

A 5-Minute Guide to Fitness Nutrition

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There's some truth in the saying that you are what you eat. If you want to be a fitness buff, it's important to follow a healthy diet.

It's easy to feel overloaded by the nutrition information provided by daily news and the diet industry. That's especially true when some advice seems to contradict each other, and you're trying to maximize your workouts as well as your general wellbeing.

Still, it's worth paying attention because **the foods you choose and the way you eat can help make your workouts more effective.**

Find out what you need to know with this quick guide to fitness nutrition.

How to Eat Before and After Working Out:

1. **Keep it light.** When you're preparing to work out, you want to eat enough to give you energy and stabilize your blood sugar. On the other hand, overeating could weigh you down. Many adults prefer to have a small snack before exercising but **finish any large meal at least 3 hours in advance.**
2. **Consume carbs.** Focus on carbs for your pre-workout snack. They're easy to digest, so your body stores them in your muscles as glycogen and breaks them down when you're exerting yourself.
3. **Monitor your protein.** Most adults need to get about 10 to 35% of their daily calories from protein. If you're trying to build muscle, you may need slightly more. Your body can digest protein more efficiently if you spread your intake

out throughout the day.

4. **Choose whole foods.** Energy bars and protein powders can be convenient and safe for most adults. However, you can also get the nutrients you need from a wide range of ordinary unprocessed foods.

5. **Drink fluids. Staying hydrated enhances circulation and prevents fatigue.** The American College of Sports Medicine recommends about 3 cups of water before a workout, one cup each 20 minutes while you're exercising, and three cups afterwards.

6. **Understand electrolytes.** Plain water is adequate for most fitness programs. However, sports drinks may be helpful if you exercise at high intensity or for more than 90 minutes. These beverages contain additional ingredients, including electrolytes, which are essential minerals like calcium and potassium that you lose when you perspire.

7. **Refuel your body.** Eating after a workout aids recovery. **Have a snack if your next meal is more than 2 hours away.** Choose foods high in protein, such as milk or fish.

How to Eat the Rest of the Day:

1. **Calculate your calories.** You could wind up gaining weight if you overestimate how many calories you burn while exercising. Keep a journal if you need help tracking your activity level.

2. **Increase your fiber. Eating foods rich in fiber is beneficial for any fitness level.** It can help you manage your weight, lower your cholesterol, and maybe even increase your lifespan.

3. **Start with breakfast.** The first meal of the day replenishes your energy and helps you stay alert. If you work out in the mornings, finish your meal at least an hour before exercising, or wait until afterwards. You may be comfortable working out on an empty stomach, or you may need a snack first.

4. **Consider supplements.** What about those shelves of performance aids you see at the supermarket or health food store? **They can't replace a healthy diet, but they may help if you train intensely or have dietary restrictions.**

5. **See your doctor.** For individual nutrition advice, talk with your doctor or a registered dietician. They can advise you about specific supplements, meal plans, and other options.

Taking care of yourself involves many choices. Along with eating a nutritious diet, be sure to manage stress, exercise regularly, and sleep well. Your lifestyle can help you lead a longer and more active life.