

Want to try the KijFit vegan month?

Read this document carefully to be well informed before you start the challenge!

Put together by Kije Brinkhoff from KijFit.

Introduction KijFit

KijFit is a health movement and physiotherapy practice founded by Kije Brinkhoff. By providing all kinds of different challenges that are accessible for everyone, we hope to introduce as many people as possible to a more sustainable lifestyle.

An important factor of a sustainable lifestyle is living more consciously. With our challenges, we try to make people more conscious of their nutrition, sleep, activity or how we affect our planet. This contributes to a healthier lifestyle for body, mind and environment. At KijFit we believe that you can become stronger both mentally and physically by living more sustainable!

In this document, KijFit provides you with tools and knowledge to start or try out eating vegan. KijFit uses the latest research to provide you with the most honest and recent knowledge. But we advise you to always stay critical and do your own research.

Before you start!

We always want to remind you in advance of every KijFit Challenge that it is not about the results. It's all about the experience and what we can learn from it. We'd like to emphasize that this challenge cannot be seen as 'the gold standard', it is simply to try out something new. But there's a big chance that you will have a positive experience in the upcoming weeks, because you will become more aware of nutrition and take on a healthier lifestyle.

What you'll need to find out beforehand

It is important to know what the long-term effects as well as the short-term effects of your new diet will be. What will your daily nutrition be? And what effects will it have on your body composition? Also research the risks this challenge might entail, like a deficit of a specific nutrient. Questions you should ask yourself in advance are:

- What do you require from your body for daily energy needs and what recovery is needed for this?
- What kind of nutrients do you need most to support these daily needs, such as sports or other activities?
- How does the new lifestyle fit into your daily life compared to the one you have now?
- Why do you want to try the challenge?

How will this challenge help me live a more sustainable lifestyle?

We live in a consumer society. Our consuming keeps going on, while we don't even need most of what we buy. Because we constantly buy new clothes, products or food, many of those are produced in large numbers. This only takes supply and demand into account, but unfortunately the negative consequences of large production, such as high CO2 emissions, are often ignored.

Trying this sustainable challenge from KijFit will make you think a little longer about what you eat. It probably requires a little more planning and research. This makes you more aware of your personal consumption behaviour. As a result, you will probably end up buying fewer "nonsense" products and less surplus food than usually. Therefore, you focus on *essential consumption*, and contribute less to the spiral of endless consumption and production. This way, the challenge helps you to adopt a more sustainable lifestyle.

A study from 2018 tried to grasp the impact that, for example, food production has on our planet and the environment. This study describes how our environment could benefit if we all stopped eating



animal products. In that case we could reduce our land use by 76%, we would reduce our CO₂ emissions by 49% and our freshwater abstractions by 19%⁷. Switching to a vegan diet or eating less animal products could therefore lead to major environmental improvements. The EAT Lancet Commission also advised that we had to cut our animal based food consumption and eat a lot less sugar³.

Can you start eating vegan right away?

It is possible, but first you have to learn how to eat vegan in a responsible way. For example, it is very important to take nutrient deficiencies into account.

A recent study reviews many researches done on the comparison of a plant-based diet with an animal product-based diet. It shows that vegans averagely consume fewer saturated fatty acids (SFA), retinol, vitamins B12 and D, calcium, zinc and proteins. On the other hand, there is a higher intake of fibre, magnesium, iron, folic acid, vitamins B1, C and E in vegan eating patterns in comparison to other eating patterns⁹.

We are happy to explain the most important nutrients that are mentioned. It is important to pay attention to this when you start eating vegan:

- Proteins
 - Proteins consist of amino acids. The human body cannot produce nine types of specific amino acids itself. It is essential for the body that we get these amino acids through our diet. These essential proteins are generally found in animal products, but not all types of seeds, vegetables, nuts and grains contain all the essential amino acids. As long as there is sufficient protein intake, regardless of the source of proteins, muscle building can take place. With a plant-based diet, it is important that you use multiple types of protein sources to provide your body with all essential proteins⁵.
- Vegan BCAAs:
 - BCAAs are supplements with leucine, valine, isoleucine and they are very important for muscle protein synthesis. It contains three of the most important amino acids that you should get through food. BCAAs can be found in a variety of plant-based foods such as: beans, soy, chickpeas, legumes, seeds, tree nuts and peanuts. Note: they differ in composition.
The use of this supplement is recommended in combination with sports that require a lot of muscle recovery, such as fitness or strength training.
- Vitamin B12
 - Vegans often have a deficit in vitamin B12⁹. If you only follow a plant-based diet for a short period, such as 4-6 weeks, you don't have to worry about developing a B12 deficiency. It is likely that your body has a large amount of B12 stored, which is usually sufficient for at least six². If you are unsure about this, consult your dietician or take B12 supplements.
- Vitamin D
 - There are two types of vitamin D. Vitamin D2 is obtained from food and vitamin D3 from sunlight. D2 is found in animal products⁶. Plant-based foods also contains vitamin D, but only in small doses.
Are you taking the challenge between September and March? Then we recommend taking vitamin D-supplements during the challenge.



- Calcium
 - Calcium is important for maintaining a healthy body. It is essential for our bones and teeth. For example, getting enough calcium is especially important for growing children, or patients with a fracture. If you don't eat any dairy products, the risk of a calcium deficiency is very high. Calcium is found in nuts, vegetables and legumes, but you can also take calcium as a supplement (in combination with zinc). Use vitamin D for efficient absorption.
- Zinc
 - Zinc is a mineral that plays an important role in tissue and muscle renewal. It is also important for the immune system. You can get zinc through eating dairy, meat, and shellfish. With a vegan diet, you can get it through nuts and grains, or through zinc-supplements (in combination with calcium).
- Fatty Acids – Omega 3
 - Fatty acids help you to reduce the inflammatory values in your body and to keep your resistance high. Fatty acids can be obtained through Omega 3 algae supplements.
- Creatine
 - Creatine is a physical substance but can also be obtained through (mainly) meat products. Research has been done into creatine and its effects in meat eaters versus vegetarians, but unfortunately not yet specifically for vegans. However, we can already learn a lot from the results of the vegetarian groups. It appeared that there are 'responders' and 'non-responders'. Responders are people who respond to the intake of creatine supplements. This can result in longer or better training sessions and/or there is a possibility you gain some weight in a short time (this will mainly be from fluids). Non-responders do not respond to creatine intake because their creatine content is already high enough. The studies that have been done with vegetarians show a significant difference in responders and non-responders. There are considerably more responders in the vegetarian group, which means it is wise for vegetarians and vegans to use creatine supplements. Creatine has proven to improve muscle and psychosocial performance. Creatine supplements are therefore especially recommended when you exercise a lot, especially with high-intensity work outs¹. Ask your dietician about this for more information.

To get the most out of this challenge, personal coaching is recommended. Schedule an appointment online or start a chat box session.

Please contact us via kije@kijfit.nl or call + 31 6 11 32 30 68. Or check out the website for more information: www.kijfit.nl.

When you start a challenge don't forget to mention @thesustainablephysio on Instagram when you share your experiences. Enjoy and learn from all the great new experiences!

Pro-claimer:

All the challenges are free and available for everyone. KijFit cannot be held responsible for any health inconveniences or issues in this matter. KijFit tries to provide you with the most honest and recent knowledge about any challenge. But always stay critical, do your own research and act responsible.



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