

BEST PRE-WORKOUT FOODS

4/23/2012

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All kinds of pre-workout supplements are being marketed to athletes claiming to boost energy, enhance performance, and improve endurance. Do you need to eat before a workout? If so, what should you eat or drink? Let's look at who might need a pre-workout snack and the best choices.

If your workout lasts longer than 45 minutes (and what swimmer's workout doesn't?) you should fuel up before exercise. What you should eat and how much you should eat depends on how much time you have before a workout.

Ideally, you will have time for a healthy meal 3-4 hours before exercise, so that there is time for the food to be digested and absorbed. But when reality strikes and you don't have time to eat before swim practice, you should at least eat 30 grams of carbohydrate. Carbs that are easily digested and eaten 15 minutes before exercise can improve your performance when compared to exercising with no carbohydrate.

Here are my top picks for snacks with 30 grams of carbohydrate. These foods also provide other benefits, such as extra vitamins and minerals needed for optimum performance.

- 6-ounce container of low-fat fruit yogurt has 30 grams of carbs with the added benefit of calcium (as much as a glass of milk), protein, potassium, vitamin A and riboflavin.
- 2 mini-bagels with a piece of low-fat string cheese provide 30 grams of carbs, protein and B-vitamins needed for energy.
- 1 medium to large sized banana has 30 grams of carbs. A banana is the original fast food – easy to pack and eat, and requires no refrigeration. Bananas are also a powerhouse for potassium, an electrolyte lost in sweat.
- Banana-strawberry fruit smoothie (8-12 ounces depending on product). Liquids, like smoothies, are easy to digest and most contain calcium and vitamin C.
- 10 mini-pretzels and ½ cup apple juice contain easy to digest carbs along with some sodium for those who are salty sweaters.

Eating before a workout doesn't have to be complicated or expensive. All it takes is some planning to have nourishing snacks available to power you through a workout.

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