

Vitamins and Minerals for Athletes



Did You Know ...

- A varied diet is the most effective way for athletes to meet their vitamin and mineral needs.
- Intensive exercise routines may lead to an increase in the need for some micronutrients.
- All athletes, and especially vegetarian athletes, should make sure they are getting enough iron, B12, zinc, calcium, and omega-3 fatty acids.



Vitamins and minerals are vital for keeping our bodies healthy and functioning well. A lack of vitamins and minerals will impair athletic performance. Refer to this table for examples of key vitamins and minerals for athletes diet, and some food sources:

Vitamin	Purpose	Good Sources
Thiamine (Vitamin B1)	Helps breakdown carbohydrates and protein for energy	Whole grains, enriched grains, fortified cereals
Riboflavin (Vitamin B2)	Essential for energy production	Almonds, milk, yogurt, fortified grains
Niacin	Supports anaerobic and aerobic performance	Meat, fish, poultry, peanuts, enriched grains
Vitamin B6	Essential for energy production and hemoglobin production	Meat, fish, poultry, eggs, beans, whole grains, seeds
Vitamin B12	Helps deliver oxygen to tissues	Animal products or supplements only. Seafood, meats, milk, cheese, eggs, fortified foods.
Vitamin D	Important for bone health and muscle function	Fortified milk and cereals, seafood, eggs, sun exposure
Pantothenic Acid	Helps breakdown fat, protein and carbohydrates into energy	Poultry, seafood, nuts, seeds, avocados and whole grains
Mineral		
Sodium	Regulate body fluids	Salt, breads, salted nuts
Potassium	Maintains proper pH balance	Potatoes, squash, seafood, lima beans and white beans, bananas
Calcium	Aids in muscle contraction	Dairy products, spinach, beans, fish, fortified foods
Iron	Production of hemoglobin, oxygen transportation	Meat, poultry, seafood, lentils and fortified grains