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

- Dairys milk
 (natural/ chocolate,
 yogurt natural/
 flavored; cheese
 strings/ slices).
- Eggs
- Fresh fruits: bananas, apples, grapes.
- Fresh vegetables: prewashed 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.

Nutrient Targets at Main Meals What should go on your plate?

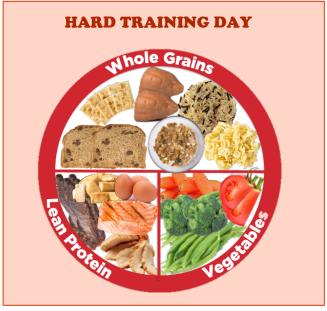
To ensure balanced meals throughout the day, include high quality **carbohydrates** such as potatoes, quinoa, whole grain pasta or brown rice; **proteins** such as lean red meat, grilled chicken breast or eggs; and healthy **fats** such as olive/canola oil, nuts and nut butters avocadoes.

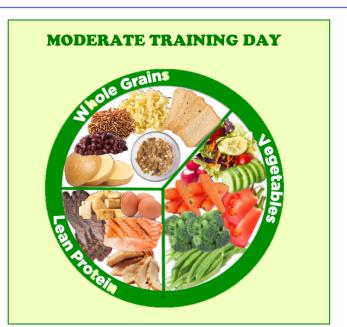
Easy Training day: Easy days are ones you do not train or have a practice and do not need to load up on energy. In this case your plate should be ½ vegetables, ¼ protein and ¼ carbohydrate.

Moderate Training day: A moderate day is one where you practice once a day. In this case your plate should be ½ vegetables, ¼ protein and ½ 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 ½ vegetables, ½ protein and ½ carbohydrate.







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

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Meal / Time / Activity	Sample Menu Options
Breakfast (7:00 am)	Meal: complex carbohydrate + protein + fruit or vegetable
At Home	• 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)	Balanced Snack: protein + carbohydrate + fruit or vegetable
At School	Greek yogurt cup with granola and dried fruit
	Hydration: water throughout the day
Lunch (12:30 pm)	Meal: complex carbohydrate + protein + fruit or vegetable
At School	Beef and vegetable stir fry with rice
	Hydration: water / tea / 100% fruit juice
Snack (2:30 pm)	Balanced Snack: protein + carbohydrate + fruit or vegetable
	Peanut butter and banana sandwich with an apple
	Hydration: water throughout the day
Dinner (4:00 pm)	Meal: complex carbohydrate + protein + fruit or vegetable
Before Practice at 6:00 pm	Pasta salad made with chicken and vegetables
	Hydration: water / tea / 100% fruit juice
Snack (7:15)	Snack During Training: simple carbohydrate + fluid
During Practice	• High energy granola bar (e.g. Clif ®, Lara Bar ®, Fig bar)
	Hydration: water throughout practice
Snack (9:00)	Recovery Snack: protein + carbohydrate + fluid
At Home After Practice	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:
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