



Pre-Exercise Nutrition

We've spent the past 2 weeks looking at recovery and hydration, this week we will look at pre-exercise Nutrition. As the food and drink you consume before training matters too!

Pre-Exercise Nutrition will help;

- Fuel and hydrate your body for the exercise ahead
- Get the most out of your training (sustain quality and intensity for a longer period)
- Avoid an upset stomach or unwanted toilet stops
- Avoid unwelcome and distracting hunger pangs during the session

When should I eat?

As mentioned before, everyone is different and they should practice these guidelines until they find what works best for them. Most people can tolerate a main meal 2-4 hours before exercise without any stomach upset. You can also add in a small snack in the 1-2 hours before exercise for a final top up of your fuel stores. When it comes to hydration, you should follow the guidelines mentioned last week. Sip on fluid in the few hours leading up to exercise rather than gulping a large volume down just before you start to allow your body to use the fluid effectively and avoid the need to go to the toilet soon after starting the session or race.

What should I eat before exercise?

Again, everyone is different and you will need to practice this. But your pre-exercise meal or snack should be:



- Rich in carbohydrate to top up your fuel stores
- Low in fibre, especially if you have issues with your gut or feel nervous
- Easy to digest – avoid foods overly high in fat as these are slow to digest
- Familiar – practice your options in training and don't try anything new on race day!

Choosing a pre-exercise meal or snack will depend on what your individual goals and requirements are but here's a few ideas to get you started:

- Fruit smoothie
- Small bowl of oats with chopped fruit and yoghurt
- Bagel with sliced banana and drizzle of honey
- Small bowl pasta with tomato based sauce
- Tub of creamed rice with chopped fruit



What should I drink before exercise?

The ideal fluid before exercise depends on your goals. If you are using fluid mainly to hydrate for the session, water or electrolyte drinks are a good choice. If you need a source of fuel then sports drinks can be helpful as they contain both carbohydrates and fluid to help hydrate and fuel your body at the same time.

What can happen if I get my pre-exercise nutrition wrong?

Getting your nutrition plans wrong before a training session or race can mean that you don't optimise your potential during exercise. Failing to fuel or hydrate properly before exercise can result in:

- Earlier onset of fatigue
- Reduced speed, especially during repeat efforts
- Reduced endurance
- Poor concentration
- Gut upset

