

Nutrition for Cross Country Runners

Nutrition Tips for Optimal Performance

- Eat Enough Calories
 - Eating 3 meals per day plus at least 2 snacks is a good starting point
 - Feeling sluggish with low energy levels or not recovering from hard workouts is an indication more calories may be needed
 - Easy ways to add calories:
 - Add condiments to foods you are already eating; cream cheese, peanut butter, guacamole, oatmeal made with milk vs. water
 - Trail mix, dried fruit, or granola; alone or added to foods adds extra calories
 - Try 2%, whole milk, smoothies or milkshakes. It is usually easier to consume more calories in liquid form
- Practice Your Nutrition Plan
 - Know what foods work for you. The way to know this is to practice what you will eat on race days and on practice days.
 - Plan ahead what snacks you need and when you need to eat them.
 - Figure out what lunch foods are the most easily digested for you. Everyone is different.
 - Do not try new foods on competition days.

Meal & Snack Timing

- 3-4 Hours before a race/workout: Balanced meal (carbohydrate, lean protein, small amount of fat) + water
- 1-2 Hours before a race/workout: Snack (carbohydrate food that is familiar to you) + 8-16 oz. of water
- 30-45 Minutes after a race/workout: Snack (carbohydrate and protein) + water
- 2-4 hours after a race/workout: Balanced Meal + water

Pre-workout/Race Snack

- Dry Cereal, Pretzels, Bagel, Banana, Sport Drink, Animal crackers, Graham crackers
- If nerves make it hard to eat try a Sport Drink + Saltines
- If you have a sensitive stomach limit high fat or dairy foods that take longer to digest before you run. These are fine after a run though!

Recovery Snack

- Milk (chocolate or white), String Cheese + Fruit, Bagel with Peanut butter, ½ or Whole Sandwich, Trail Mix, Yogurt, Smoothie
- This snack should be a combination of carbohydrates and protei

Hydration

- ❑ Hydrate yourself well in advance. If you have a race on Saturday you should be thinking about hydration on Wednesday already. Be consistent.
- ❑ Thirst is an indication that you are already dehydrated. Urine is a better indicator and should be lemonade colored vs. apple juice colored.
- ❑ If you have an evening workout or race try to drink at least 2-3 water bottles throughout the day with 1 bottle being about 2 hours before the race/workout.
- ❑ Stop drinking and just sip about 1 hour prior to the race/workout to avoid a sloshing feeling.
- ❑ During workouts sip on 4-6 oz. of water every 15-20 minutes (1 oz. = 1 medium mouthful)
- ❑ Replace each pound of sweat you lose during the race/workout with 16-24 oz. of water