

Timing of Meals and Snacks for Athletes



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Did You Know ...

- Eat foods before and after exercise that are high in carbohydrates and in protein.
- Experiment to see what foods, drinks, and timing strategies work best for you.
- Fueling your body for exercise is not just important right before an event! Eat right all the time and your body will thank you when it comes time to perform.

Timing Your Nutrition

Timing is everything, and sports nutrition is no exception. What you put into your body before, during, and after exercise can help you perform better, train longer, decrease your risk of injury, improve your strength, and recover more quickly. Get the timing right to optimize these benefits.

Eating Before Exercise

The most important factor in pre-exercise nutrition is giving your body enough time to digest. Meals should be consumed 1-4 hours before exercise and be around 500-900 calories, depending on the athlete and the type of training to come. Snacks that are high in carbohydrates can be consumed 30-60 minutes prior to exercise if your body tolerates it. Hydrate before exercise to optimize performance.

Eating During Exercise

Ideally, you have prepared your body well enough that you can last your entire workout without the need to refuel. However, if your workout exceeds 60-90 minutes, you may need an extra boost during the session. Consider carbohydrate-rich foods like a banana or a sport drink to help keep you moving, while avoiding digestive discomfort. Hydrate throughout your entire exercise.

Eating After Exercise

Grab a snack that contains protein and carbohydrate within 30 minutes after exercise. Consumption of 15-30 grams of protein within a couple of hours after exercise leads to increased muscle synthesis. Replenishing carbohydrates restores glycogen stores and helps avoid the need to burn muscle protein for fuel. Eat protein, carbohydrates, and fats throughout the day. Remember to rehydrate immediately after exercise.

