

BigTime Sports Nutrition- Pre-Exercise

There is no one meal that will guarantee success all the time. The meal that works for one person may not work for another. All athletes have to find what works for them based on a trial and error effort. One of the biggest problems for athletes is finding a meal that will not affect their performance due to GI (gastrointestinal) problems. There are many factors to consider when choosing a meal before a workout. Type of sport, experience with working out, age, gender, emotional stress, intensity, and levels of hydration to name a few. With more experience of working out and competing will come a better understanding of what will and won't work.

There are reasons to eat certain foods before a workout or the days leading up to a competition. The foods eaten 12-48 hours prior to exercise will affect your performance. The food that is eaten right before a workout will have less of an effect.

- Will fuel muscles- this occurs from food eaten days before and the hours leading right up

Eating properly 3-4 days before exercise:

- to the activity.
 - Will help settle your stomach- it will absorb some of the gastric juices, and alleviate hunger.
- Will help prevent hypoglycemia- will prevent low-blood sugar and its

- accompanying symptoms of dizziness, fatigue, vision, and confusion.
- Will ease the mind knowing that the body is well fueled- allowing for concentration on what is at hand rather than being hungry.
- Eat meals high in carbohydrates to fuel and refuel muscles in order to keep exercise intensity at a high level every single day.

Eating right before you exercise

- If the activity will last longer than 60 to 90 minutes, choose carbohydrates that can help fuel your effort. Complex carbohydrates such as yogurt, bananas, oatmeal, and apples are a few that will digest quickly and can help provide fuel during a long workout.
- If exercise will be less than 60 minutes, eat foods that will digest easily. These include bread, muffins, cereals, and pasta.
- Limit high-fat proteins to a minimal amount. These take longer to digest and will not help you receive the fuel that is needed.
- Be careful with foods high in sugar. Initial sugar highs that result from food taken an hour before exercise usually don't last long enough to help out during exercise.

Allow 2-4 hours to digest

- the food before exercise.
- Allow longer times if the intensity of the activity is going to be at a high level.
- If it is hard to eat before an event because of a jittery stomach, be sure to eat well the day before.
- If there is a food that always works, make sure to eat it so it can be used. This will help out psychologically, if not physiologically.
- Once a meal or food is found that works, stick with it. Changing foods before competition may produce ill effects.
- Find a certain time period before activity where it is comfortable to eat and eat at that time every day. The body will start to adapt and better results will occur.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Dehydration is much more likely to occur during an activity. Drink up to six glasses a day before competition so that you overhydrate.
- The morning of an event, eat a breakfast that will settle easily.
- **Practice eating different foods with your training in order to find out what does and doesn't work for your competition.**

These guidelines should help when trying to compete at the highest level possible. An athlete wants to make sure that they are running on fuel rather than on fumes.