



Nutrition for Endurance Athletes

Optimal health requires consumption of nutrient rich meals on a regular consistent basis. As an athlete, additional considerations are necessary. Follow these nutritional guidelines to reach your personal best.

Daily nutritional needs

Proper caloric balance and timing is essential to achieving optimal athletic performance.

Macronutrient Balance:

- Carbs – 50-60%
- Pro – 10-25%
- Fat – 15-25%

Pre-race meal

Consume 200-400 calories about 3 hours prior to exercise. This is a snack, not a meal. Focus on carbs with a little protein. Avoid fiber, simple sugars (high fructose corn syrup, fructose, sucrose) and high fat.

Some good choices: a banana and a cup of yogurt, a white flour bagel and a teaspoon of peanut butter, half of a skinless baked potato with a cup of yogurt, 2 servings of Hammer Gel

During exercise

The following ranges are ideal for most athletes:

- Fluids: 20-25 ounces per hour
Keep fluids cold. Your body absorbs them more rapidly.
- Sodium chloride: 300-600 mg per hour
Electrolyte needs vary greatly among athletes. Always consume a full spectrum of electrolytes, not just salt.
- Calories: 240-280 calories per hour

For exercise up to 2 hours in duration, these calories can be carbs only (maltodextrin). For exercise beyond 2 hours, include some protein (carb/pro ratio ~ 8/1).

Avoid sports drinks/gels/etc containing simple sugars (high fructose corn syrup, fructose, sucrose) and caffeine.

Some good choices: Hammer Gel, e-Gel, Gu

Timing

Do not wait until you are hungry/thirsty to eat/drink. Determine your specific needs by recording your intake during training workouts. Have a nutrition plan on race day and stick to it. Take in calories and/or fluids every 15-20 minutes.

Recovery

Consume 150-400 calories within 30-60 minutes after exercise. Focus on carbs and protein (carb/pro ratio ~ 3/1).

Take advantage of this small window in which your body absorbs and metabolizes nutrients most efficiently. Eat a normal balanced meal about an hour after consuming your recovery fuel.

*Source: Sports Nutrition. A Practice Manual for Professionals. 4th ed. American Dietetic Association; 2006
The Endurance Athlete's Guide to Success. 8th ed. Endurance Marketing Group; Hammer Nutrition; 2008*

For more information or to discuss your specific nutritional needs, contact Todd Benedict, Nutrition Coach at 502-797-0565 or todd@thetrainingstudio.com