

Basic Nutrition for Runners and Triathletes

Nutrition should be seen as fuel and fun. Treat your body like a Ferrari engine that needs premium gas and have fun speeding through your workouts and races.

Daily foundation:

Here is a snap shot of what you want a typical day to look like. Amount of food you eat is dependent on your size and activity level. Input = output

1. **Breakfast** or light snack right before am workout or drink 16-24 oz of sport drink during am workout for energy. Eat breakfast after am workout.
 - 500-800 kcals includes fruit/grain/protein
 - Ex: Fruit with whole grain cereal and milk (reg/soy/rice/almond), Banana with toast and peanut butter, fruit with oatmeal and milk
2. **AM snack**
 - 150-300 kcals includes fruit or veg pared with protein
 - Ex: Orange with 10-15 almonds, fruit or veg with low/non-fat yoghurt/cottage cheese
3. **Lunch** or light snack right before lunch workout or drink 16-24 oz of sport drink during workout for energy. Eat lunch after workout.
 - 500-800 kcals includes veg/grain/protein
 - Ex: Sandwich with lunchmeat or meat substitute, tons of veg inside, salad with egg/tuna/salmon + rice or quinoa, or leftovers from last nights dinner. Hand/plate rule here.
4. **PM snack**
 - 150-300 kcals includes fruit or veg pared with protein, can add some grain here for a PM workout prep
 - Ex: Orange with 10-15 almonds, fruit or veg with low/non-fat yoghurt/cottage cheese, 1 slice of toast/rice cracker with peanut butter and banana
5. **Dinner**
 - 500-800 kcals includes veg/grain/protein
 - Use hand/plate rule here.

Basics:

- Drink 2.5-3 L of water/day – Use a bottle or glass you can measure and bring it with you everywhere.
- Limit caffeinated drinks to 2/day. This includes coffee, tea and soft drinks.
- Avoid drinking juice as a fruit sub. Eat the fruit/veg, drink water.
- Choose whole grains that have at least 4g of fiber/serving. Fiber will help you feel fuller on fewer calories. Beans work great for this! Decrease your fiber intake however 1-2 days before long runs and races ☺
- Choose fruits and veggies that are bright and deep in colour.
- Try to eat real food as much as possible. Use bars/gels for sports.
- Follow the Canada Food Guide for nutrition portions and serving sizes.

Pre-during-post workout nutrition:

1. Pre-workout

- Eat 2-2.5 hours before most workouts to avoid stomach problems
- Choose foods that are easy for you to digest. This can take practice. Most important to eat before all long rides and runs. This should be high in carbohydrates with a bit of protein.
- Avoid high fat!

2. During workout

- Eat approximately 1g of carb/kg of body weight/hour. So a 60lb athlete needs 60g of carb/hour or about 2-3 gels, or a combination of 1-2 gels/bars + sports drink.
- Aim to be taking in fluids every 10-20 min.
- Most athletes need about 24-32oz or almost a liter of fluid/hour! This is a combination of water and or sports drink.
- This can take a lot of experimentation to find out what works best for you in terms of what sports drink, gel combination you use.
- For events longer than half ironman distance you need to start taking in protein during racing and long rides.

3. Post-workout

- Eat as soon as possible after workouts.
- Aim for about 200-300 kcals. Recovery drinks or 8oz of chocolate milk work great. Look for a ratio of 3:1 carbs to protein.
- Continue to drink water for the rest of the day.
- Aim to eat a healthy meal within 1 hour of the workout.

How to sabotage your hard work:

- Going out for coffee post long run/ride and eating muffins, scones, etc.
- Drinking too much beer, wine hard liquor. Limit this a to a few glasses/weekend. These are empty calories.
- Not following the hand rule for dinner.
- Eating too much late at night.
- Remember 80/20. Eat well 80% of the time and let go 20% of the time.