

Fuels to Run By: Smart Eating Habits for Runners

If you're just kicking off a new running program, follow these five nutritional guidelines. They'll help you get the most out of your workout -- and your body.

1. Go for Lean and Green

When starting a new running regimen, it is crucial to feed your hard working muscles heart-healthy and high quality foods – no junk! **Center** your diet around whole grains, fish, lean meats, fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy. These foods will meet your basic nutritional needs and will help your body recover after exercise.

2. Timing Is Everything

When it comes to fueling up for a workout, the *when* is just as important as the *what*. If you hit the pavement in the morning, you need something light before exercising -- such as a piece of toast with peanut butter and a glass of water. Follow up your run with a healthy breakfast of lean protein, fruit and whole grains. For midday or afternoon runs, the optimal time to eat is two hours before exercising. In that amount of time, your body will have absorbed the energy from your food. If you must have something soon before you head out, a small banana will give you a boost. However, be careful about consuming too much fiber right before you run, because exercise can stimulate your digestive tract.

3. Recovery Rules

Typically you don't feel hungry right after exercise, but eating within 30 minutes of your run is the maximal glucose uptake time for replenishing glycogen stores -- and helping your body recover. Soon after you finish your workout, eat a snack high in both protein and carbohydrates, such as:

- 1 tablespoon of peanut butter on a slice of whole-grain bread
(240 calories, 9 grams of fat, 7 grams of protein)
- A small apple with a small handful (about 2 tablespoons) of almonds
(230 calories, 15 grams of fat, 6 grams of protein)
- 1 cup of low-fat yogurt with a half cup of blueberries
(190 calories, 4 grams of fat, 13.5 grams of protein)

4. Eat in Moderation

You've already made the wise choice to exercise, so don't counteract your progress by overeating. Jogging burns roughly 100 calories per mile, so it does not merit overindulgence.

5. Healthy Hydration Habits

Get in the habit of replacing any fluids lost while exercising. Make it a point to drink directly before and after you run. If your jogging session is more than 45 minutes, figure out a way to drink *during* your run. You can also weigh yourself immediately before and after exercising. If your weight falls by several pounds, you need to drink more to replenish fluid levels. Sports drinks that replace electrolytes are generally not necessary unless you are running long-distance or sweating profusely for an extended time.

Nutrient Primer



Seven "elite" foods for runners to help you feel your best and keep you up and running.

- **Small bagel with peanut butter**

If you're a morning runner, you know it can be tough to hit the road on an empty stomach. It's been several hours since your last meal the night before, and your energy stores are low. Eating a 100- to 300-calorie snack before your morning run can give you energy and staying power. This quick-and-easy snack has carbs and protein, plus it's easy to digest.

- **Bananas**

If you need a carb-packed energy-booster before an afternoon run, it's hard to go wrong with a banana. A bonus: Bananas contain loads of potassium, which regulates blood pressure and reduces the risk of stroke.

- **Berries**

Your legs can take a pounding from high-impact activities like running; soreness you feel after a hard run may be caused by micro-tears in the exercised muscles. That's why, in addition to their high fiber content, berries are a good option for runners. The vitamin C, potassium, and antioxidants they contain help the body repair itself.

- **Broccoli**

This nutritional powerhouse has Vitamin C, potassium, fiber, and phytochemicals, all key for peak performance and health.

- **Low-fat yogurt**

Running and other weight-bearing exercise can help you improve your bone density. But calcium and vitamin D are essential parts of the equation, and many runners don't get enough. Dairy products are an excellent source of calcium and vitamin D, as well as protein; soymilk and almond milk are also fortified and are great for smoothies. An adult needs approx. 1000 IU (25 mcg) vit D and 1000-1500 mg calcium daily.

- **Lean beef**

In addition to providing high quality protein, important for building muscle and recovering from tough workouts, beef is high in iron, an especially important element for runners. (Iron deficiency can lead to fatigue.) For vegetarians, beans, peas, green leafy vegetables, and iron-fortified cereals are good sources of iron.

- **Wild salmon**

In addition to being a good protein source, salmon contains loads of heart-healthy omega-3 fats, which can counteract inflammation and fend off disease.

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Smart Snacking

A snack *before* you work out gives you energy and stamina to go the distance, but it is even more important to replenish your energy after your workout with these smart protein and carb snack combos.

Yogurt Smoothie and a Banana

Look for a bottled yogurt smoothie with about 100 calories. Avoid smoothies with fructose or high fructose corn syrup listed as one of the first ingredients. This type of refined sugar will cause your blood sugar to peak, then crash -- making you hungry again before too long.

Recommended serving size: 1 bottled low-fat smoothie and one small banana. *Calories:* about 170

Peanut Butter & Banana on Rice Cakes

If you're craving something more substantial after a workout, a healthy peanut butter and banana sandwich will fit the bill. Instead of bread, smooth your peanut butter onto two brown rice cakes for extra fiber. The banana is a high-glycemic carbohydrate meaning it will replenish your energy quickly.

Recommended Serving Size: 1/2 banana, 1 tbsp. peanut butter, and 2 brown rice cakes, 215 calories

Hummus and Red Peppers, maybe a whole wheat Pita

Forget the baby carrots and fat-free ranch dip! Instead, get creative with your veggies and add a source of protein like hummus for a satisfying snack. Vegetables offer good carbs and fiber, plus loads of nutrients and vitamins, which help fill you up and add nutrition to your diet. And hummus adds some protein to up the snack's staying power. Try dipping your hummus with red peppers, zucchini, mushrooms, sugar snap peas, or raw asparagus. Need additional slow-release energy from carbs, add the whole wheat pita.

Recommended serving size: unlimited veggies and 1/4 cup hummus; *Calories:* About 100 (275 with one 6-in. pita)

Fruit and Yogurt Parfait

This will fill you up thanks to the fruit's fiber, and sustain your hunger, thanks to the yogurt's protein. Fix your own at home, or if you have to eat fast food try McDonald's Fruit and Yogurt Parfait *Recommended serving size:* 1 small McDonald's fruit and yogurt parfait (hold the granola)

Calories: 130

Tuna on Whole Wheat

What could be more filling after a workout than half a sandwich? And when you choose its filling wisely, you'll be building muscle while you eat, too! Tuna drizzled with a little lemon juice and olive oil spread over a slice of whole wheat bread is an ideal protein/carb mini-meal.

Recommended Serving Size: 4 ounces water-packed tuna and 1 slice whole wheat bread, 220 calories

Half of a Turkey Sandwich

A half of a lean turkey or chicken sandwich on whole wheat bread with mustard gives you energy-boosting carbs, plus the satiety-boosting protein you need for a good snack.

Recommended serving size: Half of a sandwich, made with 2 ounces of lean turkey meat and 1 slice of whole wheat bread; *Calories:* About 200

Turkey and Cheese with Apple Slices

If you're not in the mood for a sandwich, skip the bread and eat the fillings on their own! Spread a soft-cheese wedge over two or three slices of lean deli turkey, then roll up for a quick, high-protein, eat-on-the-go snack. Add a sliced apple for some energy-boosting (and glycogen-replenishing) carbs.

Recommended Serving Size: 4 ounces deli turkey, 1 soft cheese wedge, and 1 apple, 240 calories

Fresh Bananas and Apples

Loaded with vitamin C, antioxidants, and fiber, fruit is great for times when you need a little energy boost. It's got vitamins, minerals, and good carbs, which give you quick energy. Choose any fruit you like -- bananas, apples, and oranges are easy to tote along with you since they don't need refrigeration. Berries, while not as portable, are also a great option, and are considered lower sugar fruits.

Recommended serving size: 1 piece of fresh fruit or 1 cup of chopped fruit or berries

Calories: 80-120, depending on the fruit

Popcorn

Popcorn is a great snack because you get a lot of volume and fiber (which makes you feel full), and it's a whole grain, so it's healthier than a snack like pretzels. What's more, the low-fat microwave kind is easy to prepare and low in calories. These days you can buy single-serve popcorn - eat a whole bag without feeling guilty!

Recommended serving size: 1 single-serve package, low-fat microwave popcorn; *Calories:* 100

Almonds and Walnuts

Believe it or not, these salty morsels make for a wonderful snack. They're packed with good fats, which help you stay full; fiber, and nutrients like selenium, vitamin E, and omega-3s. Because nuts are notoriously easy to overeat, try this trick: fill an empty Altoids tin with nuts for the perfect serving size (about an ounce).

Recommended serving size: 1 ounce of almonds or walnuts; *Calories:* 160-170

Soy Crisps

Sometimes you just want a snack-food type of snack. Soy crisps to the rescue! Made of puffed soy protein, they're "the salty, crunchy, snacky thing many of us want in a snack." And with about five grams of protein per serving, they have more staying power than a bag of regular chips or pretzels.

Recommended serving size: 1 2-serving bag (eat the whole thing!); *Calories:* 140

Wheat Thins and String Cheese

A single-serve bag of crackers and a string cheese are easy to find at a mini-mart or 7-11. What's more, they're a great combo to help curb your hunger and add some nutrients to your day. The Wheat Thins offer fiber and good, whole-grain carbs, while the string cheese adds hunger-zapping protein.

Recommended serving size: 1 single-serve bag of Wheat Thins and 1 string cheese; *Calories:* 240

A Fresh Apple and Skim Milk

Sure, it may take you back to grade school, but a simple apple and carton of skim milk from the convenience store make for a top-notch snack. Apples fill you up with fiber, and skim milk is a great addition to any snack for its calcium, riboflavin, and vitamin D.

Recommended serving size: 1 medium apple and 1 8-ounce carton of skim milk; *Calories:* 170

Bag of Chocolate-Covered Pretzels

For those days when you're in a comfort-food mood, try chocolate-covered pretzels. While they are not packed with nutrients, chocolate-covered pretzels do offer enough calories with little enough fat to fill you up and give you a feel-good-food fix once in a while.

Recommended serving size: 1 single-serve bag of chocolate-covered pretzels; *Calories:* 130

Half a Wheat Bagel with Cream Cheese

If you're looking for a more substantial snack, try hitting the bagel shop for a whole-grain bagel. Packed with fiber, half a bagel will fill your tummy for several hours; smear on some reduced-fat cream cheese, and the little bit of fat will give this snack even more staying power.

Recommended serving size: half a bagel and 1 tbsp. reduced-fat cream cheese; *Calories:* 200

Healthy Snacks from a VENDING MACHINE!

These 10 low-fat and fat-free vending machine offerings are the best of the bunch -- and some even include nutritious fiber, protein, and healthy fats!

Top Pick

1. Planters Sunflower Kernels (1/4 cup)

160 calories, 14g fat, 1.5g sat fat, 4g fiber. **The Bottom Line:** Full of healthy fats

Second Best

2. Baked! Lays Original

210 calories, 3g fat, 0g sat fat, 4g fiber. **The Bottom Line:** Surprisingly fiber-full

Other Smart Snacks

3. Sun Chips Original

140 calories, 6g fat, 1g sat fat, 2g fiber. **The Bottom Line:** Made of whole grains

4. Snyder's of Hanover Mini Pretzels (20)

110 calories, 0g fat, 0g sat fat. **The Bottom Line:** Naturally fat-free

5. Smartfood Reduced-Fat Popcorn

120 calories, 5g fat, 1g sat fat, 2g fiber. **The Bottom Line:** Low fat, and has fiber!

6. Peanut M&M's

250 calories, 13g fat, 5g sat fat, 2g fiber. **The Bottom Line:** Just don't go nuts

7. Fig Newtons

190 calories, 0g fat, 0g sat fat, 2g fiber. **The Bottom Line:** It's fruit!

8. Nature Valley Granola Bar, Oats & Honey

180 calories, 6g fat, 0.5g sat fat, 2g fiber. **The Bottom Line:** Beats hunger

9. Planters Honey Roasted Peanuts (39)

160 calories, 13g fat, 1.5g sat fat, 6g protein. **The Bottom Line:** High in protein

10. Quaker Chewy Low-Fat Granola Bar, Chocolate Chunk

110 calories, 2g fat, 0.5g sat fat, 1g fiber. **The Bottom Line:** Guilt-free chocolate

Nutritional information is for contents of entire package, unless otherwise noted.

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