

Nutrition

Fuel you body well, run well!!

Eat well = more energy and a better performance!

Running involves every cell and system in your body: your muscles, joints, ligaments, tendons, respiratory system, circulatory system and immune systems. If you want them to work at their best you have to be sure that you have fuelled your body to its best.

I am going to give you a few pointers to help you with before, during and after exercise snacks/meals to help you get the most out of every run!

BEFORE TRAINING

How much energy you have prior to training will dictate how well you perform. It will dictate how much body fat, glycogen or muscle tissue you burn. How often have you struggled during a run and wondered why? Could it be down to poor nutrition or lack of hydration?

Get your pre exercise fuelling right and you'll find that you have the energy you need - that your legs will feel strong, your respiratory and circulatory system will perform better making you feel like that well oiled machine you long for!!

The main reason to eat and drink prior to training is to stabilise blood sugars to minimise risk of developing a stitch, staving off hunger and avoiding low blood sugar levels and avoiding dehydration. A pre-workout meal will not fuel your muscles however – it takes 24hours to refill your muscle (glycogen) stores so what you've eaten the day before affects your run today!

When to Eat

If you are having a meal eat it between 2 – 4 hours before a run. This gives your system time to partially digest the food. You should feel comfortable – neither hungry nor full up.

How Much to Eat

How much you eat depends on your body weight and how long and hard you plan to run. In general for runs less than 2 hours aim to eat 1g of carbohydrate per kg of body weight (ie 70g for a 70Kg person) or 400 – 600 calories. For longer workouts consume 2g carbohydrate per kg of body weight.

What to Eat

Try and eat slow burning or low GI foods – ie foods that produce a gradual rise in blood sugar levels.

Pre-exercise meals

- Jacket Potato with beans, cheese, tuna, coleslaw or chicken.
- Pasta (preferably wholemeal) with a tomato based sauce with vegetables and cheese
- Rice with chicken, turkey, fish and vegetables
- Porridge made with milk
- Wholegrain cereal with milk or yoghurt
- Noodles with stir fried vegetables, prawns, chicken, turkey
- Sandwich made with wholemeal bread, bagels, wraps, pitta breads filled with chicken, fish, turkey, cheese, egg, salad or peanut butter

Pre-exercise Snacks

- 250ml glass of flavoured milk or shake
- 50g energy or sports bar
- 250ml fruit juice
- 150 – 300ml fruit yoghurt
- 300ml Smoothie
- 40g Raisins, dried apricots or other dried fruit
- 1 – 2 bananas
- 2 -3 portions of fresh fruit

RE-FUELLING AFTER A RUN

After a run your glycogen stores will be depleted (the fuel stored in your muscles) which breaks down muscle tissue. By re-fuelling after a run you prevent this happening and you will be refilling your fuel stores as well as repairing damaged muscle fibres as soon as possible. It is after a run that your body gets stronger and fitter. To refuel within 30 mins after a run is particularly beneficial.

Re-Fuelling Snacks

- Fresh fruit and a glass of milk
- 1 –2 pots of yoghurt
- A smoothie fresh fruit and yoghurt or milk whizzed together.
- Sports Bar – mix of carbs and protein
- Tuna or cottage cheese sandwich
- Dried fruit and nuts
- Wholegrain cereal with milk
- Jacket potato with tuna or cottage cheese
- Meal replacement shake containing a mix of carbs and protein

Re-fuelling Meals

- **Pasta with tomato based sauce with grilled fish and salad**
- **Jacket Potato with chicken breast, carrots and broccoli**
- **Bean and vegetable hotpot with wholegrain bread**
- **Pitta bread, falafel and salad**
- **Lasagne or veg lasagne with salad**
- **Chicken curry with rice and vegetables**

Using this useful information, tips and suggestions should help you become a stronger, fitter runner with a faster and less painful (muscle soreness) recovery enabling your next workout to be enjoyable and effective!

Lisa Lawson

Information taken from Anita Bean's Food for Fitness, 3rd Edition.