

# Food Pairings That Will Boost Your Post-Workout Recovery

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Like a call from the Internal Revenue Service, post-workout nutrition is not something to take lightly. When you exercise intensely, your energy stores in the form of muscle glycogen become depleted and your muscle fibers suffer some degree of damage.



This places your body in a situation in which it requires the correct nutrients to kick-start muscular recovery so you have plenty of energy to put in some hard miles again soon. Optimal exercise recovery through nutrition also encourages your muscles to become stronger, faster and bigger. Thankfully, research is showing that there are a number of edible pairings that can show your hurting muscles some love.

## **Bread + Canned Salmon**

Show your weary muscles you're looking out for them by reeling in a salmon sandwich after an inspired workout. Studies indicated that the omega-3 fatty acids present in this swimmer can help ease muscle inflammation and soreness in response to workouts (1).

Researchers at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis have found that omega-3s may help stimulate muscle protein synthesis, which would encourage building stronger muscles (2). What's more, British scientists discovered that these benevolent fats could improve immune function following exercise (3).

Ideally, you want to cast your line for canned salmon from sustainable and low contamination sources such as Wild Planet. Layering your salmon between two slices of bread adds the necessary carbohydrates to replace spent energy stores so your muscles are primed for your next sweat session.

**Make this:** Place some canned salmon on a slice of toasted whole-grain bread and top with sliced roasted red pepper and baby spinach. Top with another piece of toast.

## **Cereal + Milk**

Great news: Comfort food can be ideal recovery fuel. A study published in the *Journal of the International Society of Sports Nutrition* found that subjects who consumed a bowl of whole-grain cereal with low-fat milk after endurance exercise experienced improvements in the synthesis of muscle glycogen (a storage form of carbs) and muscle protein (4).

Why? The dynamic duo of carbs in cereal and protein in moo juice can expedite recovery following exercise. As a bonus, a *British Journal of Nutrition* study determined that milk protein helps improve fluid retention after working out, thereby allowing for better rehydration (5).

**Make this:** Pour a serving of high-protein cereal such as Kind Healthy Grains Clusters into a bowl and top with low-fat milk, berries and hemp seeds.

## **Rice Protein + Blueberries**

Whey protein isn't the only protein powder with muscle-mending powers. Scientists at the University of Tampa in Florida found that isolated rice protein can be just as good as whey protein at building lean body mass and reducing muscle soreness in response to training (6).

Rice protein contains an arsenal of the necessary amino acids to instigate muscle cell recovery and growth following workouts. Team it up with blueberries for a bigger benefit. Research out of

Appalachian State University in North Carolina suggests that the payload of antioxidants in blueberries can help quell the oxidative damage, inflammation and drop in immunity that can occur with high-intensity exercise (7).

**Make this:** For a post-workout smoothie, blend together milk of your choice, a scoop of rice protein, frozen blueberries and cinnamon.

### **Greek Yogurt + Walnuts**

Worthy of a resounding *opa*, deliciously thick Greek-style yogurts are chock-full of protein. Pumping protein into your system soon after a workout is crucial for halting excessive muscle breakdown, jump-starting the recovery process and flipping the metabolic switch, which encourages lean body mass growth.

Dairy such as yogurt is a leading source of leucine, an amino acid that is particularly effective at stimulating muscle recovery (8). A 2014 study in *Nutrition Journal* determined that antioxidants such as vitamin E in crunchy walnuts can help lessen the free-radical-induced oxidative damage that is similar to what occurs when you exercise with gusto (9). The upshot is that going nuts for walnuts can help your muscles get ready quicker for their next demanding workout.

**Make this:** Scoop plain Greek yogurt into a bowl and top with granola, chopped walnuts and sliced banana.