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Fuel Up Pre- & Post-Run with These Meals & Snacks



Running on an empty stomach isn't for everyone—especially when the training plan calls for major effort with distance, speed, or both! But lacing up with a full tummy isn't exactly a recipe for success either. "You want to make sure you have enough fuel in the tank to get through your workout, but not so much that it leads to GI distress," says recent marathoner and MyFitnessPal registered dietitian Elle Penner, M.P.H, R.D. Here are her tips for pre- and post- run fueling.

Before Your Run Pre-fuel with a carbohydrate-rich snack 30 to 60 minutes before you hit the pavement. "Be sure to avoid high-fiber and fat—they take more effort for your body to digest and can cause an upset stomach while striding," says Penner. Good options include a piece of fruit, a slice of toast with jam, or a low-fiber granola bar.

More smart tips:

Drink a tall glass of water to hydrate and help digest your snack before heading out.

Stay away from orange or grapefruit juice, the acid can irritate your stomach.

Consider hydrating with diluted sports drink instead of water. The added carbohydrates will help keep you going.

After Your Run Re-fuel with a meal containing protein and carbs within 1 hour.

READ MORE AT THE JUICE BAR

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NOTE: Some sentiments contained within "What We're Reading" articles may not strictly conform with PROJECT: PFC's nutritional outlook. We read articles containing opposing information all the time and derive our nutritional philosophies from the latest science, the opinions of experts worldwide and our anecdotal experiences in the field. We keep an open mind and a strong affinity for fact-based evidence to help make the world of nutrition "Simple Again" for you.

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After Your Run Re-fuel with a meal or snack that contains complex carbohydrates and protein within 1 hour of your sweat session to replenish glycogen stores and encourage muscle repair. "A piece of fruit and a small handful of nuts is all you need after a run lasting 60 minutes or less, but you'll want to have something more substantial after longer distances and harder efforts," says Penner. Some post-training meal ideas:

A Greek yogurt parfait with granola, fruit, and a sprinkle of nuts or seeds

A smoothie made with Greek yogurt, frozen berries, and sliced avocado, a dollop of peanut butter, or flax or chia seeds for a dose of healthy fats

Oatmeal (made with milk for added protein), topped with dried or fresh fruit, nuts, or nut butter

An omelette made with whole eggs and sautéed veggies (think: spinach, tomato, caramelized onions), a slice of whole grain toast, and a cup of reduced-fat milk.