

NUTRITION TIPS WHEN TRAINING FOR YOUR CHALLENGE



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Everyday nutrition

It is really important to ensure that you've got the basics spot on before thinking about how best to support your exercise.

- Aim for at least five portions a day of fruit and vegetables
- Eat regular meals and ensure that they contain a balance of protein, carbohydrate and fat.
- Try and eat a varied diet
- Moderate your alcohol intake
- Keep hydrated
- Ensure you are sleeping well.

Training nutrition

Nutrition plays a key role in supporting your training and on event day. This is important for everyone, not just elite athletes. It's based around some key principles:

- Eating enough to fuel your training: this will vary depending on the amount of exercise you are doing
- Using nutrition to aid your recovery
- Avoiding injury
- Hydration: ensure you're well-hydrated by drinking throughout the day, as well as before, during and after exercise.

Preparing for short distance events

If your event is under one hour, you don't need to buy any sports nutrition products for during the event. Make sure you have a good meal two to three hours pre-event, then a small carbohydrate-rich snack one hour before will mean your energy levels will be topped up. Stick to water.

Preparing for long distance events

For events lasting more than an hour you'll need to ensure that you are eating and drinking during the event, so you don't run out of energy. If you're walking, then stick to using real food and drinks. If you're running then you may find energy gels and other sports products helpful as well.

- As a general rule, aim for 30-60g carbohydrate per hour (this may be higher for marathon runners if you're able to tolerate it)

For example: per hour you could have one or two gels, a handful of jelly sweets, two large dates, handful dried fruit, one-two packets of shot blocks, or a banana

- Sip water and sports drinks throughout your long runs or walks to stay hydrated. Aim for 400-600ml per hour. Choose isotonic sports drinks or homemade versions
- During training try different foods and products and find what works for you.

Top tips:

1. If you are using sports gels, aim to drink around 350ml water with each gel to improve tolerance and palatability.
2. Start fuelling early. This will reduce the chances of any tummy upsets.
3. Make your own homemade sports drink: Mix 300ml orange juice, 300ml water, 1/4tsp salt.

Recovery

Follow the four Rs:

- **Refuel** - replenish your energy stores by eating carbohydrates, ideally within two hours
- **Rehydrate** - replenish 150% of fluid lost in exercise. Avoid alcohol. Rehydration may include a drink containing carbohydrates and electrolytes
- **Rest** - aim for >7-9 hours per night
- **Repair** - repair muscle tissue using protein. Aim for around 20g post exercise.

After your training session, aim to have some nutrition within two hours of finishing. This could be a meal or a drink. Aim to include carbohydrates and protein as this will help maximise your recovery.

- For example: chocolate milk, sandwich with peanut butter/meat/egg, fruit and yoghurt, breadsticks and hummus, cereal and milk.

Event day

- Preparation: get all your kit, equipment, food and drink ready the night before
- Get to the event with plenty of time: time to check your bag in, go to toilet, have a snack, drink, and warm up
- Know what food is being provided by the race organisers
- Don't be tempted to try any new food, clothing, gels or even shoes on the day or the day before the race
- Put reminders on your food when to eat it, or how long it will last you
- Have a few back up snack options in case you are struggling to stick to your plan.



TOP TIP

Plan your nutrition across the day and stick to what you have practiced.



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