



# Vitamins and Minerals for Athletes

Vitamins and minerals do not provide energy directly to the body but they are vital in turning food into energy that your body can use. While there is no evidence that taking vitamins can improve performance, a lack of vitamins and minerals can surely slow you down. A varied diet is the ideal way for athletes to meet their vitamin and mineral needs.

The following table highlights a handful of vitamins and minerals that are crucial to an athlete's diet, as well as some food sources of these vitamins and minerals.



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

Resource: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Website eatright.org "Vitamins Needs of Athletes"