

EATING FREQUENCY

FOR THE STUDENT-ATHLETE



I am a junior student-athlete. I have morning workouts at 5:30 a.m. and my first class is at 8:30 a.m. I am too busy to eat breakfast and I stop at the cafeteria for lunch between classes. I am back in the pool at 3:30 for a two-hour practice; then I have to grab dinner before going to study hall from 7 to 9 p.m. Sometimes I have to study late into the evening to finish a paper or prep for an exam.

How can I sustain my energy throughout the day to optimize both my academic and athletic performance?

- **START OFF RIGHT:** Breakfast is the most important meal of the day; choose nutrient-rich foods.
- **PLAN AHEAD:** Have portable performance foods in your backpack for fuel every two to three hours between meals and around training.
- **ADAPT TO YOUR NEEDS:** Know what foods sit well with your body. Don't try new foods or meals during days that you have important training sessions or a competition.

(For food options and tips, turn the page.)

Information presented by



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The key to optimal meal planning is developing a plan to meet the demands of your busy schedule and your body composition goals. There are lots of ways to strategize about eating frequently. A registered dietitian (RD) or Certified Specialist in Sports Dietetics (CSSD) is the food and nutrition professional best qualified to help you design a nutrition plan tailored to your health and performance needs. Check with your athletics department or student health services or go to scandpg.org and click on Find a SCAN RD.

START YOUR DAY OFF RIGHT

- Get a quick carbohydrate boost before the morning training session and eat a balanced breakfast that combines fiber (whole grains) and protein for sustainable energy before class.
- Select meals that are carbohydrate-rich, moderate in protein, and low in fat.
- **Breakfast:** choose eggs, whole grain toast with peanut butter, cereal and milk, fruit or 100% fruit juice, whole grain waffles topped with fruit, or yogurt
- Make lunch count by choosing lean meats to help you recover from a morning session and complex carbohydrates to replenish your body for an afternoon workout.
- **Nutrient-rich lunch options:** pasta with chicken and tomato sauce, steamed rice with vegetables and low-fat milk, grilled chicken sandwich with a fruit and yogurt smoothie, instant oatmeal with dried fruit and low-fat milk, a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, chicken noodle soup with crackers, chicken or turkey wrap, or sliced turkey on a bagel.

KEEP ENERGY UP DURING TRAINING

- If your training will be longer than an hour, plan a small carbohydrate-rich snack or beverage immediately before and during the activity.
- A sports drink during training or intense physical activity provides fuel and replaces lost fluid and electrolytes.
- **Nutrition during training:** granola or sports bars, bananas, dried fruit, and bread with jam or jelly.
- Drink water when consuming carbohydrates during practice to avoid stomach problems.

REPLENISH YOUR BODY DURING RECOVERY

- Plan to have a meal within one hour after training. A meal of carbohydrate-rich foods, high-quality protein, and ample fluids will meet your recovery needs.
- A recovery snack, eaten within 30 minutes, is critical if you don't eat a meal within one hour after training. This is especially important on days with multiple training, competition or tournament sessions.
- **Recovery nutrition:** Low-fat chocolate milk, trail mix, cereal and milk, yogurt parfaits and fruit smoothies.
- Student-athletes do not always have access to food immediately after practice. Be sure to pack recovery snacks in your gym bag so that you can quickly begin to refuel.



FUEL YOUR DAY

- Plan to have healthful food available to consume every two to three hours. This will provide enough physical and mental fuel to sustain intense training on the field of play and in the classroom.
- **Smart snacks:** string cheese, low-fat yogurt, dry cereal, trail mix, whole grain crackers, 100% fruit juice, dried fruit snacks and granola or breakfast bars.
- Establish a routine eating pattern for every day of the week. Athletes with a consistent fueling pattern tend to be leaner and have more energy.
- Some athletes prefer carbohydrate-rich fluids instead of whole foods to avoid feeling full.

