

## **Heathly Living Magazine**

### **Hilary Swank Gets Phenomenally Fit with Flax**

Just looking at the sculpted muscle on Hilary Swank's back, one can see the beautiful physical transformation she underwent in order to play a heavy weight boxer in the new film "Million Dollar Baby." Yes, Ms. Swank put in many hours at the gym and in the boxing ring to get the desired result; but there was another key component to her success – flax oil. Just ask Grant Roberts, Hilary Swank's trainer on the film. When he recently spoke to *Healthy Living*, he said, "Flax seed oil is responsible for a significant part of Hilary's success in achieving the look she did for her role in the film." Even Hilary herself, talked about flax oil on a recent appearance on The Tonight Show with Jay Leno while promoting the film. Here's the story about how flax helped Hilary Swank to phenomenal fitness.

#### **The Challenge**

Grant Roberts was hired only nine weeks before film production began. At his first meeting with Hilary, she was waifishly thin (only 110 lbs) for her 5'7 1/2" frame. "Only then did I learn she intended to fight the 140-pound Women's World Boxing Champion in the movie, Roberts said. "Lucia Rijker, who plays the Champ, is in real life, the actual 140 pound Women's Champion!" Roberts said that in order for the film to be credible, Hilary had to look like she belonged in the ring. Thus, he immediately got to work designing her training regimen and equally as important, making significant adjustments to her diet. The studio also had made it clear that they wanted Hilary to gain at least 10 pounds of muscle. Quite a feat!

#### **The Diet**

With limited time and the goal crystal clear, Roberts divined a plan for Hilary that allowed her not only to reach her physical goals, but far surpass them. The diet consisted of mostly proteins (egg whites, fish, etc.), almost no carbohydrates (except for some fibrous vegetables and controlled high-glycemic carb snacks), and flax oil (for the essential fatty acids). The bulk of her caloric intake came from protein (for muscle and repair of muscle tissue after workouts) and flax oil (for continued growth). Flax provided her with nearly 1000 calories a day, a quarter of her daily intake. Without an abundance of carbohydrates, her body began accessing stored fat to use as energy. The essential fatty acids (EFA's) from the flax served to "stoke" the metabolism allowing her body to burn the fat and also digest the 210 grams of protein she was taking in each day. Flax provided high-quality calories for building muscle mass without interfering with the "fat-burning". In short, said Roberts, "Flax oil was pivotal when combined with the very specific diet I had designed for Hilary to pack lean mass weight on while actually reducing her body-fat percentages as her training progressed." In addition to these benefits, Roberts prescribed flax for Hilary for other reasons. He explained, "Not only are EFAs great for enhancing muscular development, stamina, recovery, and protein metabolism (while reducing catabolism). When building muscle, EFAs provide what I like to call 'anti-inflammatory properties' that ease and reduce joint pain significantly." With over four hours of

combined training and boxing a day, Hilary was “riding on the verge of overtraining” – a state she had deep concerns about. Roberts knew that the flax oil would significantly reduce her inflammation and joint pain, keeping her away from that edge.

### **The Results**

With Swank’s hard work and Grant Robert’s guidance, the results were incredible. “In a short period of time, Hilary gained 20 pounds of lean, functional, and aesthetic muscle mass,” said Roberts. And the flax, he said, played an integral role in her success. “Flax seed oil was pivotal when combined with the very specific diet I had designed for Hilary to pack on lean mass weight while actually reducing her body-fat percentages as her training progressed.” Roberts proudly said that for this role, “Hilary was an athlete who just happened to be an Academy Award-winning actress.” We are happy to report that Hilary Swank has been nominated for a Golden Globe Award as Best Actress award for her role in Million Dollar Baby. But even more important, in the world of health, her example illuminates the vital role flax oil can play in getting fit and athletic performance.

### **Peak Performance – How Athletes Benefit From Flax**

*Healthy Living* talks with Herb Joiner-Bey, ND (“Dr. Flax”), and author of the *Healing Power of Flax*

HL: Why should our athletic readers, in particular, supplement with flax?

HJB: Well, for several reasons. The most important being that the essential fatty acids contained in flax oil allow one to optimize the energy reserves in the body. The EFAs work on several levels. First, they improve the metabolism of fats. This is especially helpful with endurance sports. Think marathon runners. When they “hit the wall” and their glycogen stores are used up, the body begins burning fats. In this case, efficient burning of fats really makes a difference in performance. Second, EFAs improve response time. Electrical impulses move from the brain out to muscles across cell membranes. Omega-3 fatty acids, what you find in flax oil, are found on cell membranes and are the most efficient fatty acids in allowing these electrical impulses to move cell to cell. Thus, response time is improved. Third, muscle repair. Athletic sports tear down tissue like crazy. Protein is needed for repair. This again happens at the cellular level and the type of fatty acids present on the cell membrane significantly effect the speed and quality of tissue repair. Omega-3’s are the best for rebuilding tissue.

HL: Wow, why don’t more athletes supplement with flax oil?

HJB: They do; it just hasn’t been in the public knowledge. You don’t have to be a professional athlete though; anyone who exercises can benefit from flax. It is particularly helpful with inflammation.

HL: Can you tell us more about flax and its anti-inflammatory properties?

HJB: Sure. The problem is that the American diet has an imbalanced intake of fatty acids. Most of the fats we eat contain Omega-6 fatty acids. Whatever fatty acids we eat are what you find at the cellular level, on the cell membrane. This is significant as the fatty acids on the cell membrane are used to make local hormones that control inflammation, smooth

muscle tone and blood clotting tendencies. Imbalanced intake of fatty acids causes local hormonal imbalances that contribute to swelling and a pro-inflammatory state. Chronic inflammation can lead to cardiovascular disease amongst other problems. If you are getting your Omega-3's from flax oil, you'll have more of balance in your system. Omega-3 fatty acids are much more efficient 'workers' on the cell membrane. Consequently, you will have a less inflammatory state. That's it in a nutshell. I like to say, don't put sugar in a Mercedes Benz. When you eat the wrong fats, you are putting poor fuel in your body, the ultimate Mercedes-Benz.

HL: How do we ensure we get the right fats?

HJB: Food and supplementation. Eat lots of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, small, wild ocean fish (salmon, sardines, etc.), products from livestock raised on green vegetation (not grain-fed), hormone-free meats and drink plenty of water. Stay away from sugar and refined foods. Omega-3's can be found in walnuts and leafy green vegetables but the best way to ensure you are getting enough is by supplementing with a good, unfiltered, organic flax oil. You want to get the oil with the highest amount of lignans – that's the fiber from the actual flax seed. Lignans keep negative estrogen influences in both men women in check. The general rule is 1 tablespoon of flax oil per 100 pounds of body weight.

HL: Surely you must have a flax recipe for the sports-minded?

HJB: The easiest way to deliciously get your flax is by adding into your current daily menu. If you have smoothie in the morning as many athletic people do, just add a couple tablespoons of flax oil. Or add 2 tablespoons to your morning oatmeal; it gives it a wonderful, nutty flavor. My favorite way to use it is in salad dressing. I use flax oil in place of olive oil. And if you want a high-glycemic carbohydrate snack (perfect after an intense workout), try making my Spiced Pumpkin Bread (see recipe at side).

HL: What's your final word on flax oil and fitness?

HJB: It's been around for a long, long time. Trust nature's intelligence. Legend has it that Julius Caesar recommended flax seeds to the Roman legions. We all know their physique and tremendous power! And Charlemagne, ruler of the Holy Roman Empire actually decreed that all his subjects should eat a certain amount of flax seed every day. I'll say again, the essential fatty acids found in flax will allow your body to optimize its energy resources. What could be more important to an athlete?!

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