

EAT MOVE SLEEP



Eating and Exercise

You need to fuel up your car if you want it to operate properly and take you where you want to go. Likewise, you need to fuel your body with the necessary vitamins, minerals, and proteins it needs to function well. Food is your fuel! The right foods will help you optimize your energy and your performance when you exercise.

Good nutrition is essential to fueling your workout and what you eat when is also important. Eating too much at the wrong time can cause stomach cramping. Not eating enough can leave you feeling weak or cause muscle cramps. Knowing the best foods to eat as part of your exercise routine will help you get the most of your workouts.



BEFORE EXERCISE

It's best to wait 2 to 4 hours after eating a meal to exercise depending on what and how much you've eaten. It's difficult to focus on your workout if you're hungry, but you also don't want undigested food in your stomach. The best pre-exercise meal is hydrating and rich in carbohydrates, moderate in protein while relatively low in fat and fiber. How much you eat is a personal preference, but most people have good results with .5 grams of carbohydrates per pound of body weight. For example, a person weighing 150 pounds would eat 75 grams of carbs or 300 calories, which is equivalent to a small bowl of cereal and a banana. Adding a little protein (like 1 egg) may also optimize recovery since it provides a readily available supply of amino acids required for muscle development.

Avoid foods and beverages that are high in sugar before your workout. Although they offer a short-term boost of energy, they may hinder performance by contributing to hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) shortly after you begin to exercise. A glass of orange juice increases 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 process, so your blood sugar can drop to an abnormally low level once you start working out.

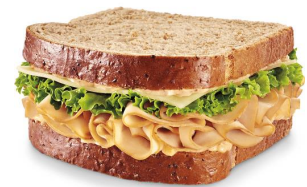
Pre-Exercise Food Ideas



Apple slices topped with peanut butter



A bowl of whole-grain cereal with skim milk



A turkey sandwich with a mandarin orange

AFTER EXERCISE

Following your workout, your top priority should be replacing the fluids you lost by sweating so your body can get back into water balance. You'll also want to refuel with some food within 30 minutes of wrapping up your exercise. This is when your blood flow is the greatest and muscles are like a sponge, soaking up fluid, electrolytes, and nutrients that you've exhausted.

To optimize muscle glycogen replenishment, consume carbohydrate-rich foods. The enzymes responsible for making glycogen are most active 15 to 30 after your exercise and will replace depleted glycogen stores more quickly. Adding protein to your post-workout snack will enhance the process of building and repairing muscles.

Post-Workout Food Ideas



A banana with Greek yogurt



Whole-grain toast topped with nut butter and honey



A protein shake or smoothie

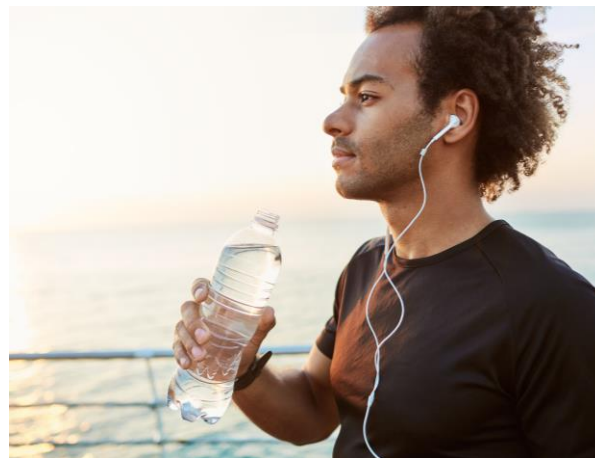
DON'T FORGET TO DRINK



You're not eating while you work out, but you definitely need to drink up. Staying hydrated while you exercise is extremely important. If it's a very hot or humid day or you're doing an extremely high-intensity workout for more than an hour, balancing electrolytes will be needed. Otherwise, your best bet for keeping hydrated is water.

The American Council on Exercise recommends the following guidelines when it comes to water and exercise:

- ◆ 17-20 oz 2 to 3 hours BEFORE exercise.
- ◆ 8 oz 20 to 30 minutes BEFORE exercise or DURING warm-up.
- ◆ 7-10 oz of water every 10 to 20 minutes DURING exercise.
- ◆ 8 oz of water within 30 minutes AFTER exercise.



Sources www.milkmeansmore.org/what-to-eat-before-during-and-after-exercise/
www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/ss/slideshow-foods-for-workout
 Images from Freepik.com