

# Nutrition for Athletes



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## Did You Know ...

To build muscle, athletes need a lot more than just protein! Strength training, adequate carbohydrate intake, and adequate micronutrient intake are just as important as getting enough protein.

Athletes, especially those who exercise for more than an hour each day, may benefit from talking to a registered dietitian who specializes in sports nutrition.

Nutrition is key to reaching peak performance and staying healthy and strong!

## Overview

Whatever your activity level, everybody needs a healthy balance of nutrients. [Carbohydrates, protein, fat, vitamins, and minerals](#) are all needed for everyday function and movement. Athletes are no exception; a well-balanced diet is all your body needs to fuel your workouts and keep you healthy.

Every athlete's macronutrient and micronutrient needs will vary depending on age, sex, size, and training intensity. Remember, all athletes are not created equal. Endurance athletes often require different nutrition than strength training athletes. As an athlete participating in strenuous activity, sticking to these tips and giving your body the proper nutrition for exercise will allow you to perform better and recover more quickly.

- What you eat and drink matters! Avoid refined foods with added fats and sugars—these are empty calories and they have the same negative effects on athletes as non-athletes. [Hydration](#) is also key to health and athletic performance.
- There is not one optimal macronutrient ratio. The percentage of carbohydrate, protein, and fat needs will differ between athletes. Recommended ranges are 10-35% protein, 45-65% carbohydrate, and 20-35% fat.
- [Supplements](#) and ergogenic aids are not necessary. Some are backed by research, but similar or better results can be achieved through proper nutrition.

Discover your specific nutritional needs as an athlete by trying a variety of nutritional plans throughout your training to find the one that fits your regimen and your body best. If necessary, meet with a registered sports dietitian to help assess your specific needs.