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NUTRITION

By Phil Robertson - Fitness Aspirations

Nutrition

Our day-to-day nutrition is extremely important but, with the additional demands and stress of training/running, we need to pay closer attention to what we eat and drink

As with any endurance-based sport, the nutritional focus of a runner needs to be geared towards maintaining calorie balance. After this is accounted for, the focus should be on specifically timed workout nutrition and also on supporting the immune system.

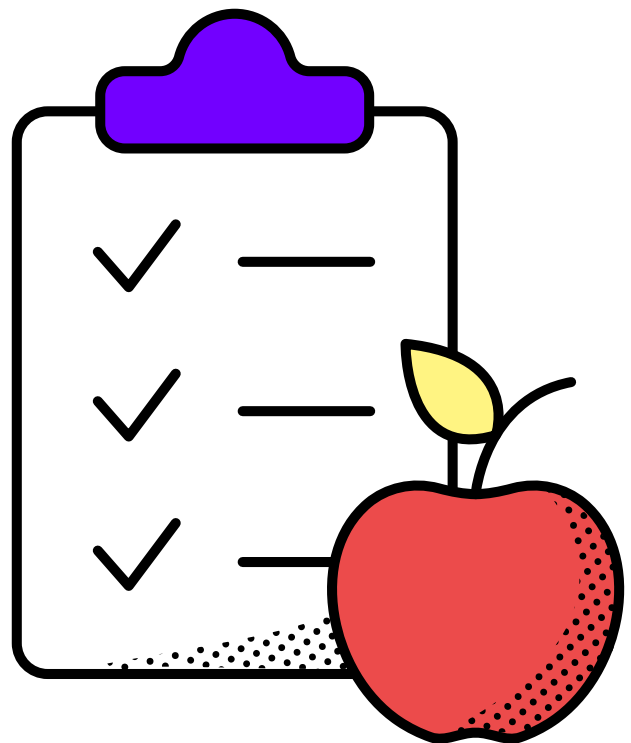
Another thing to consider is that the kind of training a runner undertakes, requires fuel, and a lot of it. Do not be afraid of eating a large amount of food around longer training sessions.

For a runner, the key thing to consider is your total energy intake. This means eating more on days you run (and maybe the day after if you want to spread it out a little).

As a runner you are placing a huge strain on your body and expending a lot of energy. For best results, you can choose to track and log your food intake. If you are not aware of your calorie intake, you can use the following calorie calculator:

<https://awesomesupplements.co.uk/pages/calorie-calculator>

Note: calorie calculations are predictive meaning that you may need to track progress and adjust accordingly, during the first few weeks.



For endurance athletes, the most important nutrient is carbohydrates because this is converted into a fuel source called glycogen, which is stored in your liver and muscles. This is essential for generating muscle contraction.

Marathon runners often refer to glycogen depletion as 'hitting the wall' – this is when all the energy stored in your muscles has burned up and your muscles simply stop working.

Carbohydrates will typically make up to around 40-50% of an endurance athlete's intake on a less active day and, on a training day around 70%.

Before a training session

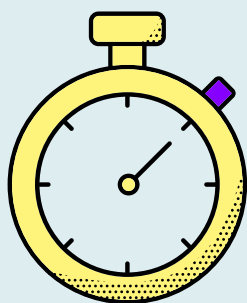
Prior to a training session, the focus should be on a good source of complex carbohydrates which is more easily digested by the stomach. This will provide enough glucose without making you 'too full'.

Eating a carb source with too much fibre has the potential to leave you with a lot of undigested food. This is the perfect time for a relatively light yet energy dense meal such as sushi, or a pasta dish with white meat or fish.

During a training session

During the run you may require a carbohydrate source (gels, fruit, sweets, etc.), but these should be factored into your total intake for the day, and not just included out of habit. If your session is only going to last 60 minutes or so, you shouldn't need anything more than adequate liquid and maybe some electrolytes if you are training in the heat or you sweat a lot.

According to the International Society for Sports Nutrition, the amount of carbohydrates you may need during exercise is as follows:



Activity

Carbohydrates

Up to 1 hour	=	0kg
1-3 hours	=	30-60g per hour
3+ hours	=	60-90g per hour

Ideally this will be in the form of easily absorbed sugary foods with a high glucose concentration. Gels are ideal, but some people prefer more natural foods such as dates, so experiment and see what works best for you. Don't wait until fatigue sets in, keep drip feeding those carbs every 30-60 minutes.

After a training session

After your session, the calories you have used should be replaced, with predominantly whole foods, focusing on 'quality' carbohydrates for the most part. Additionally, staying hydrated should be a priority. Including electrolytes, with or without carbs, to your training liquid intake can dramatically improve absorption rates and allow you to stay hydrated with far less liquid, meaning fewer 'pit stops' during a longer run.