



Timing of Meals and Snacks For Athletes

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, better improve your strength gains, and recover quicker. 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 3-4 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 simple carbohydrates can be consumed 30-60 minutes prior to exercise if your body tolerates it.

Eating During Exercise

Ideally, you have prepared your body well enough that you can last your entire workout without the need to refuel. If your exercise *exceeds 90 minutes*, you may need an extra boost during exercise. Consider low-fat 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

Rehydrate immediately after exercise. In order to avoid losing muscle tissue, carbohydrates used for exercise need to be replaced quickly. Grab a snack within 30 minutes. 3-4 hours after exercise is perfect timing for a balanced meal with carbohydrates, protein, and some healthy fats.

Resource: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Website

Quick Tips

Eat snacks and meals before and after exercise that are high in simple carbohydrates and moderate in protein.

Experiment with various foods and drinks and various times prior to exercise to see what works best for you.

Fueling your body for exercise is a process! Eat right all the time and your body will thank you when it comes time to perform.

