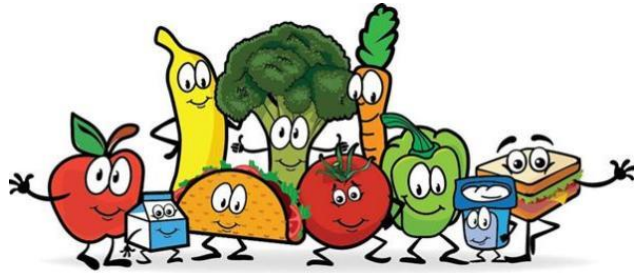


What should I eat before, during and after track meets and workouts?



The three to four days leading up to a meet are the most important in being successful. Tired legs during a race are often the biggest problem. Proper eating before a meet can dramatically delay tired legs. You can maintain a high level of performance throughout a race if your body is given 48 to 72 hours to properly hydrate and fuel.

The energy used during a race comes from the glycogen stored in the muscles and liver. Glycogen is a form of sugar that comes from eating carbohydrates. One of the most important things to consider in a pre-meet meal is to eat enough carbohydrates to fill the muscle and liver stores. However, the carbohydrates you eat cannot properly be converted into glycogen and stored in the muscles and liver without water. Therefore, water is a critical part of storing glycogen. Remember, the ability to produce speed and power during a race is dependent on how much glycogen is available to the muscles.

The meals you eat three to four days before a meet should be high in complex carbohydrates and low in fat. The meal you eat the night before the meet should be one-third protein (chicken, fish) and two-thirds starchy foods (rice, potatoes, pasta). You should drink 12-16 ounces of water with each meal. In addition, the night before the meet, you should eat a high carbohydrate snack (frozen yogurt, cereal bar, or fruit) and a glass of water one hour before going to bed. If you want to have a great race, waiting until the day or night before the race to eat properly is too late!

On the day of the meet, you should be up at least 2 hours before your race and eat at least 1½ hours before your race. Your breakfast should also be high in carbohydrates (waffles, pancakes, toast, bagels, breakfast shake) and you should again drink a full glass of water.

If your race is later in the day, try to eat 3 to 4 hours before the event. A light high carbohydrate snack (frozen yogurt, cereal bar, or fruit) can be eaten 1 ½ hours before your race. Again, water is so important, drink 8 ounces of water thirty minutes before the start of your race.

When we go to track meets in Sioux Falls or Denver, remember we are not on vacation so please save Chick-fil-A, Slim Chickens, Panda Express, Chipotle, and other fast-food restaurants for after the meet.

Check out our 8 steps for what to eat during track meets on the next page.

The ability to run track efficiently, whether in speed or endurance races, starts with sound nutrition. Consuming foods that help repair muscles while also providing energy can enable a track and field runner to prevent both injuries and burnout. Ideal snacks are those that combine proteins with carbohydrates and contain electrolytes, such as sodium, potassium and magnesium. Keep portions small so that you can refuel between races without being slowed down by a full stomach.

Step 1

Pack organic peanut butter spread on whole-grain crackers. The peanut butter is easy to digest and contains protein, monounsaturated fats, potassium and magnesium. The whole-grain crackers contain energy-boosting carbs, fiber and sodium.

Step 2

Consume beef jerky at the track meet. Beef jerky is pure protein, which can feed your tired and hungry muscles. Purchase snack-size bags or make your own by placing single servings in zipper-locked bags. Check the beef jerky package to determine a serving size.

Step 3

Cool off with creamy yogurt or cottage cheese. These snacks require a cooler, but their nutritional value make the extra effort worth it. Inside each is protein, carbohydrates, potassium, magnesium and phosphorus.

Step 4

Bake baby new potatoes the day before your track meet and refrigerate. Sprinkle the potatoes with salt before you leave for the meet and pack the salted potatoes in zipper-locked bags. Potatoes contain potassium, magnesium, iron and fiber, and the salt helps to restore your sodium levels.

Step 5

Peel a banana to eat between races. Bananas contain carbohydrates and potassium, and they come in their own wrapper.

Step 6

Bring berries, apples and oranges. These fruits are easy to pack and contain natural sugar for energy and plenty of vitamin C, which helps with cell repair. Fresh fruit also contains water, which can help you to rehydrate.

Step 7

Drink water with your snacks. Staying hydrated can help your muscles perform more efficiently. Water also can help prevent injuries, such as pulled muscles, which can happen when you are dehydrated.

Step 8

Three-Step Recovery Nutrition. Within 30-minutes post workout: **1.** Reload your body's energy reserves with at least 50 grams of carbohydrate. **2.** Repair and rebuild stressed muscle tissue with at least 15 grams of protein. **3.** Rehydrate with at least 20 ounces of water and/or electrolyte beverage.