FUELING THE ULTIMATE ATHLETE

Training for our meets takes dedication. It requires hours of hitting the water, pushing through ailments, and intense mental concentration. Proper nutrition can also be the difference between participating and actually competing in a race—and with so much of yourself invested in your goal, it's a training component we can't afford to ignore.

Training Nutrition:

During training, it's important to provide your body with quality nutrition so it can push through physically demanding workouts.

- **Not all carbohydrates are equal**. Your body needs carbohydrate fuel (glycogen) to perform, so focus on whole grains and fresh fruits and vegetables as your main carbohydrate sources. The key is to increase your intake of these healthy carbs. **BANANA WITH NUT BUTTER**

- **Protein isn't just for bodybuilders.** Because there's so much focus on carbohydrates for endurance athletes, protein is frequently ignored. Eating high-quality protein during your training can help maintain muscle mass, improve stamina and race time, speed recovery, and support a healthy immune system (2). Through balanced nutrition, you can keep your body healthy and primed for the race ahead. Consume protein throughout the day. **HARD BOILED EGG OR LEAN TURKEY WITH CHEESE SLICES**

- **Time for trial and error.** Tolerance of certain foods differs for each individual. Training is the time to try different foods and fueling methods to see what works best for you. By the time race day comes, you'll have your routine down. **HYDRATE PROPERLY WITH WATER, ORGANIC ELECTROLYTES, BEETROOT JUICE**

- **Protect with nutrients**. Supplying your body with antioxidants, fish oil, as well as essential vitamins and minerals helps the body adapt to the physical stress of ultra-endurance exercise.

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Pre-Meet Day:

Similar to rest days, trying to “carb load” by eating an increased amount of carbohydrates the night before a meet or workout is not very productive—**it must be a process** where you prime your body progressively. Increase carbohydrates throughout the days before a meet, while gradually tapering activity is key

About three days before your meet you’ll cut back on training so your body is fully recovered when you’re on the starting block. But that doesn’t mean you should ditch your healthy diet routine. The few days leading up to your race are the most important time for replenishing energy in the body.

Moderately increase carbs.

Because your exercise output will decrease prior to your race, a degree of carb loading will ensue just by sticking with your current diet. The percentage of carbohydrates that should be consumed differs from person to person, but on average about 60 to 70 percent of your calories should come from carbs. If your diet during training has allowed you to perform well, stick with that routine and increase carbohydrate sources slightly.

- **Sweet potatoes**
- **Whole grains,**
- **Moderate amounts of fruit - bananas and apples are excellent choices**

The rationale for upping carbohydrate intake prior to an event is to ensure maximum glycogen stores, which helps delay race-day fatigue and aids in maintaining a greater pace over longer distances.

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Race Day:

Nervous (but excited) jitters are common on race day. Your appetite may be nonexistent, **but don't pass on pre-race fuel.**

Keep going with carbohydrates. In addition to eating a carb-centered meal before your race, consume carbohydrates during your race. This will prevent complete glycogen depletion so you don't "hit a wall." This may spare the body from glycogen depletion and exhaustion.

- **Oatmeal with bananas**
- **Bananas with nut butter**
- **Greek Yogurt with raw oatmeal**
- **Egg with slice of whole wheat toast**

Stay hydrated. It's very important to drink small amounts of water regularly during your competition. (Chugging down a lot at once can lead to an upset stomach.) Also, providing your body with water and electrolytes will prevent muscle cramps.

- **Water is essential regardless of a race day**. Think HALF your body weight of water in ounces per day.
- **Electrolytes** are very important provided they are healthier choices without all of the added sugars, artificial colors and chemicals
- **Chocolate milk** gets a lot of press because of it's combination of both carbohydrates and protein - just watch the excess sugar

Snacks during competition. Preparation is key. Snacking to refuel the body is important but the type of snack is even more important. Eating real, whole foods as opposed to processed snacks high in refined sugar is the goal

- **Hard Boiled Egg with Spinach**
- **Banana with nut butter**
- **Mixed Nuts with Raisins**
- **Grapes and cheddar cheese chunks**
- **Carrots and hummus**

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Post-Race Day:

After hours of training, you have finally achieved your goal and completed your race. Thank your body for all the work it did by giving it the nourishment it craves.

Replenish glycogen and protein. Even if you followed all the rules for loading up on carbohydrates before and during your race, you'll still have some work to do after your event. Studies show carb uptake by muscle to be three and a half times greater after eating protein and carbohydrate together compared to smaller amounts of carbohydrate alone.

- **Whey protein** is the suggested recovery fuel for fast-absorbing nutrition that aids muscle synthesis - organic choices are best
- **Chocolate milk** gets a lot of press due to the fast absorption of both carbohydrates and protein.

Returning to your daily routine of healthy meal and snack choices.

How important is protein for athletes?

Protein plays a pivotal role in any athlete's success. It provides the body with the amino acids that are needed and used by every cell, tissue, organ, and system. Protein allows for cellular growth and recovery.

And, although often misunderstood, protein supports muscle growth (it does not cause muscle growth). Exercise produces stress on and to the muscles, and it's this process that initiates muscle growth. Protein is simply essential to the support of muscle development and recommended immediately after working out

How important is fat for athletes?

Fats offer the body twice the energy per gram than carbohydrates do. They are a slower-burning fuel, critical to hormone production and promote nutrient uptake.

Athletes need fat and will require greater fat intakes to fuel longer sessions of lower intensity exercise. Scientists argue that fat alone can supply up to 60 percent of energy required for a long bout of exercise.