Eat To Compete!

It is important as an athlete to fuel your body throughout the day, with meals and snacks, to be the best you can be at your sport and in life.

The nutrients you get at each meal should come from...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Carbohydrates</th>
<th>Examples: oatmeal, wheat bread, low fat milk, berries, bananas, brown rice, granola, whole wheat pasta, sweet potatoes, oranges, quinoa</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lean Protein</td>
<td>Examples: chicken, turkey, fish, greek yogurt, chickpeas, cottage cheese, string cheese, peanut butter, low fat milk, eggs, nuts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Healthy Fats</td>
<td>Examples: olive oil, salmon, avocados, chia seeds, walnuts, eggs</td>
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</tbody>
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Make sure to include **fruits and vegetables** to obtain vitamins and minerals!

Focus on including foods with **calcium and iron** for bone health and to prevent tiredness. Listed below are examples of foods containing these.

- Calcium: chia seeds, low fat milk, cheese, yogurt, beans, almonds, spinach, broccoli
- Iron: chicken, turkey, beans, cashews, spinach, eggs, dark chocolate

**Before exercise, avoid foods high in saturated fat (greasy foods) and fiber.** These items often cause stomach discomfort in athletes before competing. **Caffeine, spicy, or hot foods may also cause irritation.** If you don’t normally eat/drink these, don’t experiment before exercising.

Fluids and sodium lost in sweat need to be replaced. **Make sure to hydrate with water and sports drinks! Add some salt to your foods as well.**

On a day of a practice or meet, this is what a good eating schedule would look like...
| **Pre-Exercise Meal**  
(3-4 hours before) | High in carbohydrates  
Include a protein  
Stay low in fat  
Stay low in fiber  
Hydrate with water or a sports drink | Example:  
Pancakes topped with nuts and light syrup  
Greek yogurt with berries and chia seeds  
Low-fat milk  
Water |
|---|---|---|
| **Pre-Exercise Snack**  
(30 min-1 hour before) | Pair carbohydrates with a protein  
Hydrate with water or a sports drink | Example:  
Banana and peanut butter  
Piece of dark chocolate  
Gatorade |
| **During-Exercise Snacks**  
(every 15-20 min after the first hour of exercise) | Small source of sodium-containing carbohydrates + water  
OR  
Small source of carbohydrates + a sports drink | Example:  
Pretzels and water  
Granola bar and Powerade |
| **Post-Exercise Snack**  
(30 min after) | Pair carbohydrates with a protein  
Hydrate with water or a sports drink | Example:  
Crackers, carrots, and hummus  
Water |
| **Post-Exercise Meal**  
(2 hours after) | Moderate amount of carbohydrates  
Include a protein  
Include healthy fats  
Hydrate with water or a sports drink | Example:  
Chicken  
Rice  
Sweet potatoes  
Spinach salad with tomatoes, cucumbers, onion, and feta with olive oil dressing  
Water |