

NUTRITION FOR ATHLETES



NUTRITION
CONSIDERATIONS
FOR ATHLETES.

**WHAT SHOULD YOU BE
EATING TO PERFORM AT
YOUR HIGHEST LEVEL.**

**HOW MUCH SHOULD YOU
EAT AND HOW OFTEN?**

**FIND OUT WHY
HYDRATION AND KEY
VITAMINS AND MINERALS
ARE ESSENTIAL TO
PERFORMANCE.**

**HOW TO PROPERLY FUEL
FOR COMPETITION.**

Eat For Excellence. Eat For Enjoyment.

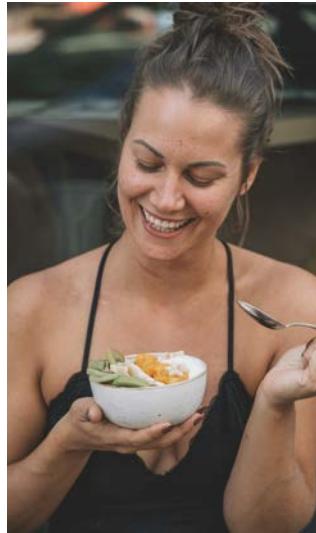
Do you always plateau at the same point in the day? Do you consistently run out of gas at the same point in practice or a race? Are you frequently getting sick or injured? Do you know the types of food you need to best perform?

If some of these questions resonate with you, it may indicate you have areas of your nutrition that need tweaking. The good news is that eating to reach your peak performance level doesn't require a special diet. It's all about working a variety of foods into your fitness plan in the right amounts. As an athlete, you have unique nutritional needs. Because you work out and are active, you generally need more food to fuel your sports performance, growth and happiness!

Athletes don't always have the knowledge, understanding, or support to satisfy the demands of their activities. Over extended periods of time, nutritional deficits can contribute to both short-term and long-term health and performance consequences, which is why we want to help!

Eat. Eat. Eat.

Food fuels your performance. The better you eat, the better you will perform. Discover the type of eater you are. Do you like certain foods because of they are crunchy, cold, warm, soft, etc? Do you like spicy, sweet, tangy, or savory? Plan your meals to make eating enjoyable. Experiment with healthy snacks between meals that keep you energy going through the day. Don't let yourself reach a point where you are starving and want to eat anything- sometimes this is when we make bad food choices.



Hydration Happens All Day.

Water is just as important to unlocking your game power as food. When you sweat during exercise, it's easy to become overheated, lose mental sharpness, and feel worn out - especially in hot or humid weather. Even mild dehydration can affect your physical and mental performance. You want to drink enough water to replace what you lose through sweat, but remember that hydration is an ongoing process. Make sure your fluid intake is adequate at all times - before, during, and after activity. A general guideline is to drink $\frac{1}{2}$ your body weight in water every day. Five sips is about 2 oz of water. Drinking sports drinks is usually not necessary unless you are exercising for more than 60-90 minutes. In that case, the electrolytes and carbohydrates can be helpful.

Balance and Variety.

When it comes to powering your game for the long haul, it's a bad idea to focus on only one type of food. Each of your meals should provide a combination of carbohydrates from whole grains, vegetables or fruits; proteins such as lean meats, fish, lentils, beans, or dairy; and fats from foods like nuts/nut butters, seeds, and avocado. Whole-foods are best! Usually the more colorful and varied the food is, the healthier it is for us. There are lots of ways to prepare foods to add the flavors and textures you enjoy, while powering your performance.





Fuel and Vitamins

Fat Fuel

Everyone needs a certain amount of fat each day, and this is particularly true for athletes. That's because active muscles quickly burn through carbs and need fats for long-lasting energy. Like carbs, not all fats are created equal. Experts advise athletes to concentrate on eating healthier fats, such as the unsaturated fat found in fish, avocado, nuts, and seeds.

Try not to eat too much trans fat - like partially hydrogenated oils - and saturated fat, that is found in high fat meat. Choosing when to eat fats is also important for athletes. Fatty foods can slow digestion, so it's a good idea to avoid eating these foods for a few hours before and after exercising.

Carb Charge

Carbohydrates provide athletes with an excellent source of fuel. Cutting back on carbs or following low-carb diets isn't necessarily a good idea for athletes because restricting carbohydrates can cause a person to feel tired and worn out, which ultimately affects performance. Good sources of carbohydrates include fruits, vegetables, and grains. Choose whole grains (such as brown rice, oatmeal, whole-wheat bread) more often than their more processed counterparts like white rice and white bread. That's because whole grains provide both the energy athletes need to perform and the fiber and other nutrients they need to be healthy.

Sugary carbs such as candy bars or sodas are less healthy for athletes because they are highly processed and lack the nutrients whole foods have. In addition, eating candy bars or other sugary snacks just before practice or competition can give athletes a quick burst of energy and then leave them to "crash" before they've finished working out.

Athletes may need more protein than less-active teens, but most teen athletes get plenty of protein through regular eating. We can get enough quality protein from both meat and plant-based sources, such as: fish, lean meats (e.g. chicken and turkey), eggs, dairy, nuts, soy, lentils, and beans. Remember, if protein powders are used, make sure they come from a reputable source, as they are not FDA regulated.



Calcium helps build the strong bones that athletes depend on and iron carries oxygen to muscles. Most teens don't get enough of these minerals, and that's especially true of teen athletes because their needs may be even higher than those of other teens. To get the iron you need, eat lean red meat, fish, lentils, beans, nuts, tofu, dark leafy greens, and oats. Calcium, a must for bone health is found in dairy foods, such as milk, yogurt, cheese. It can also be found in almonds, dark green vegetables, many seeds, tofu, and lentils. In addition to calcium and iron, you need a whole bunch of other vitamins and minerals that do everything from help you access energy to keep you from getting sick. Eating a balanced diet, including lots of different fruits and veggies, should provide the vitamins and minerals needed for good health and sports performance.



FUEL FOR COMPETITION



1 Eat Before You Work Out

Your car doesn't run without fuel, the same is true of your body. Training on an empty stomach, whether in a workout, practice, or a game, is like trying to drive with the tank on E—you're bound to stall. A pre-workout meal provides your body with a readily available source of energy. For best results, consume some protein with a carbohydrate 30–90 minutes before a workout or competition. Here are a few examples of pre-workout fuel:

- Protein Shake
- Apple with Nut Butter or Cheese
- Banana with Nut Butter
- Granola Bar with a Piece of Fruit
- Yogurt with Dried Fruit
- Cashews, Walnuts, Almonds with a Piece of Fruit

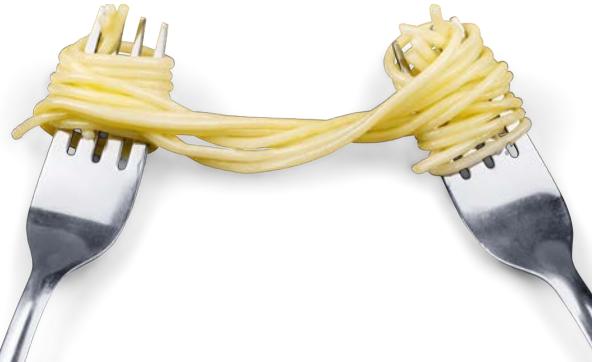




2 Eating Before A Game Or Race

Your performance on game day will depend on the foods you've eaten over the past several days and weeks. But, you can boost your performance even more by paying attention to the food you eat on game day. Strive for a game-day diet rich in carbohydrates, moderate in protein, and low in fat. Here are some guidelines on what to eat and when

- **Eat a meal 2 to 4 hours before the game or event:** Choose a protein and carbohydrate meal (like a turkey or chicken sandwich with whole-grain bread, cereal and milk, yogurt , or pasta with tomato sauce).



GAME DAY

- Eat a mini-meal less than 2 hours before the game: If you don't have time to have a pre-game meal, be sure to have a mini-meal such as low-fiber fruits or vegetables (like plums, melons, cherries, carrots), crackers, a bagel, or low-fat yogurt.



- Consider not eating anything for the hour before you compete or have practice because digestion requires energy-energy that you want to use to perform. Also, eating too soon before any kind of activity can leave food in the stomach, making you feel full, bloated, crampy, and sick. Everyone is different, so get to know what works best for you. You may want to experiment with meal timing and how much to eat on practice days so that you're better prepared for game day.



3 Eating After You Work Out or After A Game Or Race

Exercise depletes your body of energy and can damage muscle tissue, so it's important to replenish your glycogen stores (the body's main source of fuel) and supply some protein for muscle repair within an hour of working out. Eating carbs with a little protein can help you accomplish both goals. Example of post-workout fuel:

- **Eggs and Wheat Toast**
- **Sandwich like Turkey & Cheese**
- **Rice & Bean Burrito**
- **Sandwich with Banana & Nut Butter**
- **Pasta with Chicken**
- **Protein Shake or Chocolate Milk**
- **Whole-grain Toast with Peanut Butter**
- **Apple & Greek Yogurt**
- **English Muffin with Almond Butter**
- **Cereal with Milk & Handful of Nuts**

