

Eat like an Olympian

Whether you're an aspiring Olympian or just enjoy keeping fit, here are some tips on how to eat and drink for optimal performance and recovery

Going for gold means more than just long hours of training and competing. For Olympic athletes, properly fuelling their bodies is critical to their success and can make all the difference between winning a gold medal and last place. Many Olympians eat more than 5000 calories a day. For most of us, though, eating that much food would cause us to gain weight! But there are some strategies in an Olympian's diet that we should follow. They eat foods that are fresh, unprocessed and packed with nutrients.



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yogurt, as they help maintain good gut health and healthy immunity.

FUEL RIGHT

Fuel up with a bowl of porridge; rice and beans; or pasta and chicken 2 to 4 hours before you train. No time for a meal? A banana, a handful of dried fruit and nuts or a slice of toast with peanut butter about 30 minutes before working out will help you work harder and keep going considerably longer than training on empty.

FUEL ON THE GO

For workouts longer than 90 minutes, you will benefit from extra carbs in the form of sports drinks (or diluted juice or squash), gels, bars, bananas or dried fruit to maintain blood sugar levels. For shorter workouts stick to water otherwise you may consume more calories than you burn if you're not working hard enough.

REFUEL FAST

Have a snack or meal within two hours after your workout and drink plenty of water to replenish fluid losses. To speed recovery, opt for fresh fruit with yoghurt; a tuna sandwich; a homemade milkshake or smoothie; or a glass of milk. Post-exercise meal options include sweet potatoes with beans or turkey and vegetable stir-fry with noodles. [UK](#)



Food for Fitness is the ultimate resource for anyone who is serious about sport or fitness. This bestselling book is now in its fourth edition. Published by Bloomsbury and available from all major booksellers

HYDRATE OFTEN

If you start a workout or competition fully hydrated chances are you'll be able to perform better. Fluid requirements vary from person to person, depending on how active you are, your size and how hot and humid your surroundings. Aim for 1 ½ - 2 litres of fluid a day. Current advice is to drink when you are thirsty and listen to your body. For most workouts and climates, 400-800ml per hour will prevent dehydration as well as over-hydration.

BOOST IMMUNITY

One of the best things you can do to improve your performance is to stay healthy, which means including plenty of fresh unprocessed foods in your diet. Aim for 5-9 portions of fruit and vegetables a day, plenty of carbohydrates (such as whole grains, potatoes and pasta) and proteins (fish, poultry, lean meat, milk, eggs, beans and lentils), and a small serving of healthy fats (avocado, nuts, seeds, olive oil) in each meal. The more colour on your plate the better. Include probiotic foods, such as plain yogurt and drinking



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN OLYMPIAN



Breakfast
Porridge or muesli with bananas and milk
Morning snack: Fruit, nuts



Lunch
Chicken pasta salad, avocado

Mid-afternoon snack
Dried fruit and nuts or flapjack

Post-training snack
Milk or yogurt



Dinner
Fish, chicken or lean meat with lots of vegetables; rice, quinoa or potatoes

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