such products?

What types of dietary supplements are most used, and what are the justifications for their use?

How often are different types of dietary supplements used?

At what age are different types of dietary supplements first used?

Where do children and young people obtain information about dietary supplements?

Do children and young people consider what they use to be safe and healthy?

Where do young people buy dietary supplements, and what factors do they consider important when choosing a product or brand?

Is there an association between different types of dietary supplements, training, type of training and experience of body-image pressure?

What do children and young people think about the impact of influencers, social media and how it affects them?

SURVEY METHODS



QUANTITATIVE - target group

Target group and sample

The questionnaire survey was conducted among adolescents and young adults aged 13 to 24 years. The sample was recruited in two ways:

- 1) Respondents over the age of 15 were recruited through Norstat's online panel. The panel consists of around 110 000 individuals and is designed to be as representative as possible of the Norwegian population. The results are weighted for sex and age according to public statistics.
- 2) The respondents under the age of 15 were recruited through their parents, who are also members of the panel. The parents were asked if their children could answer some questions about dietary supplements and influencers, and the children were asked to answer the questions independently. This may have resulted in sample bias in the younger group.

Some of the questions had open response alternatives, i.e. the respondents answered in their own words. The results from some of these questions are presented in the form of word clouds.

QUANTITATIVE - fieldwork

Method and time period for the fieldwork

The data were collected via online interviews in May 2024.

Number of interviews: 1056

Margins of error:

The margin of error in the entire sample (1056) is ± 3 per cent.

The margins of error for figures in subgroups are larger.

QUALITATIVE

The qualitative part of the survey was carried out in the form of in-depth interviews on Teams.

The interviews (10) were conducted in June 2024.

The informants consisted of students, school pupils and some in employment. Both men and women participated. They were all in the age group 18–24 years and came from different cities and towns throughout Norway.

All those who participated were apparent users of one or more dietary supplements, including protein supplements, creatine and/or pre-workout products. The sample also exhibited a range of attitudes toward influencers and social media, shopping habits and experiences with dietary supplements, both positive and negative.

DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS WE HAVE SURVEYED:

Product group	Explanation/claimed function
Energy drinks with caffeine (e.g. Battery, Burn, Red Bull and Monster)	Give energy (use of energy drinks is presented in detail in a separate report)
Energy drinks with BCAA and caffeine (e.g. NOCCO)	Give energy and supplementary amino acid that plays a role in muscle building
Sports drinks, recovery bars, recovery drinks (e.g. Gatorade, Maxim and Powerade)	Promote recovery after training
Protein supplements (e.g. protein bars, protein puddings and ready-mixed protein drinks)	Build muscle
Protein powder	Build muscle
Weight gainers (high-calorie powders consisting of protein and carbohydrate, e.g. Big Mass and Weight Gainer)	Build muscle and increase weight



Product group	Explanation/claimed function
Turkesterone	Steroid hormones from insects
Pre-workout products, also referred to as PWO (e.g. GFuel)	Give energy, focus and muscle blood flow before training
Products such as plant and herbal blends (e.g. ginseng, golden root, ashwagandha, tongkat ali, chilli extract and garlic)	Increase energy and testosterone in the body, promote weight loss etc.
Caffeine in the form of powder or tablets taken as a supplement (not coffee or tea)	Gives energy, acts as a stimulant
Creatine (e.g. creatine monohydrate)	Improves muscle performance
BCAA powder or EAA	Give energy in endurance activities
Tanning products (such as beta-carotene)	Tan the skin without sun



Product group	Explanation/claimed function
Products used for weight loss, such as meal replacement bars, VLCD (very-low-calorie diet), shakes and soups (e.g. Nutrilett, Allevo), tablets, pills, capsules, drinks and detox products (e.g. Nutrilett, Allevo, CLA, Fat Burner, Cravings Killer)	Promote weight loss
Beta-alanine, nitrate (e.g. as capsules, powder, beetroot juice or bicarbonate)	Help muscles to perform
Supplements that are claimed to be good for hair, nails and skin (e.g. collagen, hyaluronic acid, Q10)	Products designed to enhance beauty, e.g. better skin, hair and nails
Testosterone boosters (e.g. ZMA, Test Bolan, T-booster)	Affect the body's production of testosterone
Vitamin and mineral supplements (e.g. multivitamins, vitamin D, vitamin C, magnesium, zink, cod liver oil, omega-3, iron etc.)	Provide supplementary vitamins and minerals



Combined product categories

In some of the analyses, we have merged certain dietary supplements into new product categories in order to achieve a larger, more robust sample. This applies to the two categories, muscle-building products and weight-loss and beauty products:

Muscle-building products	Energy drinks with BCAA and caffeine, protein supplements, protein powder, weight gainers, turkesterone, PWO, creatine, BCAA powder or EEA, beta-alanine, testosterone boosters
Weight-loss and beauty products	Tanning products, products used for weight loss, products claimed to be good for hair, nails and skin.



Summary of results (1)

- There is widespread use of dietary supplements among young people: nine out of ten (87 per cent) aged 13-24 years take dietary supplements. Among those under 18, the proportion is 84 per cent.
- Many also use what we have referred to as muscle growth products: protein supplements, creatine and preworkout products are most popular among boys, while girls prefer plant-based supplements and vitamins/minerals. Use is highest among informants over the age of 18, but those under 18, i.e. children, also use dietary supplements for muscle growth.
- It is not unusual to start using dietary supplements at a young age. One in four of those who use protein powder or pre-workout products used these before they turned 16.
- Vitamin and mineral supplements are the most popular products, with 7 in 10 reporting that they use them.
- A desire to build muscle, perform better and have more energy is the main motivation for using muscle-growth products.
- Building muscle quickly is essential for many. Supplements are also described as practical when informants are busy or cannot be bothered to cook a quick fix.

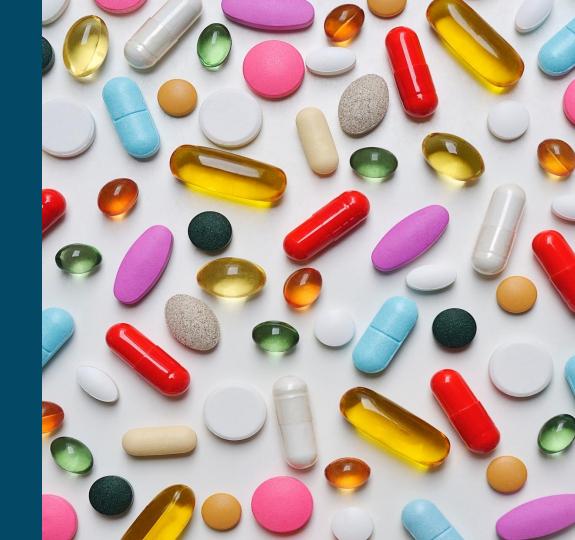
Summary of results (2)

- Three out of ten young people experience considerable body-image pressure, and among girls this applies to four out of ten. Users of weight-loss and beauty products experience more body-image pressure.
- Generally, few feel that influencers have a positive impact on their well-being. Although few report being
 influenced by influencers to any great extent, the impact is probably underreported especially among those
 under 18.
- Those under 18 are more receptive to advice on the use of dietary supplements from influencers than those aged over 18.
- The internet, family and friends, as well as training buddies, are reported to be the main sources of information on dietary supplements.
- Many young people have a focus on choosing safe products, and ensure this by buying them from Norwegian shops. Muscle-building supplements are often bought from Norwegian online retailers such as Tights.no and Gymgrossisten, while protein supplements are frequently bought in supermarkets. Few young people aged under 18 report being refused when trying to buy dietary supplements for muscle growth.

Summary of results (3)

- There is generally a considerable focus on the body in advertising. The message is often that training is necessary to achieve a muscular, slim body, but to optimise the effect of training, numerous training products must be taken.
- It can sometimes be unclear whether something is an advertisement. Random searches on Instagram show very different practices with regard to the labelling of advertisements.
- The producers wish to use so-called ambassadors. The use of ambassadors instead of influencers may give more credibility to someone fronting a product or product series.

Use of dietary supplements



Many children and young people use energy drinks and dietary supplements

92%

3.2

88%

92 per cent use energy drinks or dietary supplements

Young people use 3.2 products on average

88 per cent of those under 18 use energy drinks or dietary supplements

Many children and young people use energy drinks and dietary supplements

87%

2.6

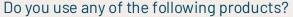
84%

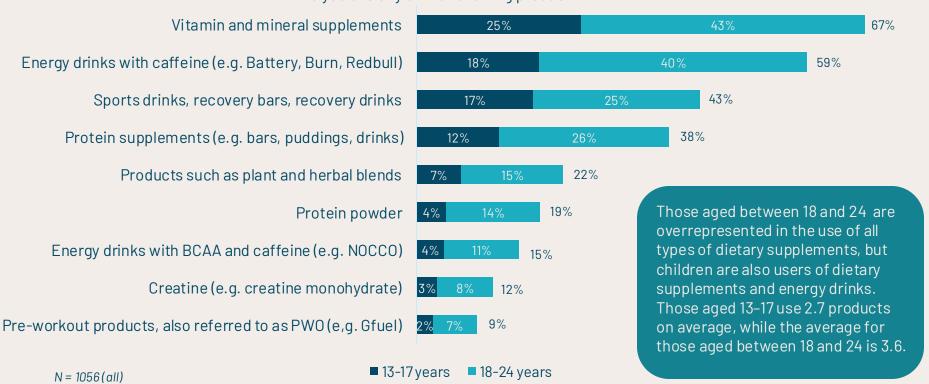
87 per cent of those aged 13-24 use dietary supplements

Young people use 2.6 products on average

84 per cent of those under 18 use dietary supplements

Vitamin and mineral supplements are the most used dietary supplements, followed by energy drinks and products such as sports drinks etc.





The least used dietary supplements are for example those that claim to be good for the skin and hair, and tanning products

Do you use any of the following products?

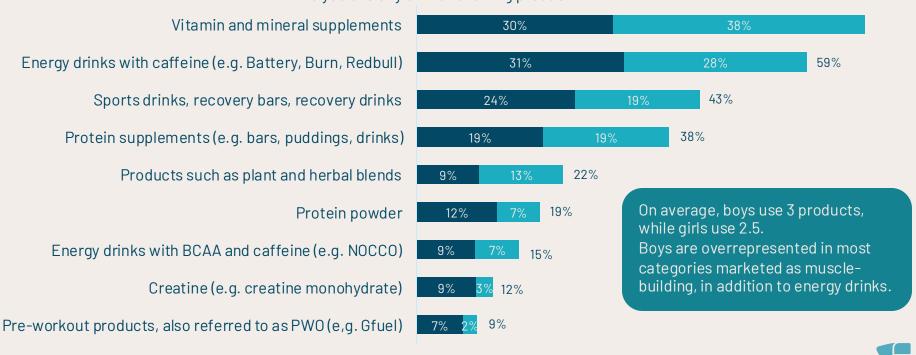


We see the same age differences among the least used products.



We also see clear gender differences in the use of dietary supplements – both in terms of the most-used supplements...

Do you use any of the following products?





... and in terms of the least-used supplements

Do you use any of the following products?

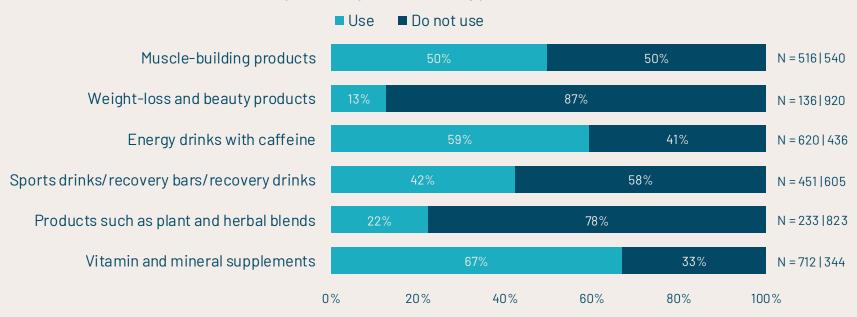


We see the same gender differences among the least used products.



Half of the young people use one or more products that build muscle

Do you use any of the following products?

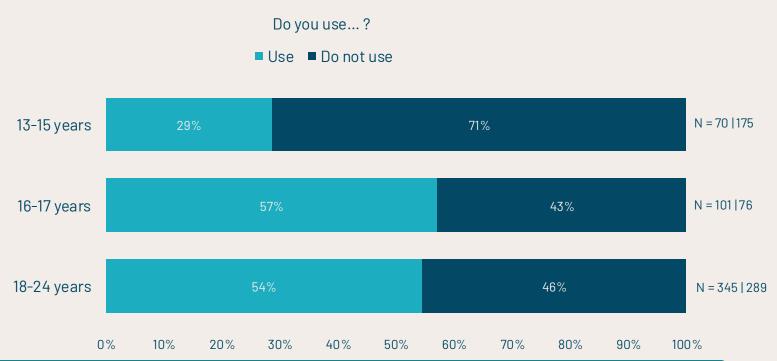


Muscle-building products: energy drinks with BCAA and caffeine, protein supplements, protein powder, weight gainers, turkesterone, PWO, creatine, BCAA powder or EAA, beta-alinine, testosterone boosters.





Use of muscle-building dietary supplements is highest among those aged 16 and over...

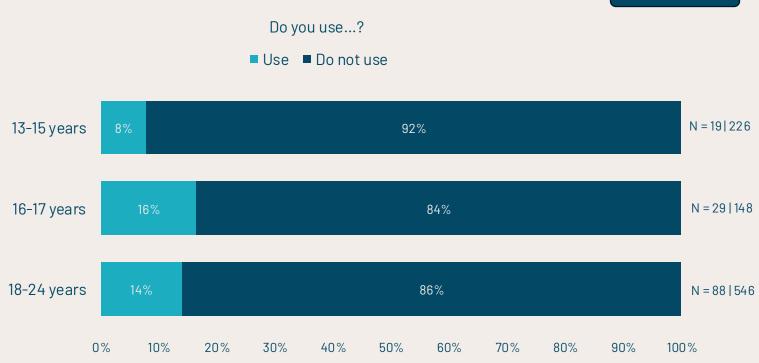






... and the same applies to weight-loss and beauty products

NB: small samples

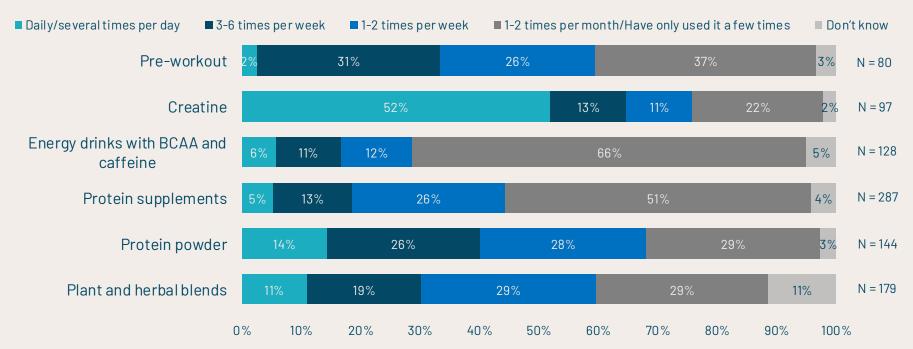






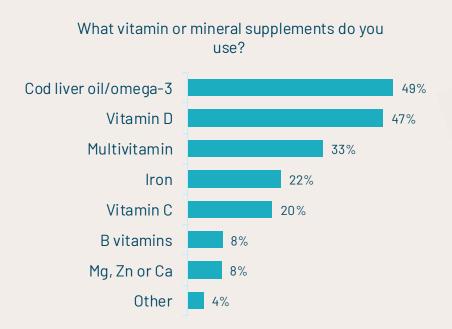
User frequency: creatine is the dietary supplement most commonly used daily or several times per day NB: small subgroups

How often do you use...?



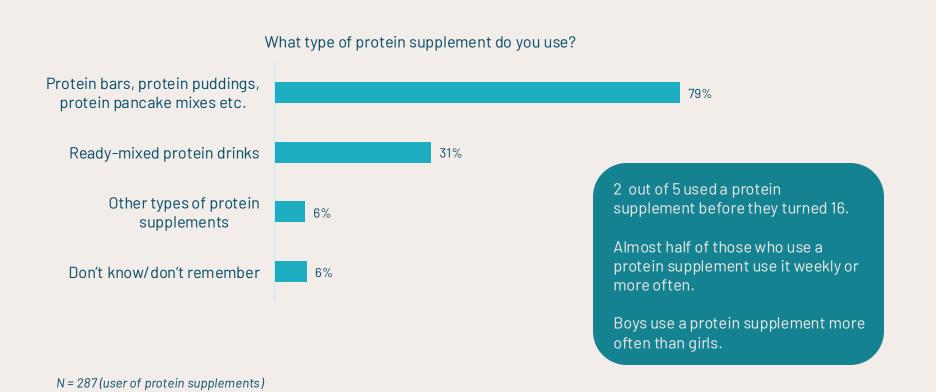


Cod liver oil/omega-3 and vitamin D are the most used vitamin and mineral supplements





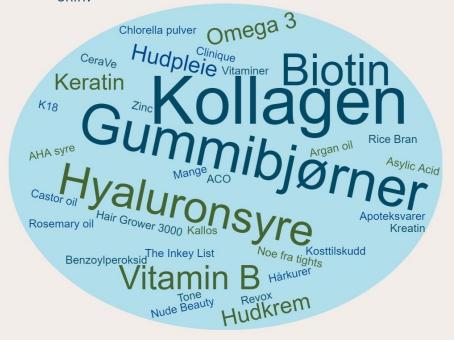
Bars, puddings and pancake mixes are among the most used in the protein supplement category



Of products that claim to be good for the hair, nails and skin, vitamin and mineral supplements are most often mentioned

- It can be difficult to distinguish between what are actually dietary supplements and what are skincare products. Some informants mention skincare products, a number of which are medications.
- Of the dietary supplements mentioned, various vitamin or mineral supplements, collagen and biotin are mentioned most frequently.

What type of products do you use for hair, nails and skin?



N = 45 (open responses from those who use products for hair, nails and skin)

Four manufacturers of protein powder in particular are named by the young people

- Bodylab
 part of The Feelgood Company, owned by Jordanes
 (Norwegian/Danish)
- Star Nutrition
 owned by HSNG (Health and Sports
 Nutrition Group AB), part of Orkla
 (Norwegian/Swedish)
- Proteinfabrikken owned by Orkla (Norwegian/Swedish)
- BodyFuel at Netthandelsgruppen.no (Norwegian)



What type of protein powder do you use?

Almost 7 in 10 of those who use protein powder use it weekly or more often.

Boys use protein powder more often than girls.

1 in 4 of those who use a protein supplement used it before they turned 16.

Some pre-workout products (PW0s) have previously been involved in doping cases

- The manufacturer Swedish Supplements produces several of the products used by the young people in this survey.
- Some of the products mentioned have previously been involved in doping cases (FuckedUp, The Butcher and Black Burn). We don't know if products sold today contain ingredients on the doping list.

3 out of 4 who use a PWO are boys.

1 in 4 of those who use a PWO have used it before they turned 16.

More than half use a PWO weekly or more often. 1 in 4 use it 3 times a week or more often.



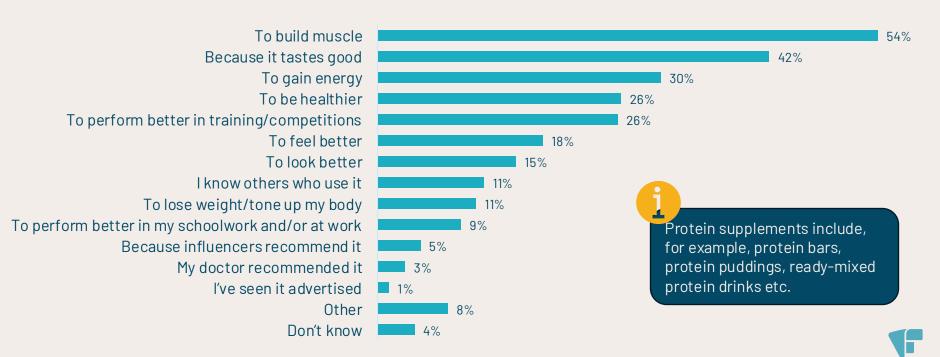
What type of pre-workout product do you use

Why do young people use various types of dietary supplements?



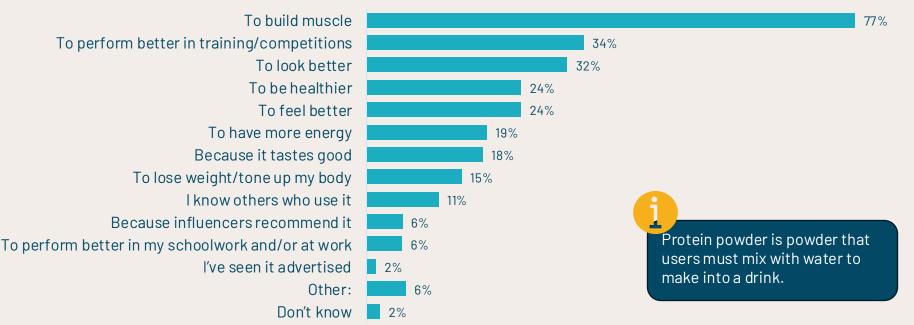
To build muscle is the main reason for using protein supplements, but taste is also an important reason

Why do you use a protein supplement? Select all that apply



To build muscle is also the main reason for using protein powder, but looking better and performance are also important

Why do you use protein powder? Select all that apply





Protein supplements build muscle – fast!

- 1) In the in-depth interviews, several informants report struggling to consume enough protein through their diet, either because they get full quickly or because it is too expensive.
- 2) Supplements are also an easy option when you're busy or can't be bothered to cook. A supplement is an easy way to achieve the target!
- 3) Supplements aid recovery after training.

"

'[...] it's a quick way to reach my daily protein target – 1.5–2 grams per kg of body weight. A cheap way to get protein into me, I can't afford to cook a load of steaks. It's practical[...] I want to bulk up quickly! That's the motivation. If it takes a long time, my motivation fades.'(Man, 18 years)

'I take protein powder now and then, depending how well I've eaten during the day [...].' (Man, 24 years)

'I take protein powder because I can't be bothered to make a varied dinner[...] especially in exam periods.' (Woman, 22 years)

Dietary supplements are a 'quick fix' on a busy day



'People are too stressed, so dietary supplements are a quick fix. Or they're afraid they're not getting enough, better to take too much than not to get any at all [...]. You have to lay out a pile of them to get enough into you!' (Woman, 21 years)

Replacing meals with supplements breaks with established norms

While some find it absolutely necessary and, not least ,practical to replace a meal with a protein shake, others believe it breaks with the norm of what constitutes a good, healthy meal.



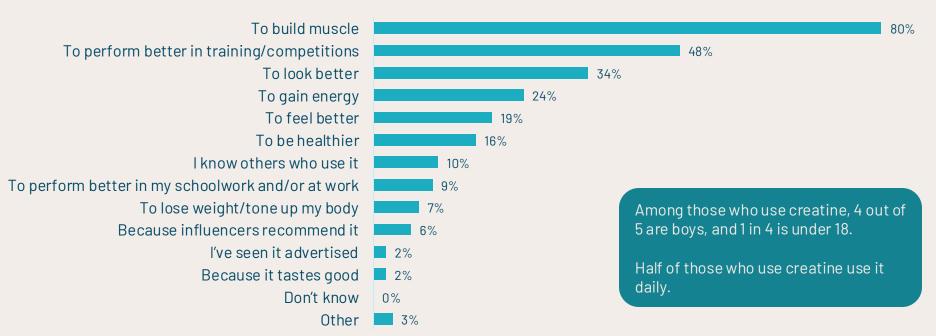
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'Drinking a shake is not the same as making a good dinner. Many of my friends look at me sideways when I say I've eaten pasta and a shake [...]. They're concerned with being healthy, Iiving well. And then I come along with my pasta and shake.' (Woman, 22 years)

'Protein supplement ... I associate that with powder. People take it in shakes. I don't think it's a good thing – I think...it's important to get enough protein through food, I'd rather eat protein-rich food than a powder [...]' (Woman, 24 years)

Creatine is also used to build muscle, better performance in training is also high on the list

Why do you use creatine? Select all that apply





Creatine increases volume

The product is taken in order to look bigger, the informants tell us.

Many train using the 'bulk and cut' method and take creatine when they want to put on weight.

It is perceived as a natural substance without side effects, except for possible hair loss.

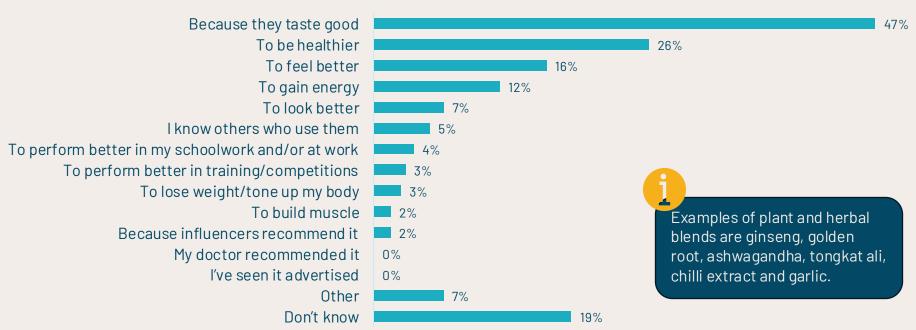
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'I use it in the winter, when I try to gain weight, increase muscle strength and volume [...] the bulk phase, putting on as much muscle mass as possible, getting muscles, becoming as strong as I can. Then I reduce my percentage of fat in the summer.' (Man, 23 years)

'It helps a bit. There are few side effects, I function at 70 per cent, it has an effect [...]. Sure, there's been talk of hair loss, but it's a myth. I can also get an upset stomach, become bloated, muscles filled with water. Gain weight, 2–3 kg. Nothing dangerous, but unpleasant.' (Man, 24 years)

Good taste and health are the main reasons for using plant and herbal blends

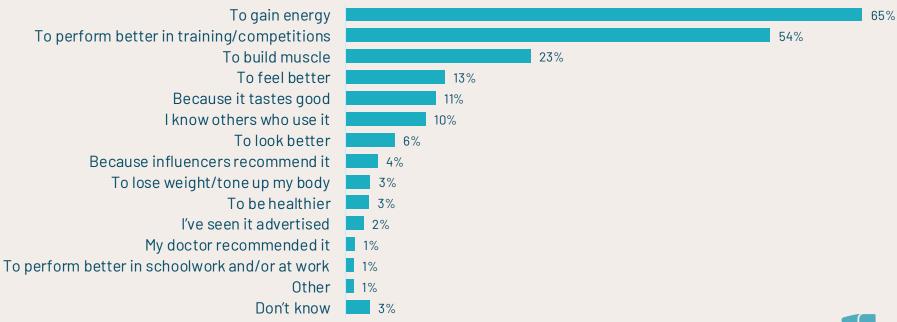
Why do you use plant and herbal blends? Select all that apply





Pre-workout products are used to increase energy and perform better







Pre-workout products provide a boost!

A number of respondents tell us that they use the supplement as an energy boost before training – the purpose is to be more focused and perform better.

Some use it in addition to an energy drink, others have swapped the energy drink for a pre-workout product because it is considered better for their teeth.

Several point to side effects such as palpitations, hypertension and poor sleep if they take it too late at night, and several are anxious about becoming addicted.

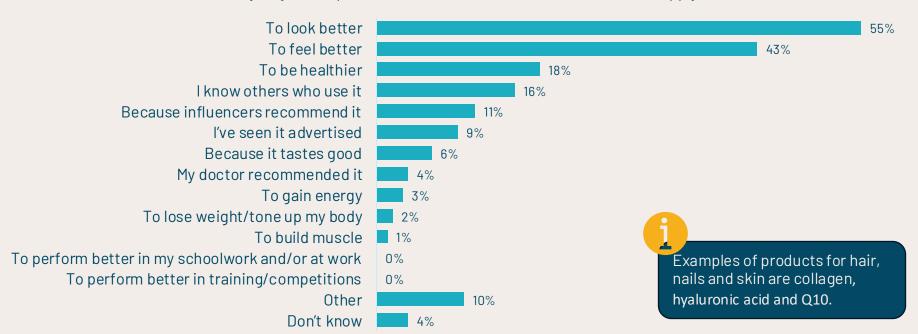
It's energy, another source of caffeine than an energy drink. It has a stimulating effect without the carbonic acid that harms your teeth. I have friends who have made the switch because their dentist recommended it.' (Woman, 22 years)

'I hear of many who train late in the evening and have to get up early, so they find it hard to sleep – maybe they get 4 hours. It's harmful to health. The best thing is a good diet.' (Man, 23 years)

'I recently started, got it as a Christmas present. So perhaps I should use it – I got it from my mother-in-law [...] lots of caffeine, I don't want to get addicted.' (Man, 18 years)

To look better and feel better are the main reasons for using products for hair, nails and skin

Why do you use products for hair, nails and skin? Select all that apply





Iron, omega-3 and magnesium

A common feature in the use of these dietary supplements is that the informants have been shown to lack iron or magnesium, or they believe they lack these, e.g. omega-3 due to low consumption of fish.

Some take a multivitamin, for example, to ensure they get the vitamins and minerals that they think their body needs.

-Magnesium, I take in the evening for better sleep quality, and it helps with my energy level in daytime.

Recommended by social media, quite a lot was made of it, in VG newspaper and on NRK. It's trendy to make something called a Sleepy Girl Mocktail to sleep better [...]. I've taken iron since I was 12–13 years old. When I started my periods the doctor said I should take it. If I don't, I get tired, then I see dots before my eyes and feel dizzy.' (Woman, 21 years)

'Omega-3, I take because it has much healthier fatty acids. I don't eat much fish, maybe just once a week or less, and nor do I eat mackerel in tomato sauce. A lot of dietary advice recommends it, it's good for the heart and brain.' (Man, 18 years)

Huh? Is normal food an alternative?

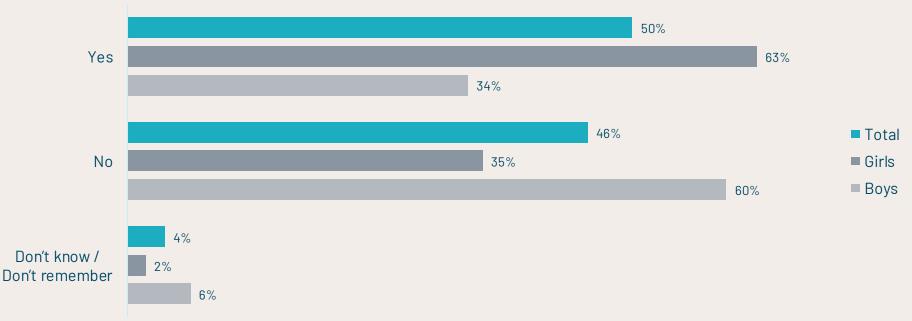
What would make you cut out supplements for hair, nails etc.?



'Perhaps more info about the types of food that contain the various minerals you need, what you can do instead [...]. For many of the easy solutions you think there's no other solution. But a lot of the food can be expensive.' (Woman, 23 years)

Far more girls than boys have been diagnosed with a vitamin or mineral deficiency by a doctor

Have you been diagnosed with a vitamin or mineral deficiency by a doctor?





Multiple factors drive the use of dietary supplements, here is a summary

Strength/muscles, status and health Look good– quickly Feel good, self-assured Be respected Avoid illness Social and fun

Easy and affordable
A complete diet, effortless without being too expensive

Just in case
Don't know enough
about dietary
needs, want to be
on the safe side

Proven deficiencies Iron deficiency Magnesium









Training and motivation for training



For young people, good health and better performance are important goals for training

What is the goal of training?



Building muscle is fun, social and healthy!

66

'To have better mental and physical health. I have a lot of energy, I sit still a lot, and get to burn some of it off. I want to live a long, healthy life. It's fun building muscles too, it's a big part of my motivation, and something to do socially.'
Interviewer: 'What do you think is fun about building muscle?'

'Becoming stronger, in my work as an electrician it's an advantage to have a strong body with good stamina. I also want to feel good, to be the best version of myself.' (Man, 18 years)

Training prevents stress and negative thoughts



'If I don't go for a run or to the gym, stress automatically builds up; even though my daily life isn't stressful, it comes automatically. It can spill over into negative thoughts, I find it challenging to rid myself of them without doing something productive like training.' (Woman, 21 years)

Masculinity should make a comeback!



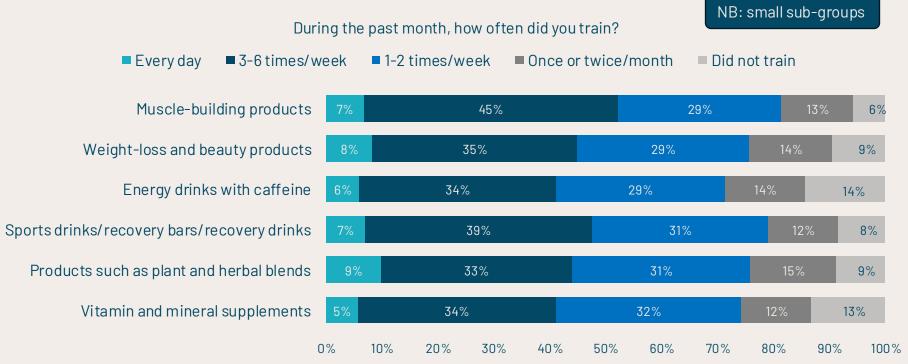
'Masculinity should make a comeback, society has become very divided – those who train want masculinity to return, it's all about big muscles [...].' (Man, 23 years)

Recognition and praise are important among boys!

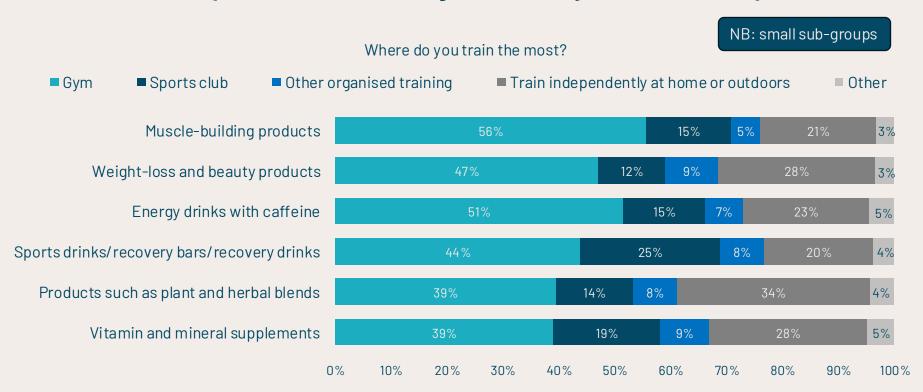


The motivation is not actually well-being, but appearance. The big trend is for girls to train to get a bigger bum, that's a major focus. Boys are more focused on the upper body. I think recognition and praise are important for boys [...].' (Woman, 21 years)

7 in 10 train at least once a week regardless of what products they use. Users of muscle-building products and sports drinks have the highest training frequency.



Nearly 6 in 10 users of muscle-building products train most frequently in a gym. Consumers of sports drinks have a higher tendency to train with a sports club.





Use of dietary supplements and social media, and body-image pressure



Body and self-image - of course we're influenced!

Perfect bodies in all channels – it's hard not to be influenced.

The ideals are unattainable for many. Our informants want to be the best version of themselves through extensive training and the right diet along with dietary supplements, but it's difficult to be satisfied.

All of them firmly reject the use of steroids.



'Impossible to avoid seeing the really muscular figures; when you've seen that over a long period of time, I think it has an impact on me [...]. A lot of people use doping and dangerous substances; many die young. I'm aware of this, mustn't let it go too far. But it's difficult to be 100% satisfied; I could look even better [...].'

Interviewer: 'When has it gone too far?' 'When it starts to affect your mental health [...]. I absolutely do not take steroids; it's a big health risk. But I'm happy to take dietary supplements.' (Man, 18 years)

'A lot of my friends have deleted Tik-Tok because it's had an adverse effect on them at times, being exposed to so many perfect bodies [...] it affects your self-image and self-confidence, focusing on others instead of yourself.' (Woman, 24 years)

Changeable and unrealistic ideals



'[...] the ideal goes up and down all the time. Not long ago, you were supposed to look like a Kardashian, with a narrow waist and big hips; an unrealistic ideal! Before that, it was popular to be super thin; it goes in waves all the time, impossible to keep up 100%. The most important thing for me is to train so that I feel good, accentuate my best features; I'm not going to be super curvy – being slim and fit is more important.' (Woman, 21 years)

On a quest for credibility

Constant exposure to big muscles, a perfect body, a perfect life and countless quick-fix solutions – in the social media jungle, the most credible contributors and stories are sought within the framework of quick-fix solutions. Several factors promote credibility:

- Not sponsored
- Large number of followers, preferably incl. friends and family
- A certain realism in what they say



'He's associated with sponsorship from a specific dietary supplement company, but in the video he says that «we sell this, but to be honest, you don't need it». This gives him credibility.'
(Man, 24 years)

'[...] preferably been widely talked about before trying it yourself. If they only have 30 followers, it's pretty dubious. Don't just get information from one person. More reassuring if friends and acquaintances like the same.' (Woman, 24 years)

'It doesn't happen in a vacuum – that everyone suddenly decided that now we'll take this and that dietary supplement [...].' (Woman, 24 years)

If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!



'It has to be pretty realistic for me to be influenced by it [...] face masks that can remove all blackheads and impurities in 10 minutes! That's not something that can happen overnight. For me to be influenced, it has to be a known product that people are aware of.' (Woman, 24 years)

These two are highlighted as credible:



Hva jeg bruker av kosttilskudd....

Sett 4,6k ganger for 4 år siden ... mer



Arild Haugen 4,86k

Arild Haugen



Noel Deyzel

They are described as inspirational, experienced and open, and have a large number of followers. This gives them credibility.

[...] open about the fact he used to take steroids, says people shouldn't do that, informs us.'

'[...]strong, cool, beefy. Enough that I trust him.'

Dietary supplements I use..... Viewed 4.6k times 4 years ago ...

Scepticism among some towards fitness influencers

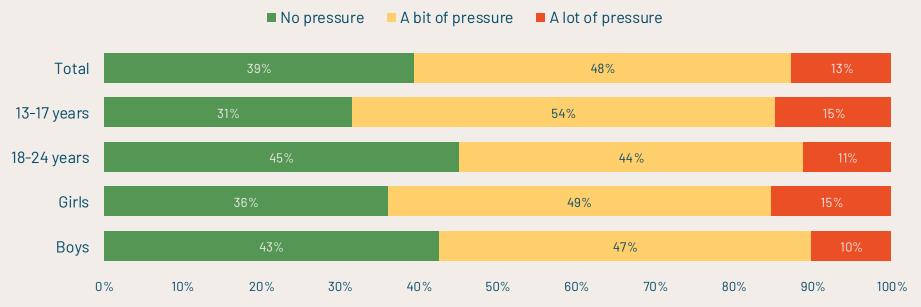
It's argued that they are mainly concerned with the aesthetic, or that they come up with seemingly new exercises and tips that are done completely wrong.

'[...] fitness influencers – only focused on the aesthetic part of training, not those who are focused on ergonomics and quality of life.'
Woman, 21 years)

'[...] training videos in particular, exercises and tips that are completely wrong, just for the sake of doing something different. They look like they're coming up with something new, but there's no help. Need to be a bit critical.'
(Woman, 24 years)

The majority feel pressure in sport, but few experience high levels of pressure. Girls and those under 18 stand out

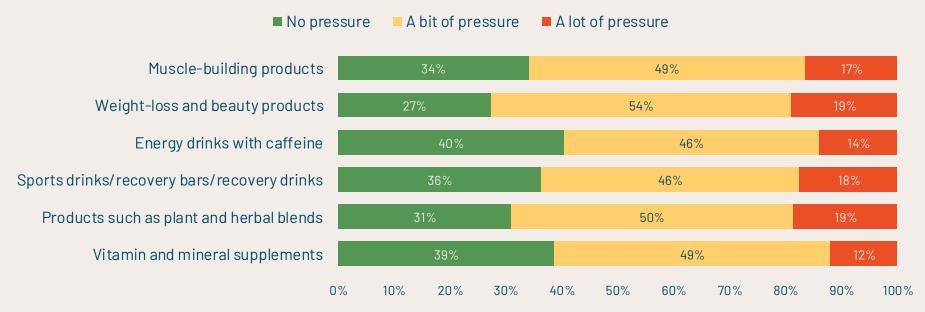
Some young people can feel different types of pressure in daily life. Does the following apply to you? Pressure to do well in sport





Users of weight-loss and beauty products as well as plant and herbal blends tend to feel more pressure to do well in sport

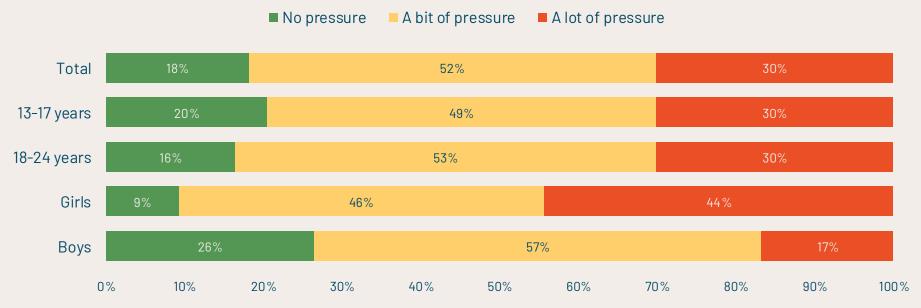
Some young people can feel different types of pressure in daily life. Does the following apply to you? Pressure to do well in sport





3 in 10 feel a lot of body-image pressure - as many as 4 in 10 girls

Some young people can feel different types of pressure in daily life. Does the following apply to you? Pressure to look good and have a nice body

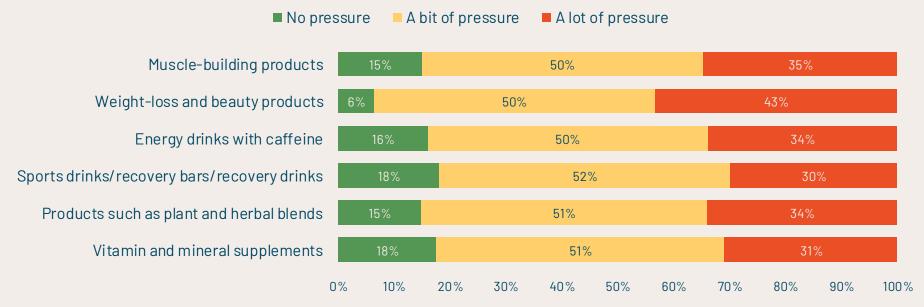




Users of weight-loss and beauty products feel even more body-image pressure than others

NB: small sub-groups

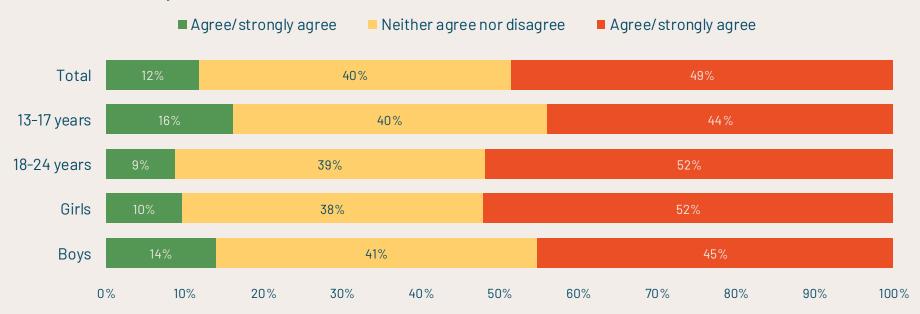
Some young people can feel different types of pressure in daily life. Does the following apply to you? Pressure to look good and have a nice body





Influencers only manage to make a few feel better - the youngest are the most positive

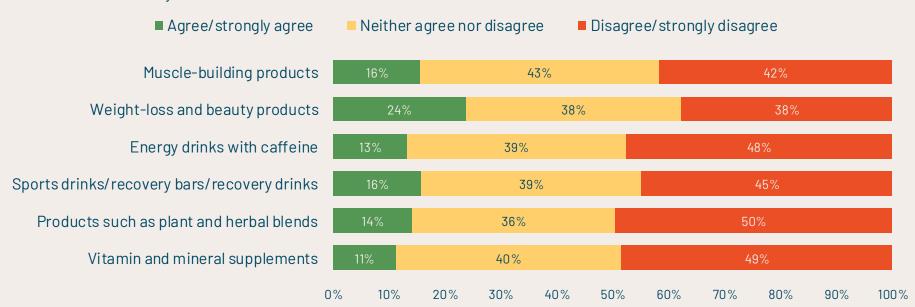
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Influencers make me feel better about myself





Users of weight-loss and beauty products are the most likely to say that influencers have a positive impact on their self-esteem

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Influencers make me feel better about myself





What factors are considered when buying dietary supplements, and where do young people buy them?



In in-depth interviews, 4 factors in particular were highlighted as important when buying dietary supplements

Price

'Should be cheap. Not the dearest.
Cheaper if you buy a pack of 10. Then 3 or 4 of us get together and share the cost.'

Practicalities

'Physical shop – should be able to stop off and buy it on the way to somewhere.
Otherwise more practical online.
Delivered to the door, or click and collect.'

Safety

'[...] that it's from a safe factory, not a scary factory in China and that it's the real deal. That you get what you order.'

'Buy something a bit more expensive, purer protein, certified and all that. No desire to digest something that might damage my health.'

Nutritional content

'For me, the nutritional content on the packet, protein per 100 grams. That's all I care about, plus the price.'

Safety is important, and young people have various strategies for choosing safe sales channels and products

Norwegian retailers

'Preferably sold in Norway, can be a foreign brand, but a Norwegian online retailer, or physical shop. Sunnkost, for instance. Then I trust it more.'

'Stringent rules and checks before the products are sold, compared with, for instance, the USA.'

Specialist retailers/pharmacy

'First time I try, I'll speak to someone who works there. A bit sceptical about what's in it – if there's more than just active ingredients, what are the other things in the pills.'

'I chose Gevita because it's from a pharmacy, more trustworthy than products you can only get from Vita or other online retailers.

More credible.'

Established/good reviews/known brands

'I use websites that are more known. Not those that are not much talked about. I check Trustpilot to see if the website is real.'

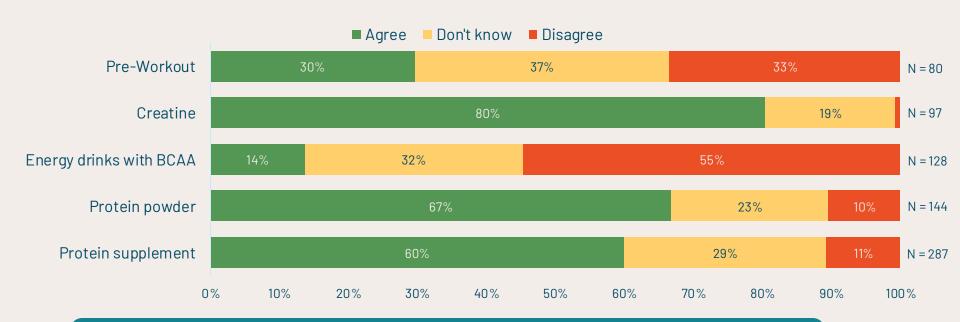
'I always use the same online retailer, Bodylab [...].'
Interviewer: 'Any you stay clear of?'
'Those without good reviews, or

with a poor website design, poor customer reviews.'

Some dietary supplements are considered healthy, others are treated with a bit more scepticism and uncertainty

NB: small sub-groups

Below are some statements on whether... What I use is healthy

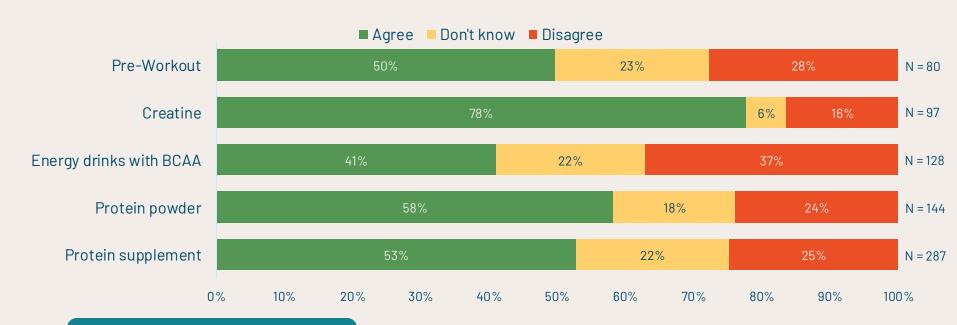


They are particularly uncertain about whether PWO (pre-workout products) and energy drinks with BCAA are healthy, or they believe they are not healthy. Almost 3 in 5 aged below 18 do not know if PWO and energy drinks with BCAA are healthy or not.

Young people believe they often know what dietary supplements contain

NB: small sub-groups

Below are some statements on whether... I know what it contains

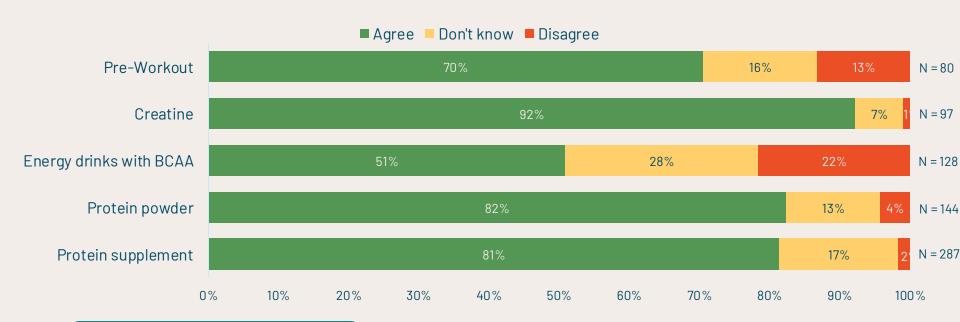


Boys are more likely to claim they know what the supplements contain.

Young people largely consider the dietary supplements they use to be safe

NB: small sub-groups

Below are some statements on whether... What I use is safe

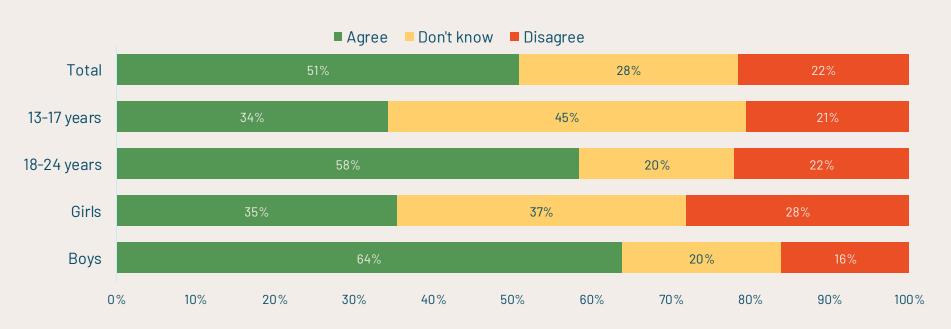


There is more uncertainty about PWO and energy drinks with BCAA.

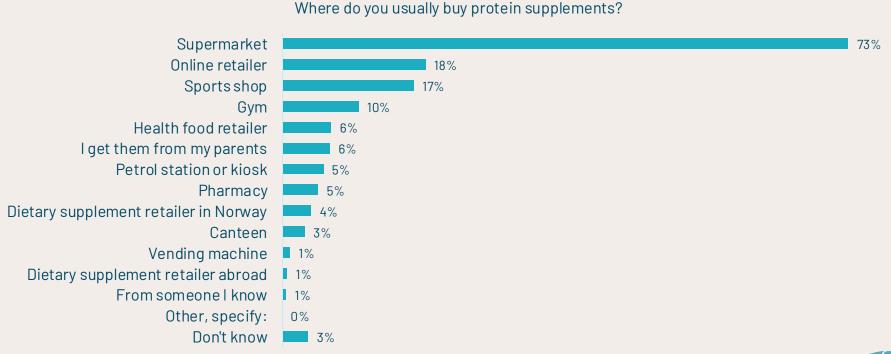
Girls and young people aged 13-17 are more sceptical about whether energy drinks with BCAA are safe

NB: small sub-groups

Below are some statements on whether... What I use is safe

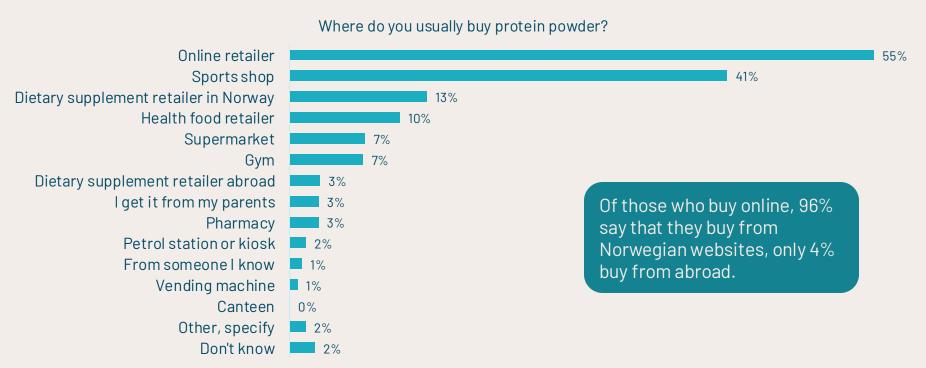


Protein supplements purchased mostly in supermarkets...



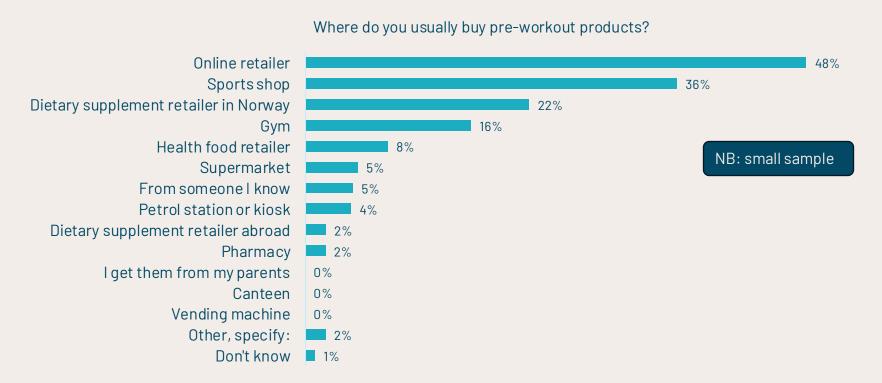


...while protein powder is mostly bought online



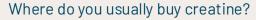


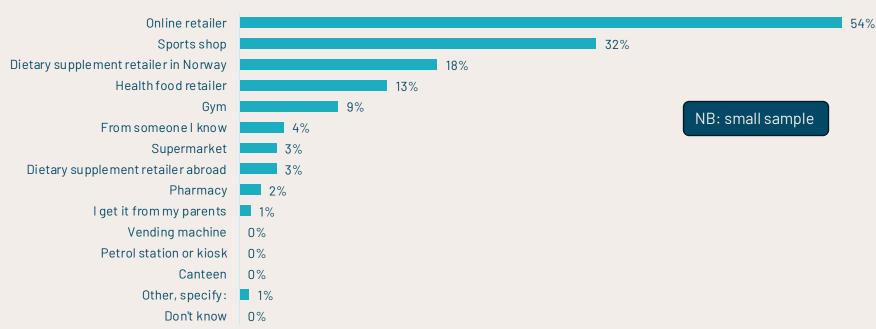
Pre-workout products are also bought mostly online...





...and the same applies to creatine







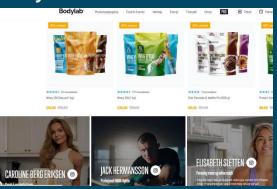
These 4 online stores are a popular choice for buying dietary supplements for muscle growth.

Tights.no tops the list.

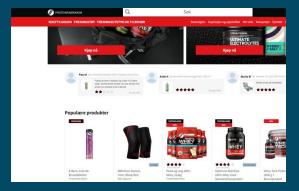
Tights.no



Bodylab



Proteinfabrikken



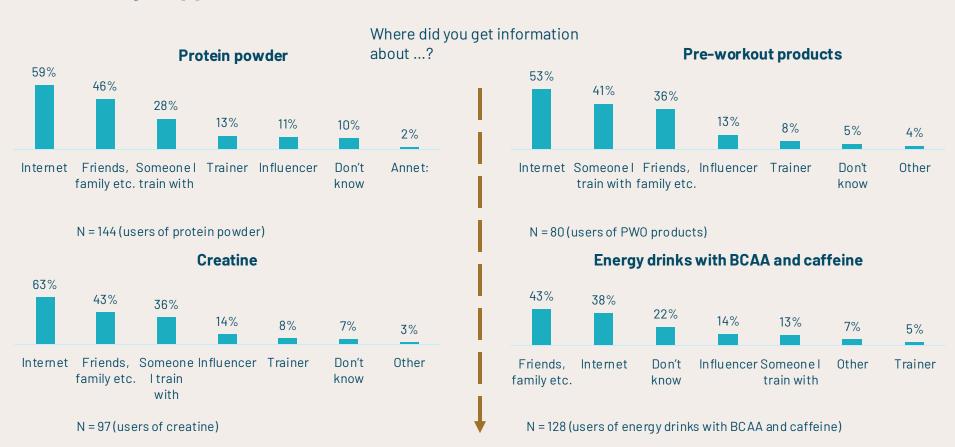
Gymgrossisten



Where do young people get information about dietary supplements, and how do they know where to find this information?

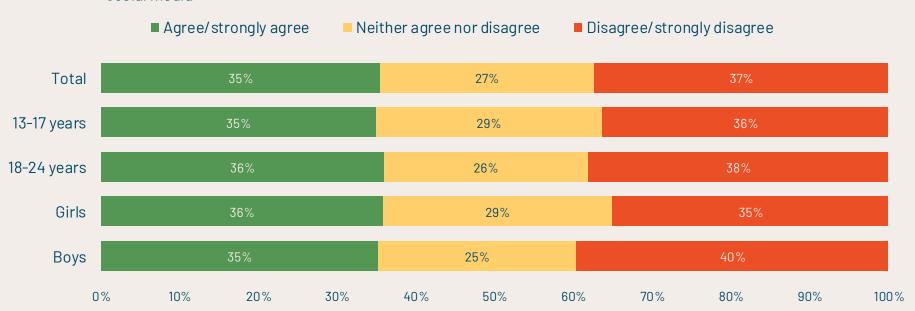


Internet and friends and family are the main sources of information about dietary supplements



Nearly 4 in 10 say they learn a lot about nutrition from SoMe – no significant gender gap or differences across age groups

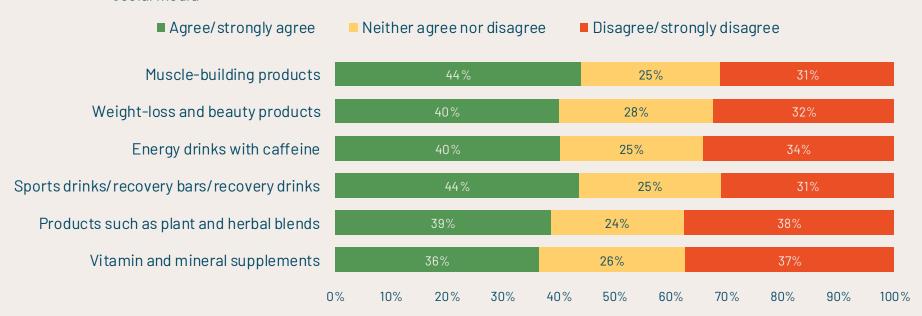
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? I learn a lot about nutrition from social media





Users of muscle-building products and sports drinks in particular say they learn a lot about nutrition from social media

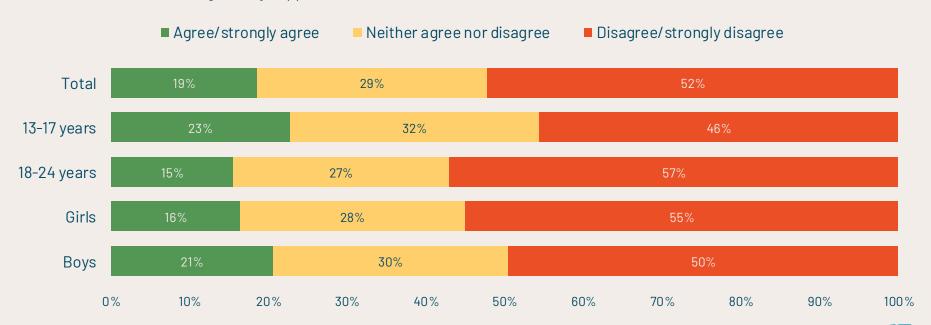
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? I learn a lot about nutrition from social media





2 in 10 believe they have received good advice from influencers – those under 18 seem more receptive to advice than others

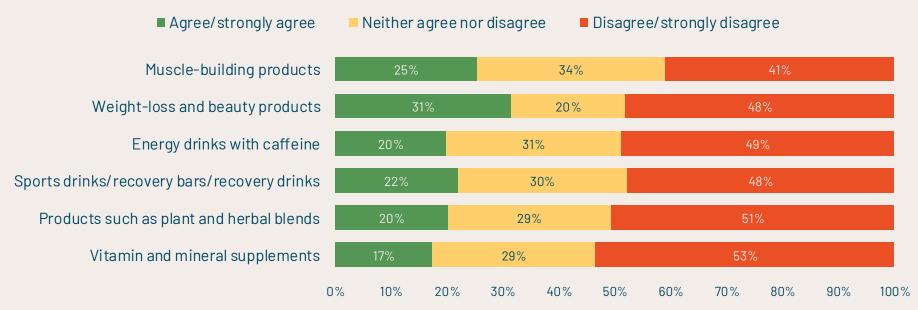
To what extent do you agree with the following statement? I have received good advice from influencers about using dietary supplements





Users of muscle-building products and weight-loss and beauty products in particular say they have received good advice from influencers about using dietary supplements

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? I have received good advice from influencers about using dietary supplements





For users of protein powder, there is a particularly significant difference across age groups, and those under 18, i.e. children, are far more receptive to advice from influencers than those over 18

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? I have received good advice from influencers about using dietary supplements NB: small sub-groups ■ Agree/strongly agree Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree/strongly disagree Total 34% 13-17 years 23% 23% 18-24 years 38% 33% Girls 32% 27% Boys 37% 38%

50%

60%

70%

80%

90%

40%



100%

10%

20%

30%

0%

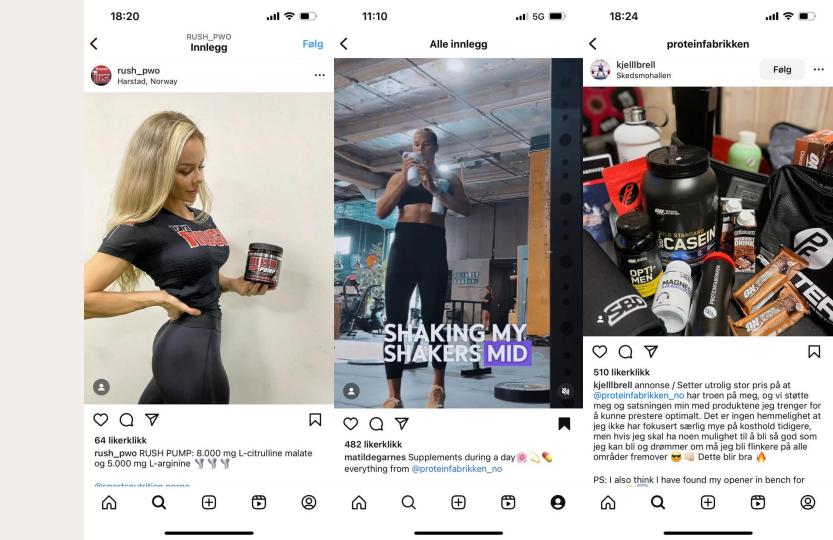


Examples of dietary supplement advertising



Advertising on Instagram has some main features:

- A strong focus on the body
- Well-trained role models are used
- Use of multiple products is often promoted
- Practices vary in relation to labelling advertising content, and the labelling can be ambiguous



Manufacturers use 'ambassadors'

- Some manufacturers are looking for ambassadors as opposed to influencers
- The distinction is not clear, but an ambassador will often be linked to a brand over a long period
- It may be that the word 'ambassador' carries more credibility than 'influencer'



Ambassador or

influencer?



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18:28

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Føla

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Følg

(F)

18:35

Online retailers promise a lot - and use creative language

295 ma



Næringsinnhold	pr 1 cps
niacin (vit B3)	12 mg (75%)
Vit B6(pyrodoksin hcl)	2,5 mg(63%)
krompikolinat	60 mcg (150%)
Dexaburn proprietary thermo blend	450 mg

*Prosent av daglig referanse ikke beregnet

Koffein

Ingredienser: Koffein, olivenbladekstrat, kanelekstrakt, ingefærekstrakt,paprika, spansk pepper,Acetamid, sort peppe,Gelatin (kapsel), Stabilisator(E460 veg.E470b),b-cyklodekstrin.Kan inneholde spor av **egg**, **soya**, **melk** og **havre**.

DEXABURN KOSTTILSKUDD- Den ultimate fettforbrenningskatalysatoren

Innholder ingridienser som koffein, olivenblad ekstrakt, ingefær ekstrakt, schisandra ekstrakt, vitamin B3 (niacin), vitamin B6(pyridoxin HCL), spansk pepperekstrakt(capsicum annum) og krom-pikolinat.

Dexaburn fra Dynamix Reserch er utviklet med den ytterste kvalitetssikringen slik at du får mest mulig ut av produktet. Dette er en fettforbrenner som er mer potent enn de fleste på markedet. Dynamix Dexaburn inneholder flere aktive stoffer som har vist seg å ha en svært positiv effekt på fettreduksjonen din.

Egenskaper:

- Et av de fremste tilskuddene på markedet designet for å brenne fett
- · Svært kjent produkt og produsent som har god omdømme
- Høy mengde koffein
- · Effektiv termoblanding
- Optimal å kombinere under dietten
- · Innholder evidensbaserte ingredienser

Dynamix Dexaburn 60 caps - Tights.no

Tights.no, 09.09.24

Online retailers promise a lot - and make certain claims

Stardust Body Sculpt:

An effective fat burner with a total of 18 ingredients:

Raspberry ketones make it easier to break down fat and convert it to energy.

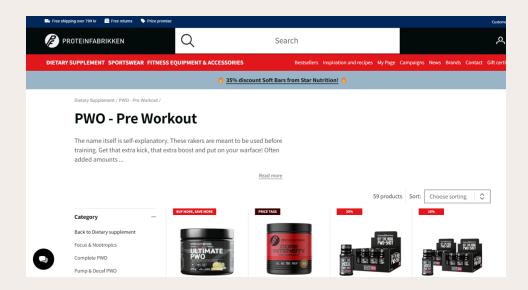
Green tea is an appetite suppresant.

Ginger root extract can enhance the skin's elasticity and give it a natural glow.



Stardust Body Sculpt Fat Burner x2 - Tights.no, 25.09.24

Example 1 of PW0 product descriptions:



Dietary Supplement / PWO - Pre Workout /

PWO - Pre Workout

The name itself is self-explanatory. These rakers are meant to be used before training. Get that extra kick, that extra boost and put on your warface! Often infused with amounts of caffeine and beta alanine, these products are meant to get you in the mood for whatever you're at the gym for. Not recommended just before bedtime or when you need to sit still and read a book.

Buy PWO - Pre Workout at Proteinfabrikken.no

Proteinfabrikken.no, 20.08.24

Example 2 of PW0 product descriptions:

PWO makes training easier

As I said, one of the most important qualities of a good PWO is that you get more energy when you exercise. Many people choose to drink coffee or energy drinks as a pre-workout, but there are many benefits to choosing a professional PWO such as the popular powder The Butcher from Swedish Supplements. In addition to containing liberal amounts of caffeine, they often have a number of other substances that give the training a higher effect. Some work so that you get an elevated body temperature, and in this way do not have to spend as much time warming up. Many people have an unfortunate tendency to not heat up well enough, and this unfortunately leads to some injuries.

With a good PWO, the training gets increased effect

One of the advantages of a PWO giving you more energy is that you have the energy to train more each time. By always putting in a little extra, you get a much greater effect from the training. In addition, substances such as arginine and beta alanine make you get more "pump". This means that the muscles swell up more when you exercise. Not only does this make you look better at the gym, more water and energy in your muscles lays the foundation for significantly greater muscle growth. What is the best PWO for you must be assessed based on how you train. Here at Gymgrossisten, we have many different types and flavors, so you can easily find a product that suits you.

<u>PWO - Pre Workout - Buy from Gymgrossisten - Price</u> guarantee

Gymgrossisten.no, 30.08.24

Product names

Many of the product names are aimed at a young, impressionable target group

Some examples of product names





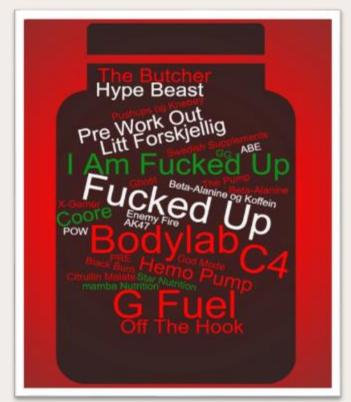






Product names with references to explosives and automatic weapons

The product names C4 and AK47 are a reference to an explosive and an automatic weapon.



What type of pre-workout product do you use?

N = 45 open responses (users of pre-workout products)

Pre-workout products

- A pre-workout product is a powder that is mixed and consumed before training
- One serving often contains as much caffeine as three cups of filtered ground coffee
- Below are two examples of online retailers' descriptions of pre-workout products

Explosive blend of active ingredients and six times the normal amount

Bodylab^a

Muscle building

Food & Snacks

Energy

Equipme

PRO

№ 0ff

Packages

Shopping cart ?

*MAGNESIUM BIDRAR TIL A REDUSERE TRETTHET OG UTMATTELSE

First things first. Our new Pre Workout is far more concentrated than it was before. And when we say concentrated, we mean concentrated. Namely, it contains the maximum permissible dose of active ingredients. We like to take it all out.

To give you a real "in your face" kick, we've also increased the amount of the active ingredient l-citrulline sixfold – and of course added 100mg of caffeine per serving. Wait... Did they say sixfold? Yep. We are fully aware that this sounds like a pretty explosive mix. But you can rest assured that we would never fill you with anything we haven't tested ourselves. Like all our other products, it is therefore developed and tested at our own factory in Denmark.





Flavor burst incoming!

In our eagerness, we completely forgot to mention the taste. It is simply excellent, if we do say so ourselves. Of course, we've kept our two biggest bestsellers: the fresh, tangy Blue Raspberry and Bubblegum Blast with the iconic gum-like taste and scent.

There are also a few "new kids on the block". Say hello to Lemon and Elderflower. Lemon is our version of a fresh and delicious Pre
Workout drink, which gets its sour taste from Italian lemons! Elderflower is perhaps the most summery taste we can imagine – perfectly
balanced between sweet, tart and aromatic.

<u>Pre Workout – energy boost before training! | Bodylab</u> Bodylab.no, 30.08.24



Information Reviews (1) Nutritional Information & Ingredients

The Butcher is perhaps one of the best products that Swedish Supplements has developed. A legend in the fitness world. This is a PWO that leaves a lasting impression and is developed for you who train hard, dedicated and goal-oriented. The Butcher leaves nothing to chance.

- · Updated formula
- · Powerful doses of everything
- · Designed for the toughest workouts
- · With 13 active ingredients

The Butcher is a legendary PWO from Swedish Supplements. This is a PWO that most people have heard of and many have tried. It has now been updated to a new, more modern formula that is composed specifically for those who train hard, dedicated and goal-oriented. This is not a PWO for the beginner.

The Butcher contains everything you would expect from a top-class PWO. It contains generous amounts of AAKG, citrulline, taurine and beta-alanine. In fact, one serving provides 350mg of beta-alanine, which is guaranteed to cause those well-known tingling sensations in the skin before it's time for exercise. Supplemented with caffeine, you can also expect a solid energy boost that will bring even the most tired person to life.

The Butcher also contains carefully selected salts in the form of magnesium and potassium to replace losses during exercise. In addition, it contains vitamin C, niacin, tyrosine, blood amaranth and glucuronolactone. This is a PWO that covers all aspects and does not hold back on the dosage.

If you are a beginner or have limited experience, it is recommended to start with a half dose and evaluate whether you can tolerate a full serving of The Butcher.

Many online retailers offer package deals for muscle growth

Example 1: Build muscles package

Build muscle with this complete package that has everything you need! Quality products from Star Nutrition that accelerate muscle growth and make you have more energy!

Below you can see which products are included in the package and how you should take them to achieve the best possible results!

1 x 12 x Off The Hook PWO Shot, 60 ml - Boosts pump, strength and endurance. Brightens up and promotes razor-sharp focus

- · To be taken before training.
- 1 x BCAA Hardcore, 264 g Stimulates muscle growth and counteracts muscle breakdown
 - · Taken during exercise or between meals.
 - Mix two scoops (10 g) with 300 ml of water, drink in conjunction with exercise
 or take in the morning on rest days.
- 1 x Creatine Monohydrate, 500 g For fast, qualitative muscle growth and improved endurance and strength
 - . Use post-workout with Whey-80.
 - Days 1-5: Mix two heaped teaspoons with 2-4 dl water and drink four times per day. Spread your intake out over the day.
 - Day 6 onwards: Mix a heaped teaspoon with 2-4 dl of water once a day either in the morning or in connection with your workout.

1 x Whey-80, 1 kg - Accelerates muscle building and improves recovery

- . Use post-workout with creatine (mix in the same shaker).
- Mix 0.75-1 dl powder with 2.3 dl water or milk in a shaker. For maximum results, take three servings of Whey-80® daily.

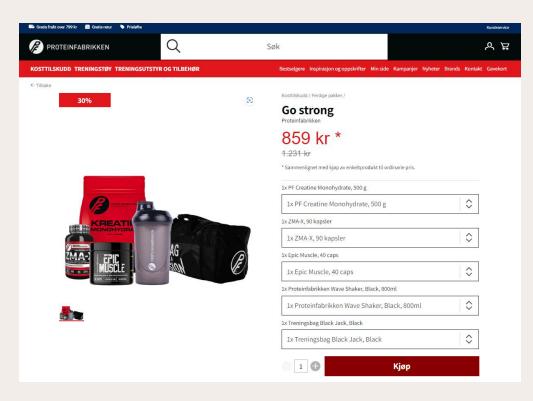
Read more about the products



Buy the build muscles package | Gymgrossisten.no

Gymgrossisten.no, 30.08.24

Example 2: Go strong package



EINFABRIKKEN		Q	S	Search		
SUPPLEMENT SP	ORTSWEAR FI	TNESS EQUIPMENT & ACC	ESSORIES	Bestsellers Inspir	ration and recipes My	Page Camp
1.790 kr	PROTITION	1:128 kr	2.205 kr	1 MI CHAPE		n conse
Information	Reviews	Nutritional Informati	ion & Ingredients			
stronger and stronge and effort. We get cre the increases we are your needs in the pla Protein supports mus phosphate to fire off t more and more peop	r. To be able to ach eatine and protein to looking for. The pr in you have now mis- scle growth, creating the repetitions with le have as corners	achieve. Lift heavier and heavier a nieve and maintain this, you need in through food — but perhaps not en oducts in this package cover the 's ade. se gives the body a larger store of and ZMA + Epic muscle are two of tones in their supplementation reg re repetitions in the sessions.	protein, creatine ough to support rast majority of creatine products we see	See more about ea	ch product here:	
PF Creatine Monohydrate, 500 g					+	
ZMA-X, 90 capsu	les				.+	
Epic Muscle, 40	caps				+	-

Buy Go strong - Proteinfabrikken.no

Proteinfabrikken.no, 20.08.24

Protein powder and other protein products can also be purchased at pharmacies.

This may be a sign of normalisation.





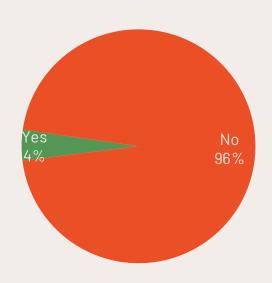
Information about FIM - Professional Committee for Influencer Marketing

FIM: Professional Committee for Influencer Marketing

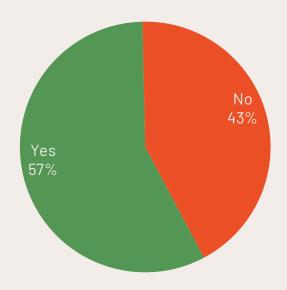
- Appointed in 2019 by the Norwegian Advertisers' Association (ANFO) and the Norwegian Media Businesses' Association
- Self-regulation mechanism
- Covers dietary supplements and cosmetic procedures
- Processes complaints about advertising that creates pressure on body image and appearance for those under 24
- Also deals with pre-clarifications

Almost no one has heard of FIM – and among those who have, only half know what FIM does

Have you heard of FIM? (Professional Committee for Influencer Marketing)



Do you know what FIM does?





Measures to protect young consumers

The Norwegian Consumer Council recommends

- Mandatory labelling of content advertising (as is currently the case for retouched advertising)
- Prioritising oversight of the marketing of online retailers selling dietary supplements
- An evaluation be performed of the Professional Committee for Influencer Marketing (the FIM self-regulation mechanism)

SJEKK FORBRUKERRADET.no

