

NUTRITION GUIDELINES FOR ATHLETES

Build your meals with the following emphasis

FUEL = minimally processed, high fiber carbohydrates that provide sustainable energy

BUILD = lean proteins that provide the body the building blocks for repair and recovery

PROTECT = healthy fats that decrease inflammation and nourish the brain

PREVENT = colorful fruits and vegetables that provide the fiber, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants needed for repair and immune function

HYDRATE = ½ to 1 ounce of water per pound of bodyweight per day

- Start thinking of your food as “fuel”
 - When you don’t give your body the fuel it needs, it becomes catabolic, which means it begins to draw fuel from your lean muscle
 - Without the proper fuel, your body will lose its ability to function properly and recover, making you more susceptible to sickness, fatigue, depression, inflammation, injury, and loss of motivation.
 - Don’t have to eat “perfect”. Follow the 80/20 rule. Choose the foods that are best for you 80% of the time. If you eat clean 6 out of 7 days a week, that is 86%.
- Eat Clean
 - Whole foods are better for you than processed foods
 - Focus on the perimeter of the grocery store when shopping, this is where you will find whole foods such as produce, meat, seafood, dairy, and other natural foods. These areas are refrigerated because the less processed a food is, the shorter its shelf life.
 - Avoid the middle aisles of the store. This is where you will find processed foods.
 - Eat a good mix of carbs, proteins and healthy fats
- Fuel with minimally processed carbohydrates
 - Carbs are our primary fuel source. They provide energy for muscle function and act as the main fuel for the brain.
 - When carbs are broken down by the body, glucose is made available, which fuels the brain and body. The more processed a carb, the faster this happens and the more unstable the energy.
 - Avoid processed carbs such as white breads, pastas and baked goods.
 - They are digested quickly, absorbed immediately, and will lead to a quick crash
 - Low-glycemic foods cause the body to do the work to extract the nutrients leading to a more gradual release of blood sugar and more sustained energy.
 - Think “brown and close to the ground” for good carbs, referring to the color of the food and where it is grown.
 - Oats, 100% whole wheat bread and sweet potatoes are good examples of this.
 - If you choose pasta, choose whole wheat pasta. If you are eating rice, go with brown or wild rice.

- Power with Lean Proteins
 - Proteins provide the nutrients for our muscles to recover and repair (grow)
 - Athletes need about 1 gram of protein per pound of body weight per day
 - Protein intake should be spread out over every meal of the day.
 - Eating protein also helps to kick start your metabolism
 - Good protein choices include: fish, chicken, eggs, low-fat dairy, Greek yogurt, beans and legumes.
 - With protein remember, “the less legs, the better”.
 - Always choose grilled over fried
- Eat “Good Fats”
 - Good fats are protectors of your body.
 - Fats are crucial to good health and the makeup of cell membranes
 - Include healthy fats with each meal.
 - “Good Fat” can be found in walnuts, salmon, tuna, fish oil, and flaxseed.
- Eat the Rainbow
 - When you look at your plate, you should see a rainbow of colors in the form of fruits, vegetables and high-fiber grains.
 - You can’t go wrong with any fruit or vegetable.
 - However, green leafy vegetables pack a serious nutritional punch. Good choices include kale, spinach.
 - Peppers, berries and beets are also great choices.
- Eat Often
 - By eating often, you can control your blood sugar level to sustain energy throughout the day
 - To build lean muscle mass, you need to eat about every 3 hours
 - Think of it as fueling your tank throughout the day
 - Your metabolism is like a fire and if you don’t put more logs on the fire, it will burn out
- Eat Breakfast EVERY Day
 - Breakfast truly is the most important meal of the day
 - Your body has been fasting while you sleep and it is critical that you break the fast as soon after waking as possible (preferably within 30 minutes of waking)
 - Breakfast will kick start your metabolism and fuel your brain.
 - Breakfast should include protein, carbs, fruits and vegetables, and fit fats.
 - Some simple options include: whole grain toast with natural peanut butter, yogurt and a banana; or, oatmeal, berries, almonds and a hard-boiled egg; or an English muffin with scrambled eggs and avocado with 100% fruit juice.
- Hydrate
 - There is nothing better to drink than water
 - Drinking sufficient amounts of water increases energy, improves the quality of skin and fascia, keeps muscles and joints lubricated, improves overall health, and prevents overeating.
 - Hydration impacts your brain and your mental abilities
 - Dehydration translates into decreased performance

- By drinking the proper amount of water every day, you could accomplish 25% more than if you do not hydrate properly
- Proper hydration also regulates appetite. Often when people think they are hungry, they are actually just thirsty.
- Sports drinks are not designed for hydration, but actually for use during intense sport.
- Athletes should drink between ½ and 1 ounce of water per pound per day.
- Athletes should drink 20 ounces of water for every pound lost during intense training.
- Fuel for your Activity
 - It's critical that you fuel your body prior to exercise. You should not exercise on an empty stomach.
 - Great pre-workout fuels include; yogurt with half cup of berries, cereal and banana, half a turkey sandwich and fruit, half a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and fruit.
 - Also hydrate prior to activity with 16-20 ounces of water.
- Refuel AFTER an Activity
 - Your body is hungry for nutrients after an activity. If you don't refuel, it will turn to your lean muscle mass for energy.
 - When you finish a workout, your cells are wide open and screaming for nutrients. The quickest way to replenish them is to consume, within 10 minutes of training, some sort of recovery shake, smoothie or chocolate milk.
- Supplement Safety
 - The supplement industry is not regulated by the FDA. Products are not tested to prove that they actually contain what is listed on the package.
 - Make sure that you research any supplement thoroughly before taking it.
 - There are two, third-party testing companies that provide help to confirm the safety of a product.
 - NSF (www.nsf-sport.com)
 - Informed-Choice (www.informed-choice.org)

GOOD

- Whole foods
- Perimeter of grocery store (produce, meats, seafood, dairy)
- 100% Wheat Bread, Oats, Sweet Potatoes, wheat pasta, brown rice, wild rice
- Fish, chicken, eggs, low-fat dairy, Greek yogurt, beans, legumes
- Walnuts, salmon, tuna, fish oil, flaxseed
- Green leafy vegetables, peppers, berries, beets and fruits
- EAT OFTEN (every 3 hours)
- Eat breakfast EVERY DAY
- Hydrate, Hydrate, Hydrate (1/2 to 1 ounce of water per pound of body weight per day)

BAD

- Processed foods (middle of store)
- White breads, pasta, white rice, baked goods
- Fried foods
- Sodas, energy drinks and other high sugar drinks
- Alcohol (decreased performance potential by up to 11.4%, increases release of stress hormone cortisol, decreases protein synthesis for muscle fiber repair, and disturbs REM sleep, which is when the body recovers).
- Eating 1 or 2 big meals a day expecting to get all the fuel needed from those

PERFORMANCE SNACKS

- Soft pretzels with natural peanut butter
- Low-fat milkshakes or smoothies
- Wheat bagel with natural peanut butter
- Granola and yogurt
- Yogurt mixed with fruit and nuts
- Low-fat cheese sticks and whole grain crackers
- High calorie granola bars or energy bars
- Almonds, walnuts, peanuts and fruit
- Instant breakfast drinks
- 8-12 oz of low-fat chocolate milk and banana