

Knowing What to Eat Is Important!



Pre-Workout Nutrition:

What to Eat Before a Workout.

Good nutrition can help your body perform better and recover faster after each workout.

Optimal nutrient intake prior to exercise will not only help you maximize your performance but also minimize muscle damage.

Fuelling your body with the right nutrients prior to exercise will give you the energy and strength you need to perform better.

***Having a good evening meal and solid sleep the night before exercise is also crucial to great performance.**

Following is a brief look at the role of each macronutrient.

Carbs

Your muscles use the glucose from carbs for fuel.

Glycogen is the way the body processes and stores glucose, mainly in the liver and muscles.

For short- and high-intensity exercise, your glycogen stores are your muscles' main source of energy.

But for longer exercises, the degree to which carbs are used depends on several factors. These include the intensity, type of training and your overall diet.

Your muscles' glycogen stores are limited. As these stores become depleted, your output and intensity diminish.

Protein

Many studies have documented the potential of pre-workout protein consumption to improve athletic performance.

Eating protein (alone or with carbs) prior to exercise has been shown to increase muscle protein synthesis.

Other benefits of eating protein before exercise include:

- A better anabolic response, or muscle growth
- Improved muscle recovery
- Increased strength and lean body mass
- Increased muscle performance

Fat

While glycogen is used for short- and high-intensity bouts of exercise, fat is the source of fuel for longer and moderate-to-low-intensity exercise.

SUMMARY Carbs help maximize glycogen stores for high-intensity exercise, while fat helps fuel your body for longer, less intense workouts. Meanwhile, protein improves muscle protein synthesis and aids recovery.

The Timing of Your Pre-Workout Meal Is Key

The timing of your meal is also an important aspect of pre-exercise nutrition.

To maximize the results of your training, try to eat a complete meal containing carbs, protein and fat 2–3 hours before you exercise.

However, in some cases, you may not be able to get in a full meal 2–3 hours before working out.

In that case, then you can still eat a decent pre-workout meal. However, keep in mind that the sooner you eat before your workout, the smaller and simpler the meal should be.

If you eat 45–60 minutes prior to your workout, choose foods that are simple to digest and contain mainly carbs and some protein.

This will help prevent any stomach discomfort during exercise.

SUMMARY It's recommended to consume a full meal 2–3 hours before your workout. For meals eaten closer to your workout, choose simpler carbs and some protein.

Some Examples of Pre-Workout Meals

Which foods and how much to eat depends on the type, duration and intensity of the workout.

A good rule of thumb is to eat a mixture of carbs and protein prior to exercise.

If you eat fat with your pre-workout meal, then it should be consumed at least a few hours before your workout.

Following are some examples of pre-workout meals:

If Your Workout Starts Within 2–3 Hours or More

- Sandwich on whole-grain bread, lean protein and a side salad
- Egg omelette and whole-grain toast topped with avocado and a small piece of fruit
- Lean protein e.g. chicken or fish, brown rice and roasted vegetables

If Your Workout Starts Within 2 Hours

- Protein smoothie made with milk, protein powder, banana and mixed berries
- Whole-grain cereal and milk
- A cup of oatmeal topped with banana and sliced almonds
- Natural almond butter and fruit preserve sandwich on whole-grain bread

If Your Workout Starts Within an Hour or Less

- Greek yogurt and fruit
- A nutrition bar with protein and wholesome ingredients e.g 1x OSM bar
- 1 piece of fruit, such as ½ a banana, an orange, apple or pear
- 250 – 300mls water (with a small pinch of salt)

*You don't need to eat all 3 of the above meals, just choose one of these.

SUMMARY A combination of carbs and protein is recommended for pre-workout meals. Fat can also be beneficial, but it should be consumed at least two hours before exercise.

Hydration Is Also Crucial

Your body needs water to function.

Good hydration has been shown to sustain and even enhance performance, while dehydration has been linked to significant decreases in performance.

It's recommended to consume both water and sodium before exercise. This will aid to improve and retain a higher fluid balance. (You can add a small pinch of salt to your water which will hardly be noticeable when drinking)

The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) recommends drinking 500 – 600mls of water at least four hours before exercise and 250 – 350mls of water 10 – 15 minutes before exercise.

SUMMARY Water is important for performance. It's recommended to drink water and sodium-containing beverages before long periods of exercise to promote fluid balance and prevent excessive fluid loss.

Putting It All Together

To maximize your performance and recovery, it's important to fuel your body with the right nutrients before a workout.

Carbs help maximize your body's ability to use glycogen to fuel short- and high-intensity exercises, while fat helps fuel your body for longer exercise sessions.

Eating protein helps improve muscle protein synthesis, prevent muscle damage and promote recovery.

Good hydration is also linked to enhanced performance.

Pre-workout meals can be eaten three hours to 30 minutes before a workout. However, choose foods that are easy to digest, especially if your workout starts in one hour or less. This will help you avoid stomach discomfort.

At the end of the day, simple pre-workout nutrition practices will go a long way in helping you perform better and recover faster.