



A Guy's Guide to Sports Nutrition Essentials

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When it comes to training, have you covered all of your bases? Many athletes may have a solid training program, but fall short when it comes to giving their muscles high-octane fuel. The right mix of fuel from foods and fluids is essential for gains in strength, speed and peak performance.

Fad Diets = Fading Energy

Fad diets don't have what it takes for peak performance. They're usually too low in calories and carbohydrate — the very components athletes need to compete! Fad diets can leave you feeling sluggish, irritable and unable to concentrate. Eat a variety of foods balanced in nutrients for training and peak performance.

Pre-Event Meals

Tensions rise as game-time approaches so fueling up hours before a game sits best with most athletes. Stick with foods you're familiar with and ones that aren't too high in fat or fiber. Some examples of meals to eat at least 3 hours before competition are:

- Cereal with low-fat milk, banana, toast, orange juice
- Grilled chicken breast sandwich, pretzels, oatmeal raisin cookie, low-fat milk
- Pasta with tomato sauce, dinner roll, mixed green salad, frozen yogurt, lemonade

Fluids—Drink Up!

One of the best ways to improve performance is to drink enough of the right type of fluids. Sports drinks, such as Gatorade Thirst Quencher:

- Taste good — The flavor and sodium in sports drinks encourages drinking beyond just satisfying thirst to prevent dehydration — something water doesn't do.
- Improve performance — Carbohydrate in sports drinks helps you train and compete.
- Help keep you in the game — Drinking sports drinks can prevent dehydration-related problems, such as fatigue and heat cramps so athletes can go the distance.

Keep a sports bottle close by during practices and games. Drink using this schedule:

Before exercise	Start hydrated — not thirsty. Drink 1 to 2 cups (8 to 16 ounces) an hour before
During exercise	Drink at least 1/2 to 1 cup (5 to 9 ounces) every 15 to 20 minutes
After exercise	Drink enough to bring your weight back to what it was before exercise

"Performance-Enhancing" Supplements?

Relying on ergogenic aids or supplement pills, herbs, or powders for performance enhancement can be short-lived and potentially harmful. Because the ingredients of dietary supplements are not as regulated as foods are, there is no guarantee of safety, potency or effectiveness. Some of the ingredients found in supplements, such as steroids and ephedrine, are banned by athletic organizations including the NCAA and NFL. Don't risk your health and eligibility! Instead of trying the latest quick fix, follow a training program that is physically challenging and balanced nutritionally to get the performance benefits you want.

Building Body Muscle

Many supplement products claim to build muscle, such as protein powders. Taking lots of extra protein from powder or foods doesn't guarantee bigger muscles. If it did, athletes could spend time lounging instead of lifting. To build muscle:

- Follow a strength training program that challenges muscles
- Eat 500 to 1000 MORE calories each day than what you're eating now
- Eat foods high in carbohydrate (grains, fruits, veggies), along with protein (meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs)
- Choose low-fat foods
- Eat several small meals throughout the day to support training and muscle building

Snacks to Pack

Did you know...studies of athletes eating 5 to 6 times per day show they have more energy than those who eat just three times per day? If weight gain is what you want, eat mini-meals or snacks that pack a nutrition punch, such as:

- Bagel with peanut butter
- Granola bars and milk
- Energy bars and sports drink
- Cheese and crackers
- Trail mix with nuts, chocolate pieces and raisins
- Banana, apple

Fast Food Focus

Most fast foods are "supersized" in fat but downsized in nutrients. Know which foods keep your engine running without loading you down. Here are some good choices:

Burger Joint	Single burger or grilled chicken sandwich	Small order French fries or baked potato	Soft drink
South of the Border	Bean burrito	Low-fat chips and salsa	Lemonade
Pizza Parlor	2 slices thin pizza with vegetables	Side salad with dressing and bread sticks	Low-fat milk
Sub Shop	Turkey, ham or roast beef sub	Pretzels and piece of fruit	Sports drink

Fill your training table up with nutritious foods and fluids. Think of healthy choices as sports nutrition gear you can't GO without!