

# feeding the athlete



It is important that an athlete's diet provide the right amount of energy, nutrients and fluids that the body needs. No single supplement can do this. It takes a variety of foods every day.

## CALORIES

How much should you eat? It depends on gender, height, weight, and the demands of your sport.

Include a wide variety of foods in your meals and don't go hungry. Likewise, avoid binge-eating or constantly over-eating as this can lead to weight gain, which can hinder athletic performance.

Here's a simple way to estimate your calorie needs:

$$\frac{\text{Current weight}}{2.2} \times \text{Basal Metabolic Rate} \quad (.9 - \text{females} / 1.0 - \text{males})$$

This is the average amount of calories you burn in 1 hour. Now multiply this by 24 hours. This is roughly the number of calories you need to perform the basic functions of life. Now add your activity factor from this chart:

Activity Level	Females	Males
Sedentary (sitting, normal movement)	0.3	0.325
Light (light movement, cleaning house, ping pong)	0.5	0.6
Moderate (bike riding, dancing, fast walking)	0.6	0.725
Heavy (physical labor, fast running, basketball)	0.9	1.05
Exceptional (hard exercise 2-3 hours / day, pro athletes)	1.2	1.375

Select an activity level and multiply it by the basic level of calories you need to fuel your body for your activity level. Add this to your basic calorie needs and you have an estimate of what you should be consuming each day. Now let's talk about some specifics:

## CARBOHYDRATES

- fuel for the body
- 45-70% of your daily calorie intake should be from carbohydrates with ½ from whole grains

## VEGETABLES AND FRUITS

- all fresh, frozen and canned varieties to obtain needed vitamins, minerals and fiber
- low calorie snacks that offer good energy

## PROTEIN

- essential for growth and repair, protein foods should provide 15-20% of your total calories
- athletes require a little more than non-athletes, however not too much. 0.9-1.0 grams protein per pound body weight is recommended
- meats, dairy, eggs, nuts and vegetable proteins such as soy are excellent sources

## FATS

- fats play an important role in healthy eating
- for the athlete they can provide useful energy
- total fat intake should comprise 20-35% of all calories
- keep saturated fats at less than 10%

It is important for the athlete to eat nutritious, balanced meals for optimal energy for performance and recovery. There are no special foods or products needed, just the wise combination of a variety of foods to help you do your best.

*Adapted from Nutrition Guide for the Athlete. Author: Mark Johnson, RD, LD, Nutrition Graduate Student, Reviewer: Marla Reicks, PhD, RD, LN, Professor, Dept. Food Science and Nutrition, University of Minnesota*

*\*Adapted from a chapter on energy balance and healthy body weight in a textbook entitled, "Nutrition - Concepts and Controversies - Ninth Edition", bySizer and Whitney*

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<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/hsmrs/Practical%20Nutrition%20March%202008/Lesson%20B/Lesson%20Plan%20B%20Mar%2008>