

Meal Planning for the Busy Athlete

This handout provides information on meal planning for busy athletes, including nutrient targets at main meals (pg.2) and a sample 1-day menu (pg.3)

Meal Planning Tips

- ✓ **Plan ahead:** healthy eating starts at the grocery store. Make sure you do your grocery shopping weekly and keep healthy items in your freezer, fridge and pantry so that your weekly meal planning becomes easy.
- ✓ **Eat frequently:** If you want to be at the top of your practice and avoid low energy levels during practice, make sure you have 3 meals a day and 2-3 snacks. Do not skip meals.
- ✓ **Prepare a lunch box:** Leftovers or sandwiches are great quick-fix lunches. You can accompany your lunch with a fruit or dairy.
- ✓ **Pack your snacks:** snacks will give you the energy you need to fuel your day. Make sure you have portable snacks on you such as: nut and dried fruit trail mix, bananas, granola bars, and homemade muffins.



To help you get started here are examples of items you should keep on hand in your pantry, fridge and freezer!

IN THE PANTRY

- **Instant snacks** (canned tuna, sardines, salmon)
- **Pulses:** dried or canned lentils, mixed beans, chickpeas
- **Grains:** quinoa, rice, barley, pasta
- **Herbs & Spices:** pepper, salt, oregano, paprika, cumin
- **Oils:** Canola or extra virgin olive oil

IN THE FRIDGE

- **Dairy:** milk (natural/ chocolate, yogurt natural/ flavored; cheese strings/ slices).
- Eggs
- **Fresh fruits:** bananas, apples, grapes.
- **Fresh vegetables:** pre-washed greens, pre-cut carrots, peppers, celery.
- **Spreads:** nut butters

IN THE FREEZER

- **Frozen fruits:** berries, bananas
- **Fresh cuts of protein:** meat/ poultry/ fish
- **Pre-made dishes (homemade):** soups, lasagna dish, meat loaf, stews.
- **Pre-made snacks (homemade):** muffin mix, banana bread mix.

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Nutrient Targets at Main Meals

What should go on your plate?

To ensure balanced meals throughout the day, include high quality **carbohydrates** such as **potatoes, quinoa, whole grain pasta or brown rice**; **proteins** such as **lean red meat, grilled chicken breast or eggs**; and healthy **fats** such as **olive/canola oil, nuts and nut butters avocados**.

Easy Training day: Easy days are ones you do not train or have a practice and do not need to load up on energy. In this case your plate should be $\frac{1}{2}$ **vegetables**, $\frac{1}{4}$ **protein** and $\frac{1}{4}$ **carbohydrate**.

Moderate Training day: A moderate day is one where you practice once a day. In this case your plate should be $\frac{1}{3}$ **vegetables**, $\frac{1}{4}$ **protein** and $\frac{1}{3}$ **carbohydrate**.

Hard Training day: A hard day is one where you are competing and have either 2 practices or 2 games per day. In this case your plate should be $\frac{1}{4}$ **vegetables**, $\frac{1}{4}$ **protein** and $\frac{1}{2}$ **carbohydrate**.

EASY/NO TRAINING DAY



MODERATE TRAINING DAY



HARD TRAINING DAY



Have a big appetite? You can always add a snack such as yogurt, cheese or fruit to your meal.



Hydrate throughout the day! Add a glass of water, milk or a cup of tea to your meal.





Sample 1-Day Menu

During the School Year

Meal / Time / Activity	Sample Menu Options
Breakfast (7:00 am) At Home	Meal: complex carbohydrate + protein + fruit or vegetable <ul style="list-style-type: none">Whole wheat tortilla with egg made with salsa, tomatoes, red peppers, cheese and lean ham Hydration: water / tea / 100% fruit juice
Snack (10:00 am) At School	Balanced Snack: protein + carbohydrate + fruit or vegetable <ul style="list-style-type: none">Greek yogurt cup with granola and dried fruit Hydration: water throughout the day
Lunch (12:30 pm) At School	Meal: complex carbohydrate + protein + fruit or vegetable <ul style="list-style-type: none">Beef and vegetable stir fry with rice Hydration: water / tea / 100% fruit juice
Snack (2:30 pm)	Balanced Snack: protein + carbohydrate + fruit or vegetable <ul style="list-style-type: none">Peanut butter and banana sandwich with an apple Hydration: water throughout the day
Dinner (4:00 pm) Before Practice at 6:00 pm	Meal: complex carbohydrate + protein + fruit or vegetable <ul style="list-style-type: none">Pasta salad made with chicken and vegetables Hydration: water / tea / 100% fruit juice
Snack (7:15) During Practice	Snack During Training: simple carbohydrate + fluid <ul style="list-style-type: none">High energy granola bar (e.g. Clif®, Lara Bar®, Fig bar) Hydration: water throughout practice
Snack (9:00) At Home After Practice	Recovery Snack: protein + carbohydrate + fluid <ul style="list-style-type: none">Fruit and yogurt smoothie with a handful of nuts



Make Your Own Fuel Plan

Meal / Time / Activity	Menu Options
	Fuel: Hydration:
	Fuel: Hydration:
	Fuel: Hydration:
	Fuel: Hydration:
	Fuel: Hydration:
	Fuel: Hydration:
	Fuel: Hydration:
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