

Top Sports Foods!

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Many athletes are confused about what to eat before and after they train and compete. It is important to keep in mind that eating well during training is just as important as eating well before, during, or after competition. Athletes train and compete harder when they consistently follow a diet high in complex carbohydrates, fruits and vegetables, lean meats, low fat dairy products, beans, and fluids.

Proper dietary habits help you train harder so that you are better prepared for competition, so whether you are running your first 5K or hoping to set a PR, including the following foods in your diet will help you to train and compete at your best.

Top sports foods for training and recovery:

1. Milk, yogurt: low fat or skim. Aim for 3 servings per day.
2. Broccoli: For vitamins A, C, phytochemicals, and fiber.
3. Baked potatoes (russet and sweet potatoes): For vitamins A, C, carbohydrates, fiber, and potassium.
4. Chicken, turkey: For protein.
5. Peanut butter, nuts: For heart healthy fats and fiber.
6. Bran and whole grain cereals: For fiber, carbohydrates, B-vitamins, and iron.
7. Cantaloupe, kiwi, berries: For vitamins A, C, phytochemicals.
8. Bananas: For vitamin C, carbohydrates, potassium.
9. Oranges, grapefruits: For vitamin C, folate, carbohydrates, potassium.
10. Peppers: For vitamins A, C, phytochemicals.
11. Tomatoes: For vitamins A, C, phytochemicals.
12. Breads, Rolls, Bagels: Whole wheat, pumpernickel, rye, whole grain. For fiber, carbohydrates, B-vitamins.
13. Air popped popcorn: For carbohydrates, fiber
14. Lean Beef: For protein, iron, zinc.
15. Tuna, Salmon: For protein, and heart healthy fats.
16. Dried beans and legumes (such as pinto, black, garbanzo, split peas, lentils). For protein, fiber, folate.
17. Hot cereal. For carbohydrates, fiber, and iron.
18. Grains: whole wheat pasta, brown rice, couscous. For carbohydrates, fiber, and B-vitamins.
19. Blenderized fruit smoothies. For vitamins and fiber.
20. Recovery drinks such a Gatorade and Sportade. For fluid and electrolyte replacement.

Including these foods in your diet on a daily basis will help you train hard and reach your potential. Pre-race considerations include emphasizing fluids, lean protein, and carbohydrates. A sample pre-race meal could be a bowl of oatmeal, cereal with milk, or low fat yogurt with at least 3 glasses of fluid. If you are training or racing for longer than 90 minutes then a fluid replacement drink should be included at the rate of about 10 ounces every 20 minutes. After the race, fuel up with high carbohydrate foods with the addition of a small amount of protein to enhance muscle recovery. A sample post race meal could be low fat chocolate milk and a whole grain bagel with peanut butter.

Whatever your event or distance, fueling up with adequate complex carbohydrates, fruits, vegetables, lean protein, and low fat dairy products will help you to achieve top performance and health.