

Pre-Competition Eating

Timing of Meals

While your day-to-day food habits affect your health and overall sports performance, timing is everything when it comes to fueling during training and competition. Use the guide below to properly fuel before, during and after exercise.

The Pre-Competition Meal

Eating before exercise is necessary to prevent hunger before and during the event. This meal helps you stay physically comfortable and mentally alert.

The timing of the last meal before competition will depend on the duration, intensity and type of event. Experiment with the timing of your meals during training, not before competition. The closer your event draws, the less you should eat. A good rule of thumb is to have your last meal one to three hours before exercise. You want to start most events with an empty stomach but you do not want to feel hungry or weak. Food choices should include carbohydrates which supply fuel to working muscles and fluids to hydrate the body.

Here are some sample pre-competition meals:

BREAKFAST

Oatmeal with milk and sliced bananas, 1 piece of whole-grain toast with a tablespoon of peanut butter, and orange juice

OR...

English muffin with jam and cheese (try fontina or ricotta), orange and milk

SNACK

Whole-grain crackers and cheese

OR...

Fresh berries and a cup of Greek yogurt

LUNCH

Broiled chicken sandwich with lettuce and tomato, green salad, fig bars and milk

OR...

Tofu stir-fry with carrots, peppers, and broccoli over brown rice, peach and chocolate milk

SNACK

Apple slices with peanut butter

OR...

Fruit smoothie made with frozen fruit, milk and yogurt
- try the Berry Blast Smoothie

DINNER

Tostada (tortilla, lettuce, tomato, beef, onions, beans, salsa and cheese), orange, milk and frozen yogurt

OR...

Salmon with pineapple-mango salsa, green beans, rice and milk



Don't forget carbohydrates and fluids at your pre-event meal.

RULE OF THUMB

Have your last meal 1 to 3 hours before exercise.



Berry Blast Smoothie

Makes 2 servings

- 1 cup frozen raspberries
- 2 (6-ounce) containers fat-free blueberry yogurt
- ½ cup fat-free milk
- 1 Tbsp unsalted, natural almond butter
- 1 Tbsp honey

In a blender, add frozen raspberries, yogurt, milk, almond butter and honey. Cover and puree until smooth. Pour into two tall glasses and serve.

For more recipes, visit NationalDairyCouncil.org.

