

Slug Gruel

By Tim Matthiessen

"Eat a wide variety of lightly processed foods."

All and all, a good diet is a lot like the summer training program. Over the long haul, a sound nutritional routine will deliver strong results and increased performance, in the same way that the training program gradually improves your conditioning. Both are much more important over the long run than in the short, and your diet, like the training program, should be viewed as part of the big picture. It's difficult to derail yourself nutritionally over the short term. A few days of indulgence will not ruin your running form any more than taking a few days off from the training program. Always keep the big picture in mind.

Pre-run Foods

It is a good idea to have some food in your system before running. Carbohydrate-rich foods with very little/no fat such as cereal, bagels, toast, fruit, energy bars, and juice are all good. And of course a banana should be first on the list as it is a good idea to eat one banana each day. If solid foods don't work for your body, try juice; it is easier to digest and does not stay in your stomach for long. Most importantly, try different foods to see what works best for you. Studies have shown that consuming a moderate amount of carbs an hour before a run can greatly increase your endurance.

Post-run Foods

After a long workout or competition, your depleted muscle glycogen stores must be replenished, especially if you will be exercising again within the next 8 hours (during 2-a-days). Eating a moderate-sized carbohydrate-rich snack within 30 minutes after exercise has been proven to greatly increase muscle recovery rates, as does continuing to eat carb-rich foods for the next 4 hours afterward. A good combination of foods would be some sort of sports drink and a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Eat a big, carb- and protein-rich meal after a long, hard run to help restore glycogen stores.

4 Best Foods

- 1) Bananas - lots of complex carbs and potassium
- 2) Oatmeal - filled with protein and complex carbs
- 3) Juice 100% - fruit or vegetable juice provides essential nutrients and water
- 4) Oranges - good for a quick, pre-run snack

4 Worst Foods

- 1) Hydrogenated/saturated/trans fats - mayonnaise, dark meats, deep fried foods, ice cream, butter, etc.
- 2) Alcohol - dehydrates your body significantly
- 3) Refined sugars - candy, junk food, soda, table sugar, etc. contain nothing but empty, useless calories
- 4) Energy drinks - Red Bull, Rockstar, Monster, etc. are loaded with caffeine and artificial chemicals that do you no good at all

A good calorie balance is 60% carbs, 25% fat, and 15% protein.

Carbohydrates

Carbs are the most important part on an athlete's diet. They are stored in your muscles as energy in the form of glycogen, which is used as fuel for running. Once your glycogen supply runs out so do you, so it is important to keep your glycogen supply filled up by eating plenty of high carb foods (see Table 1).

If you find that you are constantly hungry, your body may be trying to tell you that you need more calories. Rather than indulging in a fat-filled candy bar, you'd do

better to eat a bit more at meals or add a healthy snack in the afternoon, such as fruit, cereal or trail mix. And make sure to start off the day right with a fulfilling breakfast.

Fruits & Vegetables	Grains, Legumes, Potatoes	Breads, Cereals
Apples	Beans	Bagels
Bananas	Lentils	Bran Muffins
Broccoli	Potatoes	Granola
Carrots	Brown Rice	Oatmeal
Corn	Pasta	Wheat Bread
Oranges	Stuffing	Raisin Bran
Peas		Waffles
Raisins		

Protein

Although proteins play a very important role in recovery, be careful not to overdo it by weighing yourself down with excess protein that can harm your body instead of helping it. Good sources of protein include lean meats, fish, beans, nuts, vegetables, and low-fat dairy products.

Fats

Even though fat only plays a small role in providing fuel for running, it is still an important part of the diet. However, only unsaturated fats in small amounts have proven to be a beneficial part of the diet. Seafood, peanuts, olive oil, avocados, and soybeans are all great sources of healthy fats.

Fluids

Water is essential in a runner's diet. Cramps, weakness, dizziness, and headaches are all signs of dehydration. Be sure to hydrate plenty before as well as just after running. Water also plays a big part in a high carbohydrate diet, so be sure to drink extra when eating. Sports drinks are good for replenishing electrolytes and sugars after exercise.

Other Important Nutrients

- **Potassium** is needed for muscle function to prevent cramps and is found in high amounts in bananas, potatoes, and broccoli.
- **Iron** is needed for oxygen transportation, and it is important to get enough regularly because they are destroyed with each pounding step. Iron is found in large portions in fortified cereal, prunes, and beef.
- **Calcium** is also needed for muscle function as well; good sources include almonds, sesame seeds, dairy, and dark, leafy greens.