



# Athlete Eating Guidelines

## Focus on the following nutrition principles year-round:

**Stay hydrated.** Your body is more than 60% 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 looks like pale lemonade or apple juice 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, kiwis, oranges, broccoli, carrots 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, and higher fat meats like chicken wings, bologna and pastrami. 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. Good choices after workouts include: peanut butter sandwich (half or whole), carton of chocolate milk, or a bowl of cereal with milk or yogurt.

**Sport products.** Sports bars, gels and drinks do have their place in an elite athlete's eating program. Be sure to not over-use these types of products, however, as they can deter body weight goals and can replace more beneficial calories from whole foods. Use sports products before, during or immediately after practice depending on your sport needs and goals.



## INFORMATION

A proper eating program is just as important to an elite athlete's success as a training program.

Think of your body as a car...

The foods and drinks you consume are 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 poor health and sub-par performance.

*This material was developed by professional sports nutritionists at the United States Olympic Committee. For more information and additional sport performance resources, visit:*

[www.teamusa.org/resources/usoc-sport-performance](http://www.teamusa.org/resources/usoc-sport-performance)



# Eating Breakfast

## The importance of Breakfast:

**Breakfast is refueling-** the first opportunity to replenish glucose (blood sugar), glycogen (carbohydrate stored as fuel for the brain and muscles) and fluid.

**Breakfast eaters tend to have more strength and endurance.**

**Eating breakfast daily improves mental skills** athletes rely on, such as alertness, concentrations, problem-solving and memory.

**Eating breakfast can benefit an athlete's mood**, making it easier to stay calm relaxed, motivated and positive.

**Eating breakfast decreases the chances of inappropriate snacking later in the day.** Unplanned or out-of-control snacking can lead to higher intake of fat and calories, and unwanted weight gain.

**Breakfast provides a jump start** to meeting your daily requirements of key nutrients such a water, fiber, and more than 40 vitamins and minerals.

**Breakfast fuels and sustains the body through morning training sessions.** This helps decrease the ravenous hunger that athletes often experience later in the day.

**Breakfast eaters make better food choices throughout the day.**

## Eat breakfast daily! Great options include:

- Whole-grain cereal with fruit and 8 ounces of milk/yogurt.
- Waffles with peanut butter and a fruit smoothie.
- Oatmeal made with milk and dried fruit/nuts.
- One egg (not fried) and two pieces whole grain toast with fruit
- Smoothie made with milk/yogurt, fruit, honey, oats, ground flax, peanut butter, etc.
- Pancakes with fruit, maple syrup and a glass of milk.
- Bagel with peanut butter, small fruit smoothie.
- English muffin topped with melted cheese and tomato.
- Omelet made with vegetables and a piece of whole grain toast.



## INFORMATION

Breakfast is important for performance and health. It is an early-morning refueling stop for your body.

After 8-12 hours without a meal or snack, your body needs to be replenished with fuel and fluid.

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# Recovery Nutrition

## The Why:

Post Workout Nutrition is a 2 stage process that begins immediately after a training session and continues into the meal following. Stage 1 will immediately begin the process of recovery post workout and Stage 2 will continue the process.

Combined, these two stages of post workout nutrition will help:

- Replenish glycogen
- Decrease muscle breakdown
- Promote muscle protein synthesis
- Boost immune system
- Re-hydrate the body

## The What:

Stage I recovery is a low fat carbohydrate and protein rich SNACK that needs to be consumed within 30-60 minutes after finishing a training session:

**Carbohydrate.** Eat 30-100 grams of carbohydrate to begin replenishing depleted glycogen stores and maintain a strong immune system.

**Protein.** Eat 10-20 grams of protein to begin to repair damaged tissue.

**Fat.** Too much fat will delay the absorption of carbs and protein, so try to keep your fat intake to <3g per 100 calories.

**Fluid.** Drinking 20-24 ounces of water and/or sports drink for every pound that you lose during training will help your body get re-hydrated.

## The How:

Of course, your daily eating program will have a significant influence on how fast you recover from training also.

- Provides the proper ration of CHO/PRO/FAT for Stage I of post workout recovery nutrition as well as fuel for during training.
- It is not necessary to overload during stage I of recovery, a quick snack of the proper composition will do the trick...more is NOT better here!
- Do not forget about fluids!
- Stage II recovery should be a meal within 2-3 hours of training to maximize the refueling and recovery process.



## STAGE I RECOVERY

**What:** A low-fat carbohydrate and protein-rich snack  
**When:** 30-60 minutes after finishing a training session

## STAGE II RECOVERY

**What:** A full meal  
**When:** Within 2-3 hours of training

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# International Travel Nutrition

## Two weeks prior to travel:

Contact airline to arrange for special in-flight meal. Most airlines offer Diabetic, Heart Smart, High-fiber, Low-Sodium, Low-fat, and various vegetarian options

## Six to one days prior to travel:

- Purchase / pack cooking equipment for the country you are visiting.
- Purchase additional foods you need for the trip: e.g. crackers, nut butters, jelly, trail mix, breakfast cereal, powdered soups, instant noodles, milk powder, canned tuna, canned apple sauce, sport bars, sport drinks, recovery drinks and / or weight gainers.

## One day prior to travel:

Pack Travel Nutrition Kit (for flight, layovers, wait times, delays) and check government website for current guidelines ([www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov))

Water bottle

Sandwich or portable meal

Fruits (fresh, dried, juice)

Sports bars, crackers, dry cereal, and/or bagels

Slippers, eye cover and ear plugs for the plane

Workout clothes for potential layover/delay

## Day of travel:

Ensure you are well-hydrated.

Ensure you have eaten prior to traveling.

Put travel nutrition kit in carry-on luggage.

## In flight:

Set your watch to destination time upon take-off.

Immediately adjust eating schedule to destination time zone

Consume at least 8 ounces of fluid every hour.

Monitor hydration status. Urinate every 2-3 hours.

Avoid alcohol.

Only consume caffeine if you are caffeine-habituated.

If you do consume caffeine, do so on the destination time zone.

## Upon arrival:

Go shopping to obtain additional food items needed.

Adjust eating schedule to destination time zone.



## INFORMATION

Travel often causes sleep deprivation, body weight disturbance and circadian rhythm (body clock) disruption. These may lead to adverse consequences that may affect athletic ability.

This handout provides helpful hints on food and nutrition when traveling.

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