



Athlete Eating Guidelines

Information

A proper eating program is just as important to an elite athlete's success as is a training program. Think of your body as a car and food and drink as the fuel. Elite athletes are like finely tuned cars that require high quality fuel to achieve optimal performance.

Putting low quality fuel into your body can lead to compromised health and decreased performance.

Application

- Focus on the following nutrition principles year-round:
 - ✓ **Stay hydrated.** Your body is more than 50% water and your muscles depend on water to function properly. A dehydrated body cannot train or compete at its peak. Drink enough so that your urine color is pale lemonade to clear and so that you are urinating frequently throughout the day.
 - ✓ **Fuel up before training.** Focus on eating lean proteins, fruits and vegetables and whole grains to ensure that your body is prepared for training. Try not to go into a training session with an empty fuel tank. Eat a meal 3-4 hours or a snack 1-2 hours before exercise.
 - ✓ **Boost your immune system.** Choose foods that are high in antioxidants such as fruits and vegetables to help keep your immune system healthy and reduce the amount of free radicals that your body builds up during high intensity training. Choose more colorful fruits and vegetables such as blueberries, strawberries, oranges, broccoli, asparagus and sweet potatoes.
 - ✓ **Limit fats.** Saturated and trans fats can cause inflammation which is the exact opposite of what elite athletes need. Stay away from foods that are processed or fried or higher fat meats and choose non-inflammatory unsaturated fats such as olives, avocados, nuts, seeds, and salmon.
 - ✓ **Eat to recover.** Choose carbohydrate rich foods with some protein within 30-60 minutes of finishing a training session to help your body recover faster. Whole grains including bread, pasta, rice and potatoes, fruits and lowfat milk and yogurt are good choices after workouts.
 - ✓ **Energy products.** Energy bars, gels and drinks do have their place in an elite athlete's eating program; however, be sure to not abuse these types of products as they can deter body weight goals and can replace more beneficial calories from whole foods. Limit these to before, during or immediately after practice depending on your sport needs.