

Pre- and Post-workout Nutrition



**A short guide on what you need
to know about eating
before and after
a workout**

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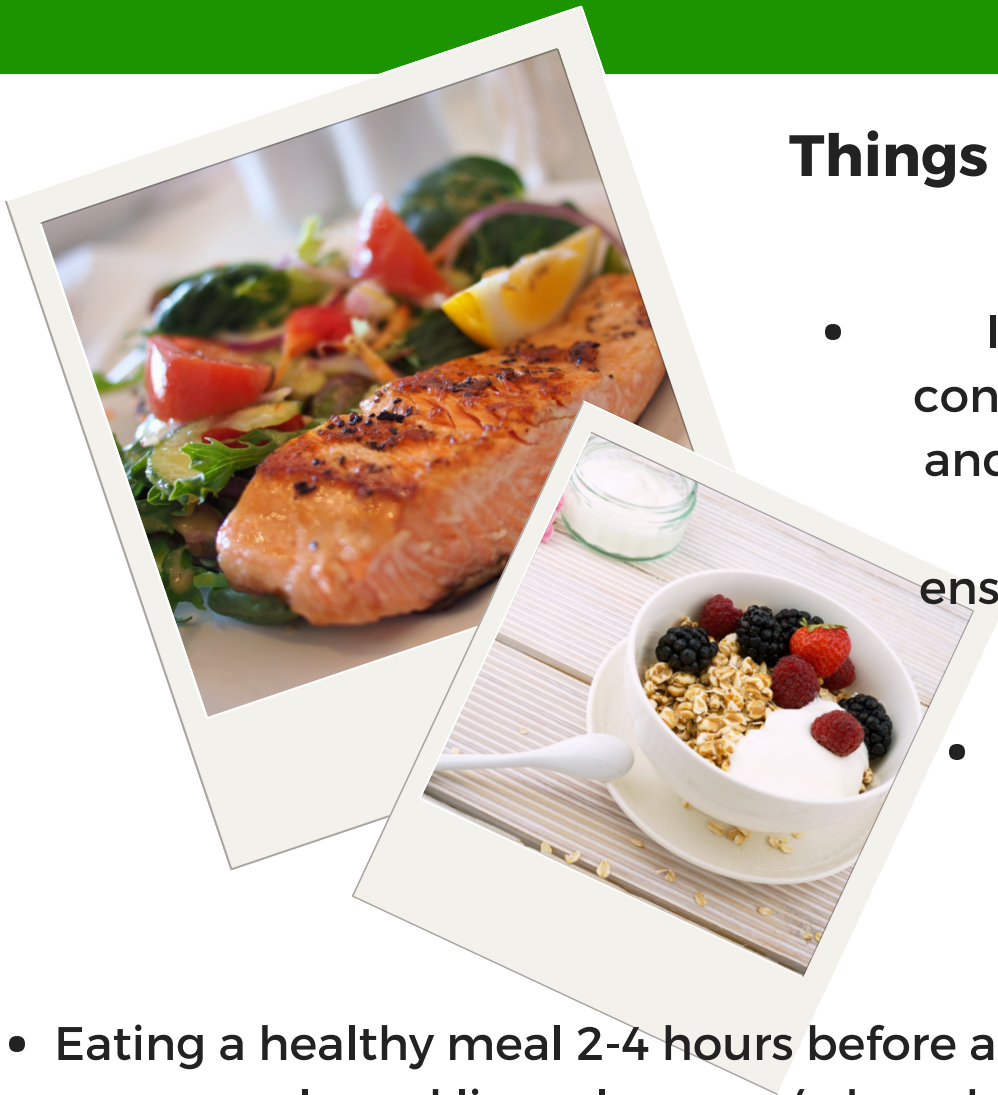
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Pre-workout Guidelines



Things to consider before working out:

- Ideally, you'll eat a meal consisting of protein, carbs and healthy fats 2-4 hours before a workout. This ensures that your stomach will be settled.
 - The closer you are to the start of your workout, the smaller your meal should be.
- Eating a healthy meal 2-4 hours before a workout will increase your muscle and liver glycogen (a bunch of glucose molecules stuck together, which fuels your body) so that you'll have steady blood sugar levels throughout your workout. Without steady blood sugar levels, you'll feel light-headed, and you'll fatigue earlier.
 - Having a pre-workout meal gives you more energy (think: train longer and harder), prevents muscle catabolism (using muscle for fuel), and promotes protein synthesis (repairing and building those muscles you just worked out).



What to Eat Before a Workout

Examples of what to eat 2-4 hours before a workout:

- Chicken, rice, and veggies
- Wholegrain bread, sweet potatoes, and rice
- Omelette with veggies (meat and cheese optional)
- Veggie and chicken stir-fry with rice
- Oatmeal with milk and fruit
- Sandwich or wrap with chicken, cheese or nut butter with a salad
- Potato with beans or meat, cheese and veggies



What to eat 30 minutes-2 hours before a workout:

- Greek yogurt and dried fruit
- Fresh fruit
- Protein shake/fruit smoothie
- Energy or nutrition bar
- Apple wedges and peanut butter

Post-workout Guidelines

Things to know about post-workout nutrition:

- It takes a beginner longer to refuel, which is why an elite athlete can work out every day and a beginner cannot and should not.
- The more you train, the more efficient your glycogen storage capacity becomes, which is why after you've been working out for a long period of time, you're able to work out longer and harder.
- The best time for refueling after exercise is within the first 2 hours, and better yet, within the first 30 minutes.

Down to the nitty gritty:

- Most research recommends that your post-workout meal consist of 1g carbs per 1kg bodyweight. (To find bodyweight in kg: Bodyweight in pounds / 2.2)
- The optimal post workout meal should include 15-25g protein and 60-100g carbs. (1:4 ratio of protein to carbs)
- The job of carbs in your post-workout meal is to help restore your glycogen stores so that you're ready and refueled for your next workout. The job of protein in your post-workout meal is to inhibit muscle loss. Both protein and carbs combined help to reduce post-exercise muscle damage and loss, as well as reduce soreness.



What to Eat After a Workout

Mini-meal ideas for after a workout:

- Chocolate milk
- 2 c. milk, cereal bar, and banana
- 2 small boxes of raisins and handful of nuts
- Rice cakes, hummus, and 1 c. milk
- Fruit, quinoa, and nuts
- Chicken or tuna sandwich and cottage cheese
- Yogurt with fresh fruit
- Nut butter with fruit and rice cakes
- Recovery milkshake: Milk, yogurt, fruit, and a little bit of honey
- Potato with cheese and beans
- Eggs, fruit, and avocado
- Protein bar
- Trail Mix and fresh fruit



Final Thoughts

When it comes to pre- and post-workout nutrition, you have to figure out what works best for your body, and that takes a little experimentation, as well as record keeping.

Because of this, I recommend keeping a food journal where you can write down:

1. What you eat
2. When you eat it
3. Workout time
4. How you feel before, during, and after your workout

This way, you'll be able to decide what you feel best eating or avoiding before and after working out. You'll also be able to note when the best time is to fuel up before a workout.

Again, these are just guidelines. Everyone's body is different, and we all do different types of workouts, so we all have different nutritional needs.

Lastly, don't beat yourself up when it comes to following these guidelines. Try to get as close as possible, but don't stress. If you typically follow a healthy diet (protein, lots of veggies, and some starchy veggies/grains at each meal), you'll be fueling your body all the time and won't need to stress about the numbers.

