

Meal Planning Tips and Food Lists

Meal Planning Tips

- Eat frequent meals and snacks throughout the day. Do not skip meals.
- Include a quality carbohydrate, lean protein, and healthy fat with all meals and snacks to increase satiety.
- Include non-starchy vegetable and fruits with meals and snacks.
- Carbohydrate intake should be 5 g/kg to 7 g/kg; 6 g/kg to 10 g/kg may be needed during rigorous training such as two-a-days, tournament play, and off-season conditioning when activity is moderate- to high-intensity for 1 to 3 hours per day.
 - Choose whole grains as your carbohydrate choices for meals (breads, bagels, tortillas, cereals, oatmeal, granola bars, crackers, pastas, rice).
- Protein intake should range from 1.4 g/kg to 1.7 g/kg.
 - Choose lean proteins such as chicken or turkey without skin, lean cuts of red meat, fish, low-fat dairy, eggs, beans, tofu, edamame, or whey or soy protein powder.
- Fat intake should be the remainder of total calories, with an emphasis on heart-healthy fats.
 - Increase intake of healthy fats such as peanut butter, nuts, seeds, flaxseed, olive oil, and salmon or tuna.
 - Decrease intake of saturated fats such as baked/package foods, high-fat meats (like ribs and wings), white, thick, creamy sauces (like Alfredo sauce), gravies, biscuits, croissants, doughnuts, and pastries.
- Hydration should be adequate so that urine color is pale yellow throughout the day.
 - Rely on water throughout the day and water/sports drinks during training or exercise.
- Include high-sodium foods to replace sodium lost in sweat.
 - Crackers, pretzels, baked chips, popcorn, deli meat, beef/turkey jerky, pickles, soups, and frozen/boxed/canned foods
 - Add table salt at meals
- Consume post-exercise snack as soon as possible (within 30 minutes) after training.
- Limit alcohol and high-fat fast-food intake.
- Include a variety of protein, carbohydrate, and vegetable choices at each pre-game and post-game meal.

Recommended Foods

Pre-Game

- Meal timing: 3 to 4 hours before game
- Meal composition: High in quality carbohydrate (200 g to 300 g) and lean protein, low in fiber and fat
- Meal hydration: 4 hours before game, consume 17 oz to 20 oz water or sports drink, or 5 mL/kg to 7 mL/kg (2 mL/lb to 3mL/lb)
- Snack timing: 30 minutes to 1 hour before game
- Snack composition: High in carbohydrate, moderate in protein, low in fat and fiber
- Snack hydration: 5 oz to 10 oz water or sports drink

Half-Time Snack

- Carbohydrate should be provided for exercise bouts of continuous activity lasting longer than 1 hour
- Composition: Quality carbohydrate with small amounts of protein, low in fat and fiber (granola bars, crackers, high-carbohydrate/moderate-protein energy bars, dry whole grain cereal, fruit, smoothies, low-fat fruited yogurt)
- Hydration: Dependent on sweat rate
 - Average: 5 oz to 10 oz water or sports drink every 15 to 20 minutes
 - Sports drinks should contain 6% to 8% carbohydrate
 - Replace electrolytes lost via sports drink or foods high in sodium and potassium

Post-Game Meal

- Snack timing: Within 30 minutes post-game
- Snack composition: Quality carbohydrate and lean protein
 - Recommended amount: 1.0 g to 1.5 g carbohydrate per kg
- Meal timing: Within 2 hours after game (continue meals in 2-hour intervals up to 6 hours)
- Meal composition: High in quality carbohydrate, lean protein, and heart-healthy fats
 - Recommended amount: 1.0 g to 1.5 g carbohydrate per kg
- Hydration: Replace fluids within 24 hours after game by drinking 16 oz to 24 oz water or sports drink for every pound lost during exercise

Foods Not Recommended

Pre-Exercise

- High-fat foods (high-fat meats, heavy sauces/creams, fried foods, food prepared with a lot of butter or oil, high-fat desserts)
- High-fiber foods (cruciferous vegetables, whole grains with added fiber, beans)
- Carbonated beverages
- Sugar-sweetened beverages (soft drinks, sweetened tea, fruit drinks)
- Alcohol

During Exercise

- High-fiber foods (cruciferous vegetables, whole grains with added fiber, beans)
- High-protein foods (meats, dairy, high-protein energy bars)
- High-fat foods (high-fat meats, heavy sauces/creams, fried foods, foods prepared with a lot of butter or oil, desserts, large quantities of nut butters, nuts, seeds)
- Fluids containing more than 8% carbohydrate (juice, soft drinks, sweetened tea, energy drinks)
- Alcohol

Post-Exercise

- Eat a meal rich in quality, fiber-rich carbohydrates, lean protein, and heart-healthy fats.
- Drink enough fluids to replace losses.

Nutrition Tips for Traveling Teams

Printable Handout

- Plan ahead
 - Determine when, where, and how long you will be traveling and the expected time of meals in relation to practice and games
- Method of travel
 - Plane: Research the airports for restaurants and pack snacks for the flight
 - Car: Plan to bring along healthy snacks for the road
- Research your destination to find information about the following:
 - Available restaurants in the area and their menu options
 - Grocery stores for snacks
 - Hotel restaurants/continental breakfast options
 - Availability of food storage at the hotel (refrigerator, etc.)
 - Meal options at the venue
- Pack healthy snacks
 - Pack nonperishable snacks that will travel well, whether on the plane, in the car, at the hotel, or at the competition venue
 - Snack options: granola bars, energy bars, peanut butter crackers, snack-pack fruit cups, dried fruit, trail mix, nuts, string cheese, peanut butter, and mini bagels

Eating at Restaurants

- Choose quality carbohydrates
- Choose lean meats (grilled or rotisserie chicken, turkey lean beef or pork, or fish)
- Choose a colorful vegetable
- Choose a fruit-based dessert (such as berries over ice cream)
- Drink plenty of water for hydration, as flying and being in different altitudes can be dehydrating

Tips for Athletes When Ordering at Restaurants

- Ask for meats and vegetables not cooked in butter
- Ask for sauces, gravies, and dressings on the side
- Choose foods that are grilled, baked, or broiled instead of fried
- Customize your meal by asking for substitutions
- Share an entrée with a friend
- Follow the general plate rule for athletes:
 - 1/3 carbohydrate
 - 1/3 protein
 - 1/3 vegetables/fruit

Healthy Meal Options for Common Restaurants

American

- Grilled chicken sandwich
- Turkey deli sandwich
- Grilled chicken pita sandwich
- Whole wheat wraps
- Grilled fish entrée
- Grilled chicken entrée
- Entrée salads with grilled chicken, salmon, or lean beef with vinaigrette salad dressing
- Side items: rice pilaf, mashed potatoes, sweet potato, baked potato with toppings on side, vegetable, salad with dressing on side, fruit cup or yogurt

Italian

- Tomato sauce-based pasta dishes with lean protein
- Whole wheat pasta dishes with olive oil-based sauce and lean protein
- Grilled chicken dishes with vegetable, pasta side dish, bread
- Grilled chicken salad meal with 1 to 3 slices of bread

Mexican

- Fajitas on flour tortillas with cheese, vegetables, guacamole, Spanish rice, black beans
- Grilled chicken burrito with tomato-based sauce, Spanish rice, black beans
- Chicken or beef crunchy tacos with cheese, lettuce, tomato, guacamole, Spanish rice, black beans

Asian

- Grilled chicken/beef/shrimp, vegetable, brown rice meals with brown or soy sauce
- Sides: miso or egg drop soup, edamame, spring rolls in rice paper (not fried)

Fast Food

- Grilled chicken sandwiches, wraps, pitas
- Grilled chicken salads
- Turkey, ham, or roast beef sub sandwiches with cheese and vegetables
- Side items: fruit cups, yogurt/granola cups, baked chips, broth-based soups, low-fat chili, low-fat milk