



## RECOMMENDED DIET PLAN

When you exercise hard for 90 minutes or more, especially if you're doing something at high intensity that takes a lot of endurance, you need a diet that can help you perform at your peak and recover quickly afterward. These five guidelines will help.

### 1. Load Up on Carbohydrates

Carbs are an athlete's main fuel. Your body changes them to glucose, a form of sugar, and stores it in your muscles as glycogen.

When you exercise, your body changes glycogen into energy. If you exercise for under 90 minutes, you have enough glycogen in your muscles, even for high-intensity activities. But if your workout is longer than that, use these strategies: "Carbohydrate loading for 3 or 4 days before an event can help top up your glycogen stores, Eat a diet that gets about 70% of its calories from carbohydrates, including breads, cereals, pasta, fruit, and vegetables, to achieve maximum carbohydrate storage.

*On the day of a big event, eat your last meal 3 to 4 hours before exercising, to give your stomach time to empty. Avoid eating sugary or starchy foods within 30 minutes of starting an activity; they can speed up dehydration. Replenish carbs, minerals, and water during long exercise sessions. Eat a snack and drink fluid every 15 to 20 minutes. Refined carbohydrates (with sugar or flour) pass quickly into the bloodstream, where they fuel working muscles. Many athletes prefer sports bars, sports drinks, or gels, since they're so convenient. But fruit and fruit juice are also excellent choices.*

Reload on carbohydrates after intensive exercise, too. "Since you don't need quick energy, it's best to choose less refined carbohydrates" such as a whole-grain bagel or carrot sticks, which provide both carbohydrates and a rich array of nutrients.

# RECOMMENDED DIET PLAN

## 2. Get Enough Protein, But Not Too Much

Protein doesn't provide a lot of fuel for energy. But you need it to maintain your muscles.

Know what you need. *The average person needs 1.2 to 1.4 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight a day.* That's about 88 grams of protein for a 150-pound person. A strength athlete may need up to 1.7 grams per kilogram of body weight. That's about 150 grams of protein for a 200-pound athlete.

Favor foods. Getting too much protein can put a strain on your kidneys. Instead of protein supplements, eat high-quality protein, such as lean meats, fish, poultry, nuts, beans, eggs, or milk.

Drink up. "Milk is one of the best foods for recovery after an event, because it provides a good balance of protein and carbohydrates. Milk also has both casein and whey protein. The combination may be particularly helpful for athletes. Research shows that whey protein is absorbed quickly, which can help speed recovery immediately after an event. Casein is digested more slowly, helping to ensure long-term recovery of muscle after a grueling event. Milk also has calcium, which is important for maintaining strong bones.

## 3. Go Easy on Fat

For long events, your body turns to fat for energy when carbohydrate sources run low.

Most athletes get all the fat they need by following the basic dietary guideline to eat mostly unsaturated fat from foods such as nuts, avocados, olives, vegetable oils, and fatty fish like salmon and tuna.

Avoid fatty foods on the day of an event, since they can upset your stomach.

# RECOMMENDED DIET PLAN

## 4. Drink Fluids Early and Often

Intense exercise, especially in hot weather, can quickly leave you dehydrated. Dehydration, in turn, can hurt your performance and, in extreme cases, threaten your life.

"All high-intensity athletes should drink fluids early and often, and don't wait until you're thirsty. By the time you feel parched, you may be seriously dehydrated."

One way to monitor hydration is to keep an eye on the color of your urine.

A pale yellow color means you're getting enough fluid. Bright yellow or dark urine means you're falling short.

Because intense exercise makes you lose fluid quickly, it's a good idea to drink fluids before as well as during an event.

*Drink 8 to 12 ounces of fluid every 10 or 15 minutes during an event.* When possible, drink chilled fluids, which are more easily absorbed than room-temperature water. Chilled fluids also help cool your body down.

## 5. Replace Lost Electrolytes

Sweating removes both fluids and electrolytes. Electrolytes help transmit nerve signals in your body. To replenish them, reach for sports drinks. If you're also losing a lot of fluid as you sweat, dilute sports drinks with equal amounts of water to get the best balance of fluid and electrolytes.

*\* This page is strictly a recommendation for healthy eating. If you have any medical conditions please consult with your doctor to see if this plan will work of you.*