

PRE AND POST EXERCISE FUEL

Just as a car needs gas and spark plugs to function, your body needs calories (gas) and the vitamins, minerals and proteins (spark plugs) found in wholesome foods to function well. If you want to have quality workouts, high energy and good health, you need to fuel your body with quality calories.

Pre-Exercise Energy

By skipping breakfast, you may be running on fumes. You will probably perform better if you eat something before you exercise. How much you eat varies from person to person. Most people feel good results with .5 grams of carbohydrates per pound of body weight 1 hour before moderately hard exercise. (i.e. for 150 lb person this would be 75 grams of carbs or 300 calories. This would be like eating a small bowl of cereal with a banana). Eating a little protein (i.e. 1 egg) may also optimize recovery since it provides a readily available supply of the amino acids required for optimal muscular development. Research has shown that athletes were able to train better with some gas in their tank – they were able to exercise longer and harder.



Eating a high sugar food 15-45 minutes before you exercise might have a negative effect. Sugary soft drinks and even fruit juices offer a short term energy boost that may hinder performance by contributing to hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) shortly after you start to exercise. For example, a glass of orange juice boosts your blood sugar but simultaneously triggers the pancreas to secrete an abnormally large amount of insulin. Insulin transports excess sugar out of the blood and into the muscles. Exercise enhances this transport. Thus, your blood sugar can drop to an abnormally low level once you start to exercise.

On a daily basis, eat adequate high-carbohydrate meals to fuel and refuel your muscles so they will be ready for action. Snacks eaten within an hour before exercise primarily keep you from feeling hungry and maintain your blood sugar; they don't significantly replenish muscle glycogen stores. The best refueling starts within 1 hour after exercise.

Some great pre-workout food ideas could be: a bowl of whole-grain cereal with skim milk, a fruit smoothie or an apple with peanut butter.





Post Exercise Refueling

Your top dietary priority should be to replace the fluids you lost by sweating so that your body can get back into water balance. You'll know you are adequately rehydrated when your urine is clear or pale yellow and you have to urinate frequently (every 2-4 hours).

To optimize muscle glycogen replenishment, you should consume carbohydrate rich foods and beverages within 15 – 30 minutes after your workout. During that time, the enzymes responsible for making glycogen are most active and will most rapidly replace the depleted glycogen stores. Adding protein as well will enhance the process of building and repairing muscles.

Some great post-workout food choices could be: a protein shake, a banana with greek yogurt, a Clif bar or peanut butter and honey on whole grain toast.

