

Fridge Raider: Pittsburgh Steelers Cornerback Ike Taylor



Photo: Ben Van Hook/Chris Graythen/Getty Images

Ike Taylor's fridge may be somewhat bare, but the Pittsburgh Steelers corner knows how to keep his body in tip-top shape.

Pittsburgh Steelers cornerback Ike Taylor may have one of the bleakest refrigerators in the NFL. "I've been living the bachelor life for so long, all I have in my fridge is water and yogurt," says the 34-year-old two-time Super Bowl champ. His bachelorhood is one reason for the bare icebox, but another is that Taylor eats out every night—"every night," he stresses—and starts each morning with a vitamin cocktail of B12, D, fish oil, and an athletic multi from GNC.

Also in Taylor's fridge? "Sleep," he answers, quite seriously. "That's a heavy part of my diet, napping during the day," explains the cornerback, drafted in the fourth round and 125th overall by Pittsburgh in 2003. "It rejuvenates your body. If you go to New York City, they have nap cocoons where people can go and nap for lunch. Some basketball teams are putting naps into their workouts. People have started to realize that sleeping is an important part of your diet."

Sleep, yogurt, vitamins, and leftovers: Those are Taylor's staples and secret to lasting 11 seasons in the NFL, which is how long he has played for Pittsburgh. Here, the D-back talks about what happens when he eats out every night, what he uses to chase down his vitamin cocktail, and his unique approach to wine—and water.



Ike Taylor poses in front of his wine cellar at his home in Orlando, Florida.

Leftovers: When you eat out every night, you inevitably end up with a lot of doggy bags. "My leftovers are like asparagus, salmon, soggy salad. There are a lot of mac and cheeses," he says. Taylor says he rotates nightly through the same five or six steak restaurants (where he orders mostly fish) right outside the gates of his Orlando home—a dining routine he has maintained for the last eight years. What do restaurant employees and other regular patrons think when they see the recurrent Steelers champ? "This whole city, this whole area cheers for me," he says. "It's a good feeling—it's a damn good feeling."

Wine freezer: There's not a wine cellar or wine cooler in Taylor's home, but an actual wine freezer, in which the cornerback chills up to 200 bottles of red wine at a time. "I don't know why, I just threw [red wine] in [the freezer] one time, popped open the cork, and it went down smooth," says Taylor, who played for the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. "So you know what, I said, I will continue to do this, no rhyme or reason. You need to try it." Taylor says he enjoys a glass of wine every night. "It puts me in a mellow mood, and they say it's good for you."

Tequila: At home, Taylor drinks wine. But, he says, after the Steelers won the Super Bowl, first against the Seahawks in 2006 and then against the Cardinals in 2009, he opted for something a bit harder. "I probably had 17 shots of Petron after the Super Bowl, no lie," he says. "And after both of them—the one in Tampa and the one in Detroit." Taylor says the last thing on a player's mind after winning the world's biggest football game is a good meal. "Heck no!" he says emphatically. "You're thinking about what we're about to do for the night and what my off-season is about to look like."

Yogurt: The first thing Taylor eats every day is Greek yogurt, which he uses to chase his morning vitamin mixture. "For the most part, it's pretty bland. It's light on your stomach," says the 6-foot-2, 190-pound player. "I've always been a yogurt fan. I get OCD with a lot of things, so I just made Greek yogurt my yogurt of choice."

Water: "I'm an old school guy," says Taylor. "I don't need bottled water. I can drink faucet water and water from a hosepipe." So why is all that Dasani in the cornerback's fridge? Taylor says he got it from Tom Shaw, a Florida-based strength coach who has worked with the likes of Eli Manning and Tom Brady and whom Taylor trains with during the off-season. Taylor says Shaw gave him a palate of the water recently, even though the player doesn't drink it. "I got to be in the mood to drink it out of the bottle, to be honest with you," he says. "The only time I get fancy with water is sparkling water."

Blackberries and blueberries: Several hours before an afternoon game, Taylor says he often eats a big fruit salad. "Fruit has good sugar—it's natural sugar," he says. "It burns faster because it's natural and I get hungry more throughout the day, but that's a good thing." Taylor says his fruit of choice is anything darkly hued, mainly blackberries and blueberries. "I try to keep all my fruit black," he says. "I might add some flavor with strawberries and pineapple, but I can eat blueberries and blackberries all day."