



## THE NUTE (NUTRITION) GURU IMPARTS WISDOM ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF NATURAL, WHOLE-FOODS NUTRITION FOR MIND/BODY WELLNESS.

Q

Hey Nute Guru, I know that making the connection between eating and exercise can help me perform better. Do you have any tips on this to help me maximize my workouts?

A

Eating and exercise go hand in hand. When and what you eat can be important to how you feel when you exercise, whether it's a casual workout or training for a competition. Consider these eating and exercise tips.

### 1. Eat a healthy breakfast

If you exercise in the morning, get up early enough to finish breakfast at least one hour before your workout. Be well-fueled going into a workout. Studies suggest eating or drinking carbohydrates before exercise can improve workout performance and may allow you to work out for a longer duration or higher intensity. If you don't eat, you might feel sluggish or lightheaded when you exercise.

If you plan to exercise within an hour after breakfast, eat a light breakfast or drink something such as a sports drink. Emphasize carbohydrates for maximum energy.

Good breakfast options include:

- Whole-grain cereals or bread
- Low-fat milk
- Juice
- A banana
- Yogurt
- A pancake

And remember, if you normally have coffee in the mornings, a cup before your workout is probably OK. Also know that anytime you try a food or drink for the first time before a workout, you risk an upset stomach.

### 2. Size matters

Be careful not to overdo it when it comes to how much you eat before exercise. The general guidelines suggest:

- Large meals. Eat these at least three to four hours before exercising.
- Small meals or snacks. Eat these about one to three hours before exercising.

Eating too much before you exercise can leave you feeling sluggish. Eating too little might not give you the energy to keep you feeling strong throughout your workout.

### 3. Snack well

Most people can eat small snacks right before and during exercise. The key is how you feel. Do what works best for you. Snacks eaten soon before exercise probably won't give you added energy if your workout lasts less than 60 minutes, but may prevent distracting hunger pangs. If your workout is longer than 60 minutes, you may benefit by including a carbohydrate-rich food or beverage during the workout. Good snack options include:

- An energy bar
- A banana, apple or other fresh fruit
- Yogurt
- Fruit smoothie
- A whole-grain bagel or crackers
- A low-fat granola bar
- Peanut butter sandwich
- Sports drink or diluted juice

A healthy snack is especially important if you plan a workout several hours after a meal.

### 4. Eat after you exercise

To help your muscles recover and to replace their glycogen stores, eat a meal that contains both carbohydrates and protein within two hours of your exercise session if possible. Good post-workout food choices include:

- Yogurt and fruit
- Peanut butter sandwich
- Low-fat chocolate milk and pretzels
- Post-workout recovery smoothie
- Turkey on whole-grain bread with vegetables

### 5. Drink up

Don't forget to drink fluids. You need adequate fluids before, during and after exercise to help prevent dehydration.

To stay well-hydrated for exercise, the American College of Sports Medicine recommends that you:

- Drink roughly 2 to 3 cups (473 to 710 milliliters) of water during the two to three hours before your workout.
- Drink about 1/2 to 1 cup (118 to 237 milliliters) of water every 15 to 20 minutes during your workout. Adjust amounts related to your body size and the weather.
- Drink roughly 2 to 3 cups (473 to 710 milliliters) of water after your workout for every pound (0.5 kilogram) of weight you lose during the workout.

Water is generally the best way to replace lost fluids. But if you're exercising for more than 60 minutes, use a sports drink. Sports drinks can help maintain your body's electrolyte balance and give you a bit more energy because they contain carbohydrates.

### Let experience be your guide

Keep in mind that the duration and intensity of your activity will dictate how often and what you should eat and drink. For example, you'll need more energy from food to run a marathon than to walk a few miles. And try not to incorporate any new products before a long-duration sports event. It's best to have previous experience to see how your system handles the food.

When it comes to eating and exercise, everyone is different. So pay attention to how you feel during your workout and to your overall performance. Let your experience guide you on which pre- and post-exercise eating habits work best for you. Consider keeping a journal to monitor how your body reacts to meals and snacks so that you can tweak your diet for optimal performance.

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/fitness/in-depth/exercise/art-20045506>