

eat for **FITNESS**

BANANAS are nature's Power Bar

It's important to carb load before exercising



There's a lot more to eating for sports than chowing down on carbs or chugging sports drinks.

The good news is that eating to reach your peak performance level likely doesn't require a special diet or supplements. It's all about working the right foods into your fitness plan in the right amounts.

Athletes have unique nutrition needs. Because athletes work out more than their less-active peers, they generally need extra calories to fuel both their sports performance and their growth.

Depending on how active they are, athletes may need anywhere from 2,000 to 5,000 total calories per day to meet their energy needs.

Carbs are Good

Although you may be tempted to skip the calories, the food you eat before you exercise will fuel your workout and maximize your efforts and results.

Eating before a workout also prevents low blood sugar, which leads to light-headedness and fatigue.

All About Carbs

Extreme low-carb diets negatively impact your mood.

Without carbs, you may feel weaker and more apathetic about training hard.

Going too low carb can impair brain function and reduce your ability to concentrate properly.

Slow-digesting carbs like oatmeal take longer to enter your bloodstream and help satisfy your appetite much better than junk food.

Your body needs a decent supply of carbs post-workout to keep that burn going as long as possible.

After working out, your body needs carbs to repair your muscles and get stronger.

Supplements—

Your wallet may think an energy bar, powder or vitamin is special because of the cost and the hype.

But guess what? Your body has no idea that it's eating a supplement and doesn't care where the protein or carbs are coming from—it's just as happy with regular food.

Eat a small meal of protein and carbs 30 to 60 minutes after training.

Carb Check

Ultimately, your activity level should determine the amount of carbs you take in. Here's how to calculate your maximum daily allotment of the muscle fuel:

- Beginner/Sedentary: 1 g/per pound of body weight
- Intermediate/Moderately Fit: 2 g/per pound of body weight
- Advanced/Highly Active: 3 g/per pound of body weight



Bananas

Bananas are nature's PowerBar. They are loaded with digestible carbohydrates and are packed with potassium, which aids in maintaining nerve and muscle function.

The body doesn't store potassium for very long, so a medium banana before a workout will help keep nutrient levels high.

Bananas are also recommended for morning exercisers. Get up and eat a medium banana with 1/2 cup of Greek yogurt. Wait about 30 minutes and then hit the gym. Your body will need the carbohydrates and protein. ■