

Fuel Your Workout

Before your workout

What you eat the night before a training session or competition can be just as important as the day of competition. Make sure you plan a meal that is familiar (this is not a good time to try a new food), high in carbohydrates, moderate of protein, and low in fat. Some athletes may want to avoid eating too much fiber the night before an early morning practice or competition. Stick to easy to digest carbohydrates, lean proteins, and moderate amounts of fruits and/or vegetables. An example of a pre-competition meal would be rice or pasta, grilled chicken, and a small side salad or cup of fruit. If competition is early in the morning it might be a good idea to have another snack before bed that combines a carb and protein. This snack could be some Greek yogurt and granola or toast with peanut butter.

Food choices before exercise

Time of exercise	Food Choice
3-4 hours (high carbohydrate, moderate in protein, low in fat)	Turkey sandwich Pasta with cooked vegetables and chicken Waffles with scoop of scrambled eggs Peanut butter and jelly sandwich Stir fry of rice, vegetables, and chicken Yogurt with granola Egg sandwich with cheese Oatmeal with brown sugar, almonds, and banana
2 hours	Fruit and yogurt Bowl of cereal Smoothie Oatmeal with brown sugar Crackers with string cheese Instant breakfast drink
< 1 hours (easy to digest carbohydrates and very low in fat or protein)	Gel Half a bagel with honey or jam Fig newton cookies Handful of pretzels Half a sports bar Applesauce Sports drink Banana
During exercise lasting longer than 90 minutes or back to back events. These suggestions would be appropriate for fueling during half time.	Sports drink Energy gel or chew Half a bagel with jam or honey Half a sports bar Applesauce Oatmeal with brown sugar or maple syrup Granola bars



During Exercise

If your practice is less than 90 minutes there is no need to eat during, unless you are exercising fasted. If you are running for longer than 90 minutes a general rule of thumb is 30-60 grams of carbohydrate per hour along with fluids and electrolytes.

Post Exercise

What is recovery nutrition? The nutritional goal of recovery is to refuel, replace muscle glycogen, and prepare for the training session. In general, the recommendation is to begin the refueling process within 30-60 minutes after exercise. The athletes that will benefit the most from recovery nutrition include those involved in multiple competitions or workouts during the day, athletes who need to gain strength or power, and athletes with the goal of improved endurance capacity. The goal intake of carbohydrate immediately after a workout should be about 45-100 grams depending on weight of the athlete as well as workout length and/or intensity. Examples include:

- A bagel with 12 ounces of sports drink
- A bar such as power, Clif or Honey Stinger with a banana
- 8 ounces of chocolate milk and a handful of pretzels or a piece of fruit

Protein is very important for muscle building and repair. If an athlete is concerned about getting adequate protein during the day research suggests that consuming 20-25 grams of protein 4-5 times per day may be preferable to larger protein intake less frequency (i.e. 30-40 grams 2-3 times/day).

Here are examples of recovery snacks that include protein:

- Yogurt with granola
- Crackers with cheese and fruit
- A protein smoothie made with Greek yogurt
- 2 handfuls of trail mix
- A bagel with almond or peanut butter and jam or jelly
- Chocolate milk with a banana

Of course it is always best to get a complete meal within two hours of a workout.



A sports dietitian can offer suggestions and trouble shoot any issues you are having with your nutrition and provide a personalized fueling plan. Youth nutrition coaching is available.

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