

Fueling Systems 1::4 Daily Maintenance for Optimum Performance

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As an endurance athlete you need to be thinking about food as 'fuel'. Following a well-designed fueling system before, during and after your training sessions will have a remarkable effect on your performance. Many athletes underestimate the power that specific fueling practices can have on their ability to train longer and harder, thereby improving race times.

There are 4 main Fueling Systems to be considered when planning your training program: Daily Maintenance, Pre-Exercise, During Exercise, and Post-Exercise Refueling. In this first article, we will look at Daily Maintenance as a key Fueling System.

When it comes to nutrition, there are four main factors that can have a negative impact on your performance. Once you are aware of these factors, you will be able to adapt your fueling system and get the most out of your workouts/races.

PERFORMANCE FUELING FACTORS:

1. Loss of body fluids (dehydration)
2. Drop in blood sugar (dizzy, lightheaded, bonking, hallucinations)
3. Depletion of muscle glycogen (lead legs, feet like cement blocks, the wall)
4. Disruption of amino acid and electrolyte balance (incorrect balance between hydration and fueling during your workout)

Many people only focus on their nutrition during the days leading up to a big event. But your performance on race day is not solely determined by how you eat in the days before your race. By following smart nutritional practices on a daily basis, you will be able to get more out of your training and you will be that much more ahead of the pack on race day.

When creating your nutritional plan, keep the following keys in mind on day-to-day basis:

KEYS:

1. Daily maintenance of carbohydrate at each meal is the key to sustained energy. High intake of complex carbohydrates (slow release energy) throughout the day, with choice simple carbohydrates (quick release energy) immediately before exercise, during exercise, and directly after exercise to quickly replace depleted glycogen stores.
2. Nutrient balance (shown as a % of daily calories): 55-65% carbohydrates, 12-20% proteins, 20-30% fats
3. 8-10 cups of fluids per day PLUS additional water before, during and after workouts.
4. Include 5-10 servings of fruits and vegetables to obtain optimum levels of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. Choose brightly coloured, fresh fruits and vegetables more often.

REFERENCE

- Whitenay, E. N., & Rolfes, S.R. (2002). Understanding Nutrition (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Clark, N (1997). Sports Nutrition Guidebook (2nd ed.). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.