



## Article Side

Cordyceps sinensis: Fueling the Energy Demands of Athletes by [Mack Shepperson](#)

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Cordyceps a product of traditional Tibetan and Chinese medicine is currently the focus of clinical trials on sports medicine. Scientists are amazed about how a small mushroom that grows on arthropods can provide added energy and endurance for athletes. While they're still figuring out how it works inside the body, early Tibetans were ahead of their time in exploiting its wonderful benefits.

Tibetan shepherds discovered the energy-giving properties of Cordyceps after observing how their livestock became more revitalized after eating mushrooms growing from caterpillars. This caterpillar mushroom, Cordyceps sinensis, was later formulated by Ming Dynasty herbal doctors as royal medicine for the Chinese emperor. The rarity of the species made it even more valuable and reserved only for Chinese nobles at that time.

Cordyceps first gained international attention during the 1993 World Track and Field Championships. After breaking the world records in the 1,500 meter, 3,000 meter, and 10,000 meter races, the runners from the Chinese women's team were accused of using steroids. Their coach, Ma Junren, revealed that his athletes only took Cordyceps as a supplement. No other illegal performance-enhancing substances were detected from the record-breaking athletes.

How does Cordyceps improve athletic ability? Taking extracts of the mushroom can enhance the functions of vital organs such as the heart, lungs, liver and kidneys. The supplement increases the absorption of cellular oxygen and improves blood supply, which are both necessary to combat fatigue and muscle soreness during physical exertion. It also protects against free radical damage and augments the immune system.

In one study, a comparison was made to compare the performances of athletes who take Cordyceps sinensis extract and those who only take a placebo. After six weeks of continuous usage, the oxygen intake of the Cordyceps group was nearly double that of the placebo group's. The increased oxygen intake signified more efficient use of body energy. Another study showed that cyclists who took Cordyceps could go on longer than those who didn't take the supplement.

While the use of the fungi is more common among athletes of endurance events such as long distance running and cycling, bodybuilders are now also reaping its benefits. Cordyceps mushroom extract can also have a steroidogenic effect on humans, which means it enhances the body's ability to build more muscle and improve muscular endurance. In fact, some bodybuilding and endurance supplements available contain traces of Cordyceps.

So far, no side effects or adverse reactions have been reported by people taking Cordyceps sinensis extract. But buyers are cautioned about purchasing substandard or counterfeit products being marketed as the real thing. Remember, before taking any form of performance-altering substance, you should first consult a physician. For more information, you can visit [peacehealth.org](#), [mindandmuscle.net](#), and [chinese-herbs.org](#).

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