



DON'T NEGLECT THE SNACKS: PRE- AND POST- WORKOUT SNACKS



By Lindsay G. Langford MS, RD

Concluding a recent presentation to a group of high school athletes, I found myself astounded by the number of athletes that pay no attention to the importance of nutrition. Many athletes eat lunch around noon, head to practice/training sessions at 3:30 p.m., and arrive home for dinner around 6:30 or 7 p.m. famished. Some athletes could be burning as much as 2,000 calories between lunch and dinner with no food in between. I found this routine to be typical for many athletes. As a dietitian, my personal take-home message that night became clear. Athletes desperately need education on the vital relationship between food and performance.

I feel athletes should look at food as a performance enhancer, which is 100% legal. An athlete will not test "positive" or fail a drug test with the performance enhancer "food." By using the proper food at the proper time, allows performance

to be enhanced in an efficient and clean manner.

A gymnast will find better workouts and a higher level of performance when their bodies are properly fueled. Like a car, a body cannot perform on an empty tank. Therefore, it is imperative that coaches stress the importance of coming to practice nutritionally prepared. You may notice a sluggish, dizzy, or light headed gymnast if proper nutrition is not accounted for. These athletes must learn to plan ahead by tossing a pre- and post-workout snack into their gym bags, before heading to their next practice. Make sure a nutritious pre-practice snack is consumed one hour before an afternoon practice. Since carbohydrates are the main fuel source for workouts, be sure to aim for the ACSM/ADA (American College of Sports Medicine/ American Dietetic Association) guidelines (2009) of 1 gram of carbohydrate per kilogram (kg*), one hour before practice. **Here are a few snack ideas to help boost energy levels before practice:**

FOODS	SIZE	GRAMS OF CARBS
SPORTS DRINK	20 FL OZ	30-50
GENERIC SPORT BAR	1 BAR	20-55
BANANA AND BLUEBERRIES WITH STRING CHEESE	1 LARGE BANANA, 1/2 CUP BLUEBERRIES	55
BAGEL WITH PEANUT BUTTER	1 LARGE	50
YOGURT WITH 1/4 CUP GRANOLA	1 CUP	35
LOW FAT CHEESE AND CRACKERS	1 SLICE, 6 CRACKERS	25
1/2 PB&J	1/2 SANDWICH	20
FIG BARS	2	20



Now that you've got pre-workout fuel down, don't forget post-workout nutrition is equally important. After a long hard training session, glycogen (muscles main fuel source) levels are running on "E" and muscle break down could also be occurring. To replenish, rebuild, and strengthen these muscle stores, proper carbohydrate and protein consumption should be consumed no later than one hour after the training session (< 30min being ideal). This will allow muscle stores to absorb, regenerate, and bounce back stronger for the next day's workout. Depending on the duration and

intensity of the workout, post-workout nutritional needs vary. For a workout lasting longer than 90 minutes of constant activity, ACSM and ADA (2009) recommend 1.5g carbohydrate per kilogram within 30 minutes and an additional 1.5g carb/kg 2 hours later. Set guidelines are not yet established for protein consumption, but the addition of a small-to-moderate amount of protein is recommended for proper recovery. **Listed below are some tasty snack options to help a gymnast recover for their next workout:**

FOODS	SIZE	GRAMS OF CARBS
GENERIC SPORT BAR	1 BAR	20-55
YOGURT WITH ¼ CUP GRANOLA AND BLUEBERRIES	6OZ YOGURT, ¼ CUP GRANOLA, ½ CUP BERRIES	41
MEAL REPLACEMENT DRINK	SLIMFAST, BOOST	40
HIGH PROTEIN CEREAL (KASHI GO LEAN) WITH LOW FAT MILK	1 CUP CEREAL ½ CUP MILK	36
½ PB & HONEY SANDWICH	½ SANDWICH	35
LOW FAT CHOCOLATE MILK	1 CUPS	32
GRAHAM CRACKERS AND PEANUT BUTTER	2 SHEETS, 1TBS	27

The snack options provided above should help propel energy level and recovery time. This enables the coach to have a well-rounded gymnast that is fueling and recovering properly for each workout. Mix and match a few items or make up some of your own, but be sure pre- and post- workout nutrition becomes a new priority.

***1kg=2.2lbs ✖**

American College of Sports Medicine, American Dietetic Association, Dietitians of Canada (2009). Joint Position Statement: Nutrition and Athletic Performance. *Medicine and Science in Sports & Exercise*. 42;3:709-739

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