

# Putting the IRON in IRONMAN

Professional Ironman Braden Currie talks about his new brand ambassador role with ANZCO Foods, the importance of quality beef and lamb in any nutrition plan, and his goals for 2023 and beyond.

#### What does your training schedule look like at the moment?

Right now, I'm training anywhere from 25-30 hours a week, including approx. 25km of swimming, 70km of running and 400-500km on the bike, with the odd gym session thrown in for good measure.

#### How much of a role does diet and nutrition play in your performance as an athlete?

Even on a lighter training day I need around 4,000-5,000 calories and on a heavier day 7,000 to fuel my body, and that can climb right up to 10,000 when particularly intense sessions are involved. Ensuring those calories come from quality, unprocessed whole foods is really important. I eat red meat (beef and lamb) at least three times a week, using it as my primary source of protein.

#### Do you use a nutritionist to stay on top of your diet?

I'm really lucky there, as my wife, Sally, is a qualified naturopath and nutritionist. She sets out all of my dietary plans, which primarily revolve around a paleo design approach to main meals, to optimise protein, nutrient and iron absorption. Carbohydrates are used strategically where required to also ensure I am able to achieve each days training prescription.

#### And why is iron so important for an athlete?

Iron is critical for your hemoglobin stores. Low iron can impact the oxygen carrying ability of your red blood cells, inhibiting your body's ability to deliver oxygen to your muscles - something which is pretty important when you're performing aerobically for eight-odd hours!

I have my iron levels checked quarterly to ensure they're where I need them to be. If you let it drop, it can take 6-8 weeks to get it back up, which can ruin an entire training cycle. Sally monitors those results really closely, adjusting my diet accordingly.

She also factors in where we're training. Earlier this year we had a training block at altitude in Utah. The altitude naturally causes your iron levels to decrease, so we upped our intake of beef and lamb significantly before heading off on that trip.

#### Why did you agree to become a brand ambassador for ANZCO Foods?

It felt like a very natural fit. I grew up on a farm in Methven, in the middle of the South Island. It was a beef and lamb farm, so I've always had a strong connection with the industry.

And Sally and I are super-passionate about nutrition - not only from an athletic perspective, but also as parents to two young children.

We love getting outside and going off on adventures together, living the healthiest, most active lifestyle we can. To do that, you've got to have the right fuel - and quality beef and lamb helps deliver exactly that.

#### What nutritional advice would you give readers?

I think the key point is to try not to overcomplicate things. People get lost in all the dietary fads out there these days. But, if you can just eat food in its most natural form, you can't really go wrong. Fill your trolley with food that hasn't been processed or refined. Eat to nourish yourself, enjoy your food, and feel proud of making good choices.

#### Finally, what are your goals for the year to come?

Well, the big event on the calendar is obviously IRONMAN New Zealand in Taupō next March. There's nothing like competing in front of your home crowd, and I'd love to repeat my performance of 2021 where I managed to cross the line in first place.

All things going to plan, a good finish in Taupō will allow me to qualify for the IRONMAN World Championships in Kona, Hawaii. Winning that is certainly the end goal - I finished third in the World Championship race in Utah earlier this year, and if I get things right on the day I think I've got every chance of taking out Kona.

"Fueling your body with quality whole foods is really important. Red meat plays a critical role in that."

#### Braden Currie

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ANZCO Foods  
Ambassador

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Crafted with care.  
Shared with pride.

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