

What are Lionel Messi's diet and training secrets?

Text adapted from an article on Goal.com 14.3.19

The Barcelona football star has been celebrated for his star skills and **incredible ability**, but how does he **maintain** his form and fitness?

Lionel Messi seems to get better season by season, defying the expectations that naturally come with growing older. Despite being in his thirties, Messi still looks better and brighter than ever and doesn't look like he will be slowing down any time soon. So, what is the secret to his football abilities, and how much of it is down to his dietary and **workout** regime as opposed to **raw talent**?



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How does Messi train?

According to most sources, Messi isn't as **rigorous** about exercise as other players like Neymar and Cristiano Ronaldo, but that doesn't mean he doesn't **keep up** a consistent workout routine.

When training, he primarily focuses on three key factors: speed, strength, and stretching. In fact, it's been reported that he stretches for over an hour every day during the La Liga season. Not only does this method keep his muscles agile and optimal, but it **boosts** Messi's performance during gameplay.

Otherwise, his **routine** is divided into different sections, each of which consists of several exercises. And while some weight training certainly plays a role in Messi's overall fitness (and his muscles), the majority of exercises revolve around **maximising** agility and building speed.

What does Messi eat?

You are what you eat, so it's no wonder that Messi is on a **strict** diet to help maintain his footballing ability.

Italian nutritionist Giuliano Poser has revolutionised the Argentina international's diet since working with him in 2014. He has identified five key foods – water, olive oil, whole grains, fresh fruit and fresh vegetables – as the foundation for Messi's dietary **regime**.

"Also very good are nuts and seeds," Poser explained and has also advised his client to **cut down on** the sugar.

"[Sugar] is the worst thing for the muscles. The farther he stays away from sugars, the better," he continued.

Like many nutritionists working with athletes, he **has reduced** his meat consumption including his favourite Argentine dish, Milanese, a breadcrumb-coated fillet of beef. According to AS, the striker has also been told to give up pizza, another one of his favourite foods.

What other secrets does Messi have?

Of course, Messi's **natural gift**, ability and skill is what makes him such a talented footballer. His incredible technical **proWess** is one in a million, and they are innate. There are so many **fitness exercises** and regimes you can try out in the hopes of trying to become a player like Messi, but there's a reason why he's touted as a GOAT (Greatest Of All Time) – he is just a unique, born and bred talent.

Before Reading the text:

What sort of training do you think a football star like Messi does regularly? What is the purpose of the training?

Make two lists in the columns below, one of foods that you think would be good for athletes such as footballers and one of foods you think they should avoid.

Good food for athletes	Bad food for athletes

After reading the text do you think that the article sets out to show:

- a) natural talent is more important than training and diet to become a great footballer
- b) for Messi regular training and diet are just as important as having innate talent
- c) to be the Greatest of All Time at football requires natural talent as well as discipline and hard work
- d) Messi wouldn't be such a successful sportsman without fitness coaches and nutritionists

Support your answer with excerpts from the text.

Find 8 pairs of synonyms from these words taken from the text:

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Workout</i> | <i>Reduce</i> | <i>Routine</i> | <i>Strict</i> |
| <i>Rigorous</i> | <i>Raw talent</i> | <i>Maximise</i> | <i>Cut down on</i> |
| <i>Maintain</i> | <i>Keep up</i> | <i>Regime</i> | <i>Fitness exercises</i> |
| <i>Incredible ability</i> | <i>Boost</i> | <i>Natural gift</i> | <i>Prowess</i> |

What qualities does it take to be great at something?

Look at the Word Cloud below. It contains adjectives describing some of the different qualities required to be a great footballer. Select the 7 qualities that you think are most important and explain why.



Now think of a different profession and create your own Word Cloud of adjectives for the qualities you believe are required to be successful in this career. Scale the size of the words, making the more important qualities bigger and the less important qualities smaller.

Do not write down or tell anyone the profession you are thinking of but show them the Word Cloud and if they can identify which profession it is from the qualities it requires.