

Sports and Performance Drinks - US - 2022

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This report looks at the following areas:

- Reasons for consuming sports and performance drinks.
- Barriers to sports and performance drink consumption.
- Claims important in sports and performance drink choice.
- Desired protein and sugar totals sought in sports and performance drinks.
- Sports and performance drink purchase behavior.

The sports and performance drink category reached \$12.8 billion in sales in 2021, a 15% gain atop the 11% bump from the year prior. The pandemic had a positive impact on the category, with early gains driven by the dominant sports drinks segment (which sees adoption among athletes and non-athletes alike). 2021 saw a resurgence of the performance drinks segment, as consumers returned to workouts and sought support after their routines were upended by stay-at-home orders. While 2022 will mark a year of recalibration, with growth projected to slow to 3%, the category is forecast to post 31% gains through 2026, bolstered by demand for functional food and drink.

Despite the category being positioned to meet the call for functionality, the growth of functional claims across food and drink categories chips away at its ownership of the space and will require attention in order to prevent it from losing ground. One option is to double down on fitness, claiming expertise in specialized performance across fitness goals, from those of casual exercisers to more extreme athletes. Brands in the space can focus on helping consumers meet their goals and achieve desired levels of fitness. In another direction, brands in the space can expand beyond a sharp fitness focus to become lifestyle brands that meet consumer needs at the gym, at home, and on the go.

Sugar remains a necessary area of focus, with high sugar credited as a leading barrier to consumption, and the majority of drinkers thinking the products contain too much sugar.



"While the increased demand for functional nutrition seems as if it would benefit the sports and performance drink category, the growth in functional claims across food and drink categories not only increases competition, it blurs category lines."

- Mimi Bonnett, Senior Director – Food and Drink

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