

## EAT RIGHT AND FUEL PROPERLY.

By Lauren Antonucci, MS, RD, CSSD, CDE, CDN, BlueStreak Advisory Council Member

An athlete's nutritional habits can have a significant impact on workouts and competitions. Learning to eat right and fuel properly are crucial elements to athletic success. While you'll still need to experiment with different foods to determine what works best for you, the following guidelines will point you in the right direction.

### ■ Pre-Workout Fueling

Intake at least some calories before early morning practices. Good choices include dry cereal, toast, crackers, sports drink or a banana.

Eat a balanced lunch daily before afternoon workouts.

Consume a high-carb snack 1-3 hours before afternoon practice

Good easy choices include bagels, salted pretzels, graham crackers, granola bars, yogurt, fruit smoothies & cereal. Think outside the box and try leftover cooked pasta or rice, pancakes or a PB&J sandwich.

### ■ Recover with Proper Nutrition

Muscles are most receptive to recovery within 30 to 60 minutes post-exercise; it's critical to utilize this important window for caloric intake. How and when you eat determines the amount of glycogen (energy) stored in your muscles, and how quickly you can train again at peak capacity. Plan



pre and post-workout meals and snacks in advance so you're prepared with foods you like that provide proper nutrients.

**Carbohydrates** are essential to muscle recovery. Eat carbohydrates as soon as possible after workouts and competitions. Nutritious options include pasta, rice, potatoes and whole grain breads.

A moderate amount of **protein** is necessary immediately following workouts as well. Eat some lean meat or eggs with your bread or pasta, yogurt with your cereal or PB&J on toast and a glass of low-fat milk for a good combination of protein and carbohydrates.

**Vitamins** are also important for muscle recovery. Try to include at least one fruit or

vegetable in your post-exercise meal or snack.

Now that you know the basics, you can individualize your approach to improve performance. Some athletes have stomachs of steel; others have sensitive systems. Experiment and take notes to find out what works best for you.

The goal of sports nutrition is to fuel your body well, making it healthy, strong and capable of repairing quickly from the stresses of difficult training sessions. If you remain healthy and recover quickly from tough training sessions, you can continue to engage in quality training. More quality training affords you greater opportunities to achieve your athletic goals.

Remember, all foods can fit in a healthy meal plan (even the occasional ice cream or candy bar) as long as you also eat enough fruits, veggies, dairy, protein and whole grain.

### About the Author

Lauren Antonucci, MS, RD, CSSD, CDE, CDN is a certified Sports Dietitian, three-time Ironman triathlete, marathon runner and the Director of Nutrition Energy ([www.nutritionenergy.com](http://www.nutritionenergy.com)).



To learn more about the author and other members of the BlueStreak Advisory Council, visit [chelseapiers.com/bluestreak](http://chelseapiers.com/bluestreak).