

# FOODS AND FLUIDS FOR FITNESS



People who are involved in an exercise program for fitness and health can learn to maximize their training efforts and get more out of a workout by learning to fuel their bodies with the right foods and fluids.

## Fluids: Staying Hydrated

- If exercisers lose too much fluid in sweat without replacing what they've lost in both fluids and electrolytes (like sodium and potassium), they risk becoming dehydrated.
- Exercisers of all ages are at increased risk for dehydration. Children and older adults are susceptible to dehydration and should pay special attention to their fluid intake.
- Dehydration can diminish energy and impair performance. Even a 2-percent loss of body weight through sweat (i.e., 3 pounds for a 150-pound exerciser)<sup>1,2</sup> can spell trouble. Maintaining proper hydration is important for all fitness enthusiasts.

## Athletes should know their sweat rates.

Since sweat rates can vary based on the individual, weather, and intensity of exercise, athletes should measure:

How much weight they lose during exercise (in ounces)  
+  
How much fluid they consume during exercise (in fluid ounces)  
=  
The amount they SHOULD drink to replace sweat losses

## Hydration for Improving Workouts

Exercisers who work out in warm weather or a hot gym risk dehydration. The risk becomes greater the longer the workout lasts, or when there is more than one workout in a day. Here's how to prevent dehydration and get the most mileage out of a general fitness routine:

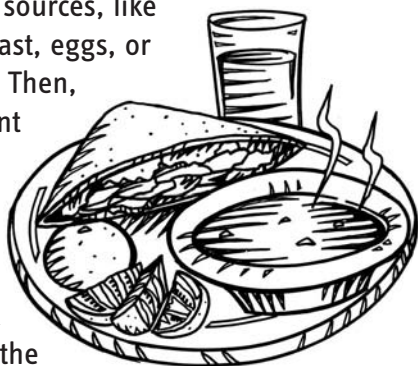
- **Remember fluids throughout the day.** This may be as simple as grabbing a sports drink first thing in the morning, then using fountains, coolers, and cafeteria beverages as triggers for drinking throughout the day.
- **Hydrate 2 to 3 hours before exercise.** Active people should aim for at least 16 ounces (2 cups) of fluid at this time and an additional 8 ounces (1 cup) 10 to 20 minutes prior to exercising.
- **Drink during workouts.** Sports drinks, like Gatorade®, can help ward off dehydration and muscle cramps because they help replenish both fluid and electrolytes (i.e., sodium and potassium) lost in sweat without overdrinking. However, for active people who prefer to drink plain water, a fitness water, such as Propel Fitness Water® may be a better option. Fitness waters are lightly flavored to help exercisers drink more than they would of plain water, thus staying better hydrated.
- **Consider carbohydrates.** Many exercisers are hesitant to use sports drinks during a workout, not wanting to take in extra calories. However, recent research has shown that consuming some carbohydrates by drinking a sports drink during a workout can limit calorie intake throughout the rest of the day.

## Foods for High Energy

Carbohydrates are energy powerhouses for fitness. Foods high in carbohydrates, like whole grains, cereals, fruits, and vegetables, supply energy to working muscles during exercise. They also offer a variety of important nutrients like vitamins C and A and antioxidants, crucial for maintaining healthy cells in the body.

Protein is essential for building and maintaining enzymes, tissues, and muscles. Although most fitness enthusiasts don't need as much protein as carbohydrate, it's also important.

An easy way to eat for fitness is to divide a plate into three equal portions. Fill 1/3 with grains, preferably whole grains, 1/3 with fruits and vegetables, and 1/3 with lean protein sources, like chicken or turkey breast, eggs, or nonfat/lowfat yogurt. Then, choose a high-nutrient drink like skim milk or 100 percent juice.



## Quick Snack Ideas

Try these quick snack combinations to fuel the fit system before or after workouts, or provide energy throughout the day:

- Whole grain crackers with peanut butter and raisins
- Oatmeal topped with fresh strawberries
- Lowfat yogurt with walnuts and dried apricots
- Whole grain pita with hummus and fresh spinach
- Cottage cheese with fresh peaches and almonds
- Pasta salad with fresh tomatoes, carrots, and green peppers
- 1/2 of a turkey and mozzarella sandwich on rye bread
- Broccoli and cauliflower with nonfat yogurt dip
- Scrambled eggs and whole grain toast
- Watermelon, raspberry, and blueberry fruit salad

<sup>1</sup> Gisolfi, C.V. and D.R. Lamb. *Perspectives in Exercise Science and Sports Medicine: Fluid Homeostasis During Exercise*, Chapt 1 pp. 1-38, 1990.

<sup>2</sup> Gopinathan, P.M. et al. *Arch Environ Health*, 43:15-17, 1998.

## Keep Healthy Foods at Your Fingertips

When fueling for fitness, take a little extra time to have healthy food options available. Exercisers should stock up on these foods regularly:

Food Group	Sample Choices
Grains	Whole grain breads Whole grain cereals like oatmeal or whole wheat flakes Oatmeal Brown rice Whole grain pastas Whole grain crackers like stone-ground wheat crackers Barley or bulgur
Fruits	Citrus fruits like oranges, grapefruit, and tangerines Bananas, kiwi, and pineapple Apples, pears, nectarines, papaya, and peaches Plums, prunes, and apricots Grapes and raisins Watermelon, honeydew, and cantaloupe Strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, and cherries 100% fruit juices 100% fruit leather Frozen 100% fruit bars
Vegetables	Broccoli, cauliflower, and Brussels sprouts Potatoes, sweet potatoes, and yams Green beans, snap peas, corn, and asparagus Tomatoes, tomato sauce, and tomato juice Spinach, cabbage, kale, collards, and greens Green, red, and yellow peppers Onions and leeks
Milk/Dairy Products	Lowfat/nonfat milk or soymilk Lowfat/nonfat cheese or cottage cheese Lowfat/nonfat yogurt and kefir Lowfat/nonfat frozen yogurt or ice milk
Protein Sources	Skinless chicken or turkey breast Pork loin Lean roast beef Eggs Salmon, tuna, whitefish, and shrimp Soy-based vegetarian burgers and meat alternatives Tofu and tempeh Nuts, seeds, and nut butters Dried beans and peas Energy bars