

Sports Nutrition: Eating for Peak Performance

Eat Breakfast and You Win

The best athletes eat breakfast every morning. After an overnight fast, most of your liver and muscle glycogen is depleted, so you need to refuel your body to replace the energy it used while you slept. Studies show that breakfast eaters have lower cholesterol levels, more energy throughout the day, and better success at weight loss or weight maintenance.

Athletes should eat even-sized meals about every three to four hours, starting with breakfast within two hours of waking. If you have limited time in the morning, plan ahead the night before and take your breakfast with you. Some simple “on the go” breakfasts may include:

- peanut butter and jelly rolled in a whole wheat tortilla
- trail mix of raisins, granola, and pecans
- fruit smoothie or protein shake
- energy bar with a piece of fruit
- whole grain bagel and sting cheese

A successful diet starts at breakfast. Make sure you budget about one-quarter of your calories for breakfast. This is about 500-600 calories for most 120-150 pound runners. One of the most versatile breakfast foods is cereal. It can be eaten dry if you’re on the go, or with your favorite milk for added calcium. Not all cereals are created equal. In addition to studying the food label, here are some tips to help you make the most nutritious choice.

- 1) *Select iron rich cereals with a minimum 25% of the Daily Value.*
To enhance iron absorption, add a vitamin C rich food to the meal such as, orange juice, strawberries, or grapefruit.
- 2) *Select fiber- rich cereals with more than 5 grams of fiber per serving.*
Fiber is a protective nutrient that may reduce your risk of certain cancers. It also helps to prevent constipation.
- 3) *Select cereals with whole grains listed within the first ingredients.*
Also check the food label for sugar content and limit it to less than five grams per serving.

Any healthy nutritious food can be enjoyed at breakfast, even nontraditional foods like vegetable pizza or a turkey sandwich.

Alison Ozgur, R.D.

To learn more about your nutritional needs and questions, purchase a 30 minute phone consultation with Alison from **GetFitLiveFit.org**.