

IRON

- Eat foods containing good sources of iron regularly (important for girls, women, vegetarians and athletes). Include lean red meats, mussels and dark flesh fish (salmon and tuna) regularly.

SALT

- Use salt carefully. Choose lower salt snacks and foods. If training or competing in hot and humid environments some extra salt (sodium) in your diet may be necessary. Use marmite sandwiches, pretzels and packet soups.

WEIGHT

- Keep body weight within a reasonable range with good food choices and regular activity. Maintain a suitable weight for your sport and body shape. Avoid wide fluctuations in body weight and fad diets.
- Eat well when injured to avoid undesirable weight gain as body fat. Watch for increased snacking and decrease energy intake due to limited or no training.

ALCOHOL

- If drinking alcohol use in moderation and limit intake as alcohol reduces carbohydrate replacement in muscles and affects coordination. Alcohol may also interfere with mineral (magnesium) balance. Restrict the use of alcohol prior to competition and training. Rehydrate with water and refuel with carbohydrate before consuming alcohol after games and competitions.



TOP NUTRITIONAL TIPS FOR ATHLETES

A Sports Nutrition Handout developed by
NZ Academy of Sport Nutrition Providers

PRINCIPAL AUTHOR: Jeni Pearce

For best results this handout should be delivered
by a NZ Academy of Sport Nutrition Provider

Contact: www.nzas.org.nz

TOP NUTRITIONAL TIPS FOR ATHLETES

The following guidelines provide a solid foundation for health and peak sports performance and assist athletes to train well and obtain a competitive edge.

VARIETY

- Choose a wide selection of foods from all the major food groups. No one food contains all the nutrients essential for good health or optimal sports performance.
- Learn to cook many different foods. Variety means greater meal enjoyment and nutrient intake.
- You may need to eat differently from your less active friends and family. The typical New Zealand eating pattern is not considered optimal for training or peak sport performance.

EAT ADEQUATE CARBOHYDRATE

- Eating breads, cereals (preferably wholegrain), vegetables (potato, kumara, taro), rice, pasta and legumes (dried beans) help to meet the needs of training and competition. For maximum daily glycogen storage 7–10g carbohydrate for each kilogram of body weight is needed. Eg. An 85 kg athlete would need 595–850g CHO per day.
- Eating wholegrain breads and cereals, fruit and vegetables (green and coloured varieties) provides excellent sources of vitamins, minerals and fibre. Vitamin and mineral supplements are not recommended for general use.
- Eat adequate fibre from many different sources such as wholegrain breads and cereals, fruit, vegetables and legumes. Aim for 25–30g per day.

PROTEIN

- Ensure adequate protein intake and choose lower fat options such as lean meats. Many protein foods contain no carbohydrate (red meat, pork, ham, fish, cheese, chicken and eggs) this must be added to meals. A little extra protein is needed during growth (teenagers) and for endurance and strength training. Teenagers require 2g protein per kilogram of bodyweight. For most athletes 1.5g protein per kilogram is a good guide. For a 90kg athlete this is 135g protein.

MONITOR FAT INTAKE

- Eat a diet lower in fat, especially saturated fat. Use lower fat foods such as skim or trim milks, lower fat dairy products and lean meats (remove fat before cooking). Use high fat takeaway meals and snacks as occasional treats. Fat intake for athletes varies from 20–30% of energy intake. Around 1g fat per kg body weight is a guide.

FLUIDS

- Maintain an adequate daily fluid intake with water and other drinks such as fruit juice, mineral or bottled water and sports drinks. Drink extra fluids during training and competitions or games. Replace 1.5x fluid lost during activity. E.g. A 75kg athlete loses 2 kilograms (2 litres) of body weight during heavy training. This requires 3 litres of fluids to restore fluid balance.

RECOVERY

- Recovery nutrition is an important phase in training. Rehydrate (use sports drinks, cordial, fruit juice and water) and refuel muscle stores by providing rapidly absorbed carbohydrates. Aim to eat 1g of CHO for each kilogram of body weight as soon as possible after training.
- Eat moderate intakes of sugar and foods containing added sugar. Remember sugar is a carbohydrate food for athletes and can be used to top up carbohydrate intakes for active people. These foods are most suitable in the recovery phase after training, games and competitions.
- Take care with prepared foods and snacks high in fat, sugar and salt (sodium). Save these foods for treats after competitions.

PRE-EVENT

- Eat regular meals and snacks as missing meals hinder training and performance in sport. Breakfast is the meal of champions and fuels the brain and body for activity during the day. Eat a light carbohydrate snack (toast, fruit, yoghurt) before morning training.

CALCIUM

- Eat foods containing calcium regularly (especially important for women, young girls, and endurance athletes). Aim for two to three servings daily of calcium rich foods such as dairy foods, fish with bones, vegetables (broccoli), legumes (soy and dried beans) and nuts (almonds).