A RUNNER’S NUTRITION GUIDE

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WHY YOU SHOULD EAT TO FUEL YOUR BODY

• Increase productivity
• Enhance mood
• Boosts Your Immunity
• Keeps You Strong
• Helps You Set New PRs
• Scores You Better Sleep
HEALTHY EATING PLATE

Use healthy oils (like olive and canola oil) for cooking, on salad, and at the table. Limit butter. Avoid trans fat.

Drink water, tea, or coffee (with little or no sugar). Limit milk/dairy (1-2 servings/day) and juice (1 small glass/day). Avoid sugary drinks.

The more veggies – and the greater the variety – the better. Potatoes and French fries don’t count.

Eat a variety of whole grains (like whole-wheat bread, whole-grain pasta, and brown rice). Limit refined grains (like white rice and white bread).

Eat plenty of fruits of all colors.

Choose fish, poultry, beans, and nuts; limit red meat and cheese; avoid bacon, cold cuts, and other processed meats.

Stay active!

Harvard School of Public Health
The Nutrition Source
www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource

Harvard Medical School
Harvard Health Publications
www.health.harvard.edu
A RUNNER’S PLATE

- CARBOHYDRATES - fruits, whole-grain breads, pasta, and vegetables
- UNSATURATED FATS - olive oil, walnuts, and avocados
- LEAN PROTEIN - chicken, sirloin, tofu, nuts, and seeds
PROTEIN

• Protein needs
  – At least 1 gram per kilogram of body weight
  – Up to 1.2-1.4 gm/kg BW for endurance athletes/runners

• Animal proteins are better absorbed than plant proteins

• Vegetarians/vegans may need more protein than their exercise level.
DAYS BEFORE THE RUN

• 2-3 days before long runs
  – Early, good dinner (carb-loading)
  – PLENTY of water
  – Avoid spicy meals
  – No / low alcohol

Examples:

• Breakfast: Bagel with 2 tablespoons strawberry jam (71g) (add nut butter or egg for protein)
• Lunch: Baked potato with ¼ cup salsa (69g) (w/ protein and veggies)
• Dinner: Chicken burrito with rice, corn salsa, black beans (105g) (w/ veggies)

• Ref: https://www.runnersworld.com/nutrition-weight-loss/a20826888/the-right-way-to-carbo-load-before-a-race/
BEFORE THE RUN

• 90-120 minutes before
• 350-550 calories
• High carbohydrate, low fiber, low fat

Examples:

• 1 1/2 cups brown or white rice with low-fat sauce (e.g. curry)

• 2-3 slices of toast, 1 English muffin, or 1 bagel with jam

• 1 1/2 cups white or wheat pasta with low-fat sauce (e.g. pesto, tomato sauce)

• 1 cup low-fiber cereal (<3 grams per serving) with skim or 1% milk
  • Cheerios

• 3/4 cup plain Greek yogurt with 1/4 cup berries

• 1 banana with 1 T peanut butter

• 1/2 cup oatmeal (dry) with 1/4 cup berries or dried fruit
DURING THE RUN

• Fuel every 20 minutes
• 45-60 grams of easily digestible carbohydrates every hour

Examples:
• Gatorade (1 20-oz bottle = 35 g CHO)
• Gu Gel/Chews (4 chews = 23 g CHO)
• Gu energy gel (1 packet = 23 g CHO)

The riper the fruit, the simpler its sugars, and the faster it will be absorbed into the bloodstream.

One banana contains fast-digesting carbohydrates that can be just as effective as a carbohydrate drink in terms of performance and blood sugar.
WATER BREAK

RESEARCH SHOWS THAT DRINKING COLD BEVERAGES BEFORE AND DURING EXERCISE Boosts endurance.

SIP OFTEN: FREQUENT, SMALL AMOUNTS HYDRATE YOU MORE EFFECTIVELY THAN OCCASIONAL, MASSIVE GULPS.
HYDRATION RECOMMENDATIONS

• Before workout
  – 2-3 hours prior exercise: 16-20 oz fluid
  – 10 minutes prior exercise: 5-10 oz fluid

• During workout
  – Individualized to sweat rate – pay attention to your thirst
  – Every 15-20 minutes: 5-10 oz
  – Water and sports drinks
    • Sports drinks after 1 hour of exercise and/or in hot and humid weather

• Post workout
  – 16-24 oz for every pound lost – weight yourself before and after your run
AFTER THE RUN

• Consume a 4:1 ratio of carbs to protein within 15-30 min after race

• Prevents muscle breakdown, replenishes glycogen stores

Examples:
• 1 cup chocolate milk
• 1 KIND or Lara granola bar
• 1 rice cake with 2 T peanut or almond butter
• 1 egg with whole wheat toast
• 1 banana with 1 oz pistachios
• 1/4 cup roasted chickpeas with 1/4 cup blueberries

Source: https://blog.runkeeper.com/1817/10-great-post-workout-snacks-to-help-you-refuel/
Examples:

- Chicken curry w/ 1 c brown rice, 2 c veggies, & 3-6 oz chicken or tofu
- 1 c pasta w/ 2 c vegetables & 3-6 oz protein
- 3-6 oz salmon w/ 2 c veggies & 1 rice
DON’T FORGET TO . . .

**WATCH THE FIBER AND FAT**
Keep your pre-run meals low in fiber and fats, and high in carbs.

**HOLD THE SWEETENERS**
Check the label of your snacks ending in “ol”—sorbitol, mannitol and avoid gels with fructose as the first sugar on the ingredient list.
DON’T FORGET TO . . .

GET YOUR Z’S
Without sleep, your energy levels, immune system, and mood all take a hit.

EAT COLORFULLY
Choose foods that are low in calories but high in run-fueling nutrients.
CARBO-LOADING

Going overboard in the days before your event can ruin your big day.

THE MYTH

Binging on carbs before a race maxes out muscle glycogen, which sustains endurance for distance events like marathons.

Instead, gradually increase the 2-3 days before
RUNGER

A runner’s hunger can come from waiting too long between meals. This means it is time for a change to your regimen.

- **Are you getting enough protein?**
  Protein stabilizes your blood sugar and helps you feel fuller longer.

- **Are you eating enough before a run?**
  Sluggish workouts come from workouts and clawing hunger later in the day.

- **Are you eating often enough?**
  If you are hungry after eating three meals, try spacing out the same amount of food into five smaller portions instead.
TIPS FOR WHEN YOU ARE TRAINING

• Don’t Run on Empty

• Develop a Drinking Habit

• Maintain a Healthy Balance

• Keep a Food Diary

• Cut Back on the Junk

• Refer to handout
QUESTIONS