

FITNESS BEAT



Issue 4: FOCUS ON ATHLETICS

Athletes & Hydration



Athletes are at risk for dehydration and heat exhaustion, especially in warm weather and high humidity. Weighing in before and after practice is an ideal way to measure how much water you lose

and how much should be replaced. Drinking water and wearing light-weight clothing during practice sessions also reduce your chances of dehydration and heat exhaustion.

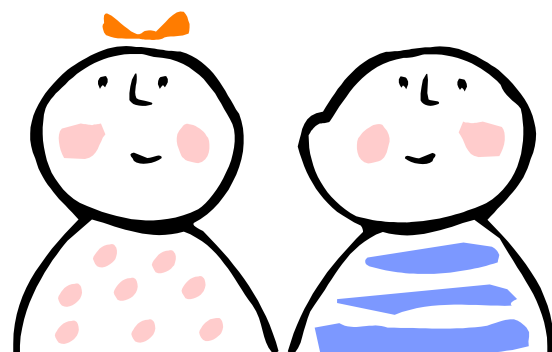
Water loss is not "real" weight loss. If water lost through sweating is not replaced, your body may suffer from fatigue and decreased performance — leading to heat stroke and dehydration. To prevent dehydration, drink two cups of water one hour before exercise, one cup 30 minutes before, and one-half to one cup every 15 minutes during exercise. After exercising, drink one to two cups.

Body Composition: What Are Boys & Girls Made Of?

You can find out what percent of your body is fat. Coaches, athletic trainers and school nurses may be able to measure the amount of fat under the skin with calipers, and then calculate the percentage of body fat.

Male athletes should have a minimum of 7 percent to 10 percent body fat, and female athletes should have a minimum of 15 percent to 20 percent fat. It is dangerous for any athlete to have less than 5 percent body fat. Adequate stores of fat are needed for good health, regardless of what sport.

When you lose weight, it's important to lose fat. And when you gain weight, it's important to gain muscle, not fat. A change of 1 to 2 pounds per week allows for this. Too rapid weight loss is usually muscle loss and too rapid weight gain is in the form of fat.



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Pre-Event Meals

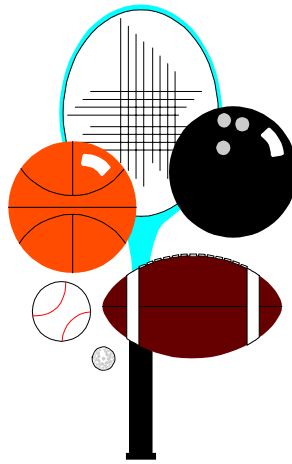
There is nothing you can eat the day before or hours before an event to make up for poor eating habits during training. A pre-game meal is the final touch to your training diet rather than a magic bullet to increase your performance. Be sure to consume plenty of beverages — water, juice, etc.

Morning Event: For a 10:00 event, eat a bowl of cereal with milk, glass of juice and a piece of fruit about 7:30 or 8:00 (about 300 to 400 calories).

Afternoon Event: Eat a large breakfast of about 700 calories and then a light snack/lunch of about 300 to 500 calories.

Evening Event: Eat a large breakfast and lunch, then a light, carbohydrate-rich snack a couple hours before the event. Save dinner until after the event.

Source: *The Athlete's Guide to Nutrition*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1998.



Post Event Meals

Any athletic competition, particularly longer events, can make you feel exhausted.

It's always a good idea to drink plenty of fluids after competing. Within 30 to 60 minutes after competing, eat a good-sized, well balanced meal. Add an extra serving of starchy (complex carbohydrate) food or fruit.

Stopping on the way home from an out-of-town game? Order low-fat milk or orange juice, a hamburger with lettuce, tomato, & light mayo, or grilled chicken sandwich, light mayo & water. At home after the game? Have a big bowl of cereal, low-fat milk, orange juice and water.

TRUE OR FALSE?

TRUE OR FALSE?

Athletes need more protein than other people.

FALSE!

Protein in muscle is not used up or destroyed by physical activity. An athlete needs more calories — but not more protein — than a less active person of similar age and weight.

TRUE OR FALSE?

Quick-energy foods such as candy bars or honey should be eaten immediately before competing.

FALSE!

Energy can't be used until you digest the food. If you eat immediately before exercising the food sits in your stomach and does not become useful until later. It's best *not* to eat within the hour before exercising.

TRUE OR FALSE?

Vitamin and mineral supplements are necessary for optimal athletic performance.

FALSE!

For the average athlete, nutritional supplements are not necessary. All the vitamins, minerals & other nutrients you need are provided when you eat a variety of foods. There has been no convincing evidence to support the idea that supplements can enhance the performance of a well-nourished athlete.

TRUE OR FALSE?

Steak is the best source of protein for an athlete.

FALSE!

There is nothing magical about steak. It is a good source of protein. However, fish, poultry, pork, eggs, milk, peanut butter and dried beans are also good sources of protein that might be included in an athlete's diet.