



Fitness Nutrition Tips

Whether you are exercising for fitness or training for a race, keep these nutrition tips in mind to get the best effect from your workout:

- A good sports diet is based on a balanced diet *every day*. Keep 3 principles in mind: 1) adequate fuel for your workout, 2) proper hydration, and 3) adequate recovery nutrients immediately after your workout. Remember, carbohydrates such as pasta, bread and fruits provide energy for your training, but protein foods such as meats, fish and beans help strengthen lean muscle mass. More on a [balanced diet](#).
- Essential nutrients to fuel an active lifestyle are protein, iron, and zinc - in addition to carbohydrates. Protein helps maintain weight loss and build lean muscle mass. Iron carries oxygen to your muscles and zinc heals injury. Beef is

an excellent lean protein which provides over 10 essential [nutrients](#), such as protein, iron and zinc at only 165 calories per serving.

- [Breakfast](#) helps you lose weight and is the most important meal in a sports diet. Any breakfast is better than no breakfast. You get the idea. Aim for 500-600 calories at breakfast (for 2000-2200 kcal daily calorie level). Aim to include at least protein, grains and fruits. Good choices are whole-grain cereals with low-fat milk and some berries or bananas. No appetite for breakfast before your workout? Bring a granola bar or a yogurt with an apple to work. Want something tasty and sustaining through the morning? Try this [breakfast burrito](#) for extra protein, iron, zinc and B vitamins.



- You know protein boosts your training and helps build lean muscles. How much do you need? A fitness runner would need about 0.5g/lb. of body weight, that is about 75 g for a 150 lb. weight. Studies show a higher amount of protein helps weight loss and improves satiety. Instead of having one large dinner for protein, try spreading it out throughout the day: peanut butter or eggs on toast for breakfast, lean beef sandwiches at lunch. Use this protein and calorie [calculator](#) to help you assess your needs.
- Keep your energy up with healthy snacks with a bit of planning for that mid morning or mid afternoon hunger, or before that 5pm run. Not only do snacks energize you, they prevent hunger or craving for sugary foods. Some convenient snacks include whole grain bagels or crackers with peanut butter, raisins, trail mix, yogurt, pretzels or energy bars. Fruits are portable and nutritious.



- Vary your proteins, keep them lean. Poultry, fish, dairy and [lean beef](#) are high-quality complete lean proteins. Beans and peanut butter are also lean proteins, but you need to pair them with other plant foods to provide complete protein for our body. Over 65% of beef cuts are lean by USDA standards. Look for the words loin, round or 95% lean ground beef in the names. For example, [Top Sirloin](#), [Top Round](#), and [Strip Steak](#) are all lean.
- Think recovery. Studies show within 45 minutes after your training is the best time to replenish body fuel and to strengthen lean muscles. Recovery foods should include some protein and carbs. Good snack/meal options are yogurt, PBJ, beef jerky, or lean beef stir-fry with brown rice. No appetite after running? Try liquid foods such as fruit smoothies or chocolate milk. Learn more on [recovery](#).
- What beverages are best? The ideal beverage should replenish hydration, electrolytes and some carbs. Sports drinks such as Gatorade are good choices that provide all three. Vitamin or fitness water provides some minerals but no carbs. If you enjoy the taste and it helps hydrate you, go ahead. Limit energy drinks because of the extra caffeine and calories. Concerned about the calories from sports drinks? Try diluting them by pouring into a thermos packed with ice. Remember, water along with pretzels is a good option too!



- [Hydrate](#) before, during and after the training to reduce fatigue. Depending on your workout, temp and humidity, you need about 2 cups of fluid before a moderate workout, and 4-6 oz. every 15-20 minutes. Don't forget to replenish 20 oz. for every pound of sweat loss. How do you know if you are well-hydrated? The color of your urine should be like lemon juice, not apple juice.
- Fuel up for the race! Maximize the stored glycogen for fuel for your run. Increase the amount of grain foods such as pasta, potatoes or rice on your dinner plate several days before the race, to about 1/4 to 1/2 of the dinner

plate. This week's recipe of [Beef Sirloin & Pasta Portobello](#) is a great example. The morning of the race, depending on your tolerance, a bowl of oatmeal with low-fat milk and raisins provides good carbs. Remember, stay with tried-and-true foods you know you can tolerate well. Get an idea what an [dinner plate](#) for moderate training should look like.