



Eat Right For Your Workout!

Those who participate in a strength training need to ensure their body is properly fueled and hydrated. The goal of any pre-workout meal or snack is to provide enough energy to get through a strenuous workout and to ensure hydration. That's why a pre-workout meal or snack should focus on providing the body with carbohydrates and fluids.

Pre-Workout Meal and Snack Guidelines

1. Larger meals consisting of 600 to 800 calories should be eaten at least 3 to 4 hours before any strength training session, giving the body adequate time to digest the meal. The closer to a workout food is eaten, the smaller the meal or snack should be. Smaller meals that are 400 to 500 calories can be eaten approximately 2 to 3 hours before a workout, and if it's less than 2 hours before a workout, eat a light snack such as cereal bars or yogurt.
2. Avoid high-fiber or gaseous foods such as beans or broccoli to reduce the risk of gas or stomach discomfort.
3. Stick with a high-carb, low fat meal. The carbs from the meal provide the body with the fuel needed to make it through a workout and a high carb/low-fat meal or snack digests easily. Also, a moderate amount of protein will help to stave off hunger.
4. Liquid meal replacements are fine to consume in the hours leading up to a workout and some athletes prefer a meal replacement shake because the stomach doesn't feel quite as full as when eating a meal equal in calories; a liquid meal leaves the stomach sooner.
5. The American College of Sports Medicine recommends drinking 17 to 20 ounces of fluid 2 to 3 hours before a workout and an additional 7 to 10 ounces approximately 10 to 20 minutes before a workout to ensure the body is properly hydrated going into a strength training workout.

Pre-Workout Meal and Snack Ideas

Examples of quick and easy pre-workout meal and snack ideas include:

- Cereal with low-fat milk
- Whole grain toast with peanut butter
- Glass of juice
- Chicken breast on whole grain bread
- Salad with light dressing
- Minestrone soup
- Yogurt with fresh fruit slices such as bananas and/or strawberries
- Grilled chicken with wheat pasta
- Steamed non-gaseous vegetables
- Fruit salad

These foods can also be combined to create a full meal such as a bowl of cereal, whole grain toast topped with a tablespoon of peanut butter, and a glass of juice.

