

# NUTRITION for RUNNERS

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## Why is nutrition so important for runners?

- Muscles need energy in order to do work.
- You need to feed your body properly to ensure you have enough easily accessible energy.
- It helps you maintain as much muscle mass as possible.
- The fastest form of energy to your body is carbohydrates.
- Complex carbs should be integrated into your normal diet to help fuel your body for runs & workouts.
- Increasing your complex carbs slightly the day prior to a long run will help give you sustained fuel.
  - Examples include: sweet potatoes, brown rice, quinoa, oatmeal, etc.
  - Also, mix in some protein with the carbs.

What you put in your body is just as important as the workouts you do.

## BEFORE

- 30 min. – 2 hrs. prior, have a snack that includes carbs and some light, lean protein.
- Examples:
  - Banana with ½ cup Greek yogurt
  - ½ cup oatmeal w/ protein powder
  - Ezekiel bread w/ turkey slices or honey & peanut butter
  - Handful of berries w/ ½ cup Greek yogurt
  - Apple slices w/ peanut butter or almond butter
  - Whole grain toast w/ hardboiled egg or avocado slices

Some contain simple carbs, and some contain complex carbs.

## DURING

- Gels are a great, quick and easy source of fuel for endurance runners.
- They can enhance your performance by maintaining consistent blood sugar levels.
- Take gels with water to dilute it. DO NOT take with sports drinks; it will increase the sugar concentration, slow absorption and may cause an upset stomach and nausea.
- Take gels 30 – 45 minutes into your long run or race and every 30 – 45 minutes after that.
- Gels containing caffeine are fine if you normally consume it. If not, it may cause stomach issues.
- Experiment! Practice with gels on your long runs if you plan on using them for your race.

## AFTER

- Refueling after a long run will aid recovery. (30 min. – 1 hr. post-run)
- Carbs replenish glycogen stores in your muscles and liver. (.5g per lb. of body weight)
- Add 15 – 25g of protein to aid protein synthesis and prevent muscle-wasting.
- If you skimp on this meal, your body will remain in a state of breakdown, recovery will take longer and muscle soreness in the hours/days following will likely last longer.

## FOR VEGETARIANS

- 8oz of skim milk has 8g of protein vs. 8oz of soy milk which has 6g; almond milk has 1g.
- ½ cup of black beans has 7g of protein. To get 20g, you'll need to mix black beans w/ other options that have more protein such as edamame, nuts, quinoa, and tofu.

TRAIN HOW YOU WANT TO PERFORM!

Don't change your diet right before the race. Your body may not respond as well. Stay with what you've done.