

Nutrition –

It is Important to Practice Pre-run Eating so You Know what Works for You on Race Day

Race day should be a fun and exciting time. Competition jitters are very common, as your adrenaline starts pumping you might start feeling a little more anxious, a little shakier and even a little queasy. Having a set routine and knowing what your body responds well to and needs to perform well can go a long way in calming nerves and soothing your belly. Often runners train hard, running mile after mile, with a very specific and well thought out schedule. By race day they arrive at the starting line confident in how far and how fast they can run. But many runners fail to put the same thought into the race day meal. Some simple guidelines and a little experimentation can prepare you to do and feel your best. The key is to use your training runs to figure out which type and what amount of food help you run well and make you feel great. Once you have it figured out, eat this same meal on race day.

Some Basic Guidelines:

- Try to eat three – four hours before your race, this may be difficult before an early morning race but you will likely be up early on race morning anyway.
- Avoid carbonated beverages
- 400 – 500 calories.
- Mostly Carbohydrate.
- Moderate Protein.
- Lower in fat.
- Meals closer to race time should have less protein, fat and fiber.
- Eat something even if you aren't hungry.
- Liquid meals such as juice, sports drinks, low-fat smoothies and shakes can be helpful if you have a queasy stomach.
- Caffeine works well for some people, but for others can cause nausea and increase your nerves.

Listen to your body to learn how you feel after different meals. Below are some ideas for pre-race or pre-workout meals from the American College of Sports Medicine but this is by no means a comprehensive list.

Morning Events:

The night before, eat a high-carbohydrate meal. Early morning, eat a light breakfast or snack: cereal and non-fat milk, fresh fruit or juice, toast, bagel or English muffin, pancakes or waffles, non-fat or low-fat fruit yogurt, or a liquid pre-event meal.

Afternoon Events:

Eat a high-carbohydrate meal both the night before and for breakfast. Follow with a light lunch: salads with low-fat dressings, turkey sandwiches with small portions of turkey, fruits, juice, low-fat crackers, high-carbohydrate nutritional bars, pretzels or rice cakes



Evening Events:

Eat a high-carbohydrate breakfast and lunch, followed by a light meal or snack: pasta with marinara sauce, rice with vegetables, noodle or rice soups with crackers, baked potato or yogurt.

Most importantly, now that you have experimented with a meal strategy and found something that works for you, keep it consistent! Race day is not the time to try new things. It can be tempting as many events will give away free gel packs and energy bar or drinks. While these may seem attractive you have no way of knowing how your body will react. Stick to your routine and what you know will work and you will be set for an exciting, comfortable and fun race.

*Pre-Event Meals. ACSM Current Comment. <http://www.acsm.org/docs/current-comments/preeventmeals.pdf>



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