



equilibrium lifestyle management

FUELING SYSTEMS: #2 PRE-EXERCISE

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PRE EXERCISE:

Before a short training session. Exercise lasting less than 30-45 minutes may not require a pre-workout snack. If you do have a meal make it light, and high in carbohydrates/low in fat and protein. Examples include: a banana, 1/4cup dried fruit, or a piece of toast with jam. Some athletes prefer liquid meals before exercise, as they are easy to digest. Blending fruit juice with frozen fruit offers a quick and easy pre-exercise snack that is easy on the body.

Before a long training session. Moderate to high intensity events lasting longer than 60 minutes require a full pre-exercise meal between 1-4 hours prior to exercise. This will allow the stomach enough time to empty before you head out for your workout. Research indicates that a pre-exercise meal should provide between 300-800kcalories, primarily from carbohydrate rich foods that you are familiar with and tolerate well. Plan to consume 1-5g of carbohydrate per kg of body weight in your pre workout meal. The closer to race time-the smaller the meal. Plan a meal high in complex carbohydrates with some easily digested protein and low amounts of fat. Bulky, fiber-rich foods such as raw vegetables or high-bran cereals, although normally desirable, are best avoided just before you head out for a tough workout or competition. Fiber in the digestive tract attracts water and may cause stomach discomfort during exercise. In the morning try a bagel with peanut butter and jam, or oatmeal with dried fruit and low-fat milk. For your afternoon sessions, try a sandwich made with whole grain bread, tomato and a lean protein serving such as tuna, low-fat cream cheese or humus spread for lunch.

Several glasses of water should be ingested with your pre-exercise meal, as well as 1-2 cups of fluid 30-15 mins before exercise. In addition to meals, it is critical to follow a hydration schedule to avoid dehydration and sub-optimal performance.

Glucose drinks and simple sugars taken just prior to (5mins) exercise may maintain blood glucose; increase the time to exhaustion, and spare glycogen in muscles (stored sugars necessary for muscle contraction).



F I T N E S S A D V E N T U R E S



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A note on caffeine: Research has shown that consuming 1-2 cups of coffee before exercise may enhance performance in endurance events lasting longer than 90 minutes by delaying the depletion of muscle glycogen stores. As an athlete, you should always weigh the possible benefits of caffeine (or any other supplement) use against its adverse effects. In the case of caffeine this may include stomach upset, nervousness, irritability, headaches and gastro-intestinal distress. Caffeine also acts as a diuretic causing the loss of precious water from your body. Never consume caffeinated beverages as a replacement for water and proper hydration. And of course always follow the golden rule of nutrition: Never try something new on race day!

REFERENCES

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Clark, N (1997). Sports Nutrition Guidebook (2nd ed.). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

