

## How should I fuel my body Pre and Post exercise?

Danny Bowers, Sport, Health and Exercise Sciences Specialist and Managing Director of The Academy 4 Wellbeing Boot Camps & Tailored Fat Loss packages, discusses when and what we should be putting into our bodies before and after we exercise to achieve the best results.

One of the most popular question clients tend to ask me, is what should they be eating and drinking prior to and after exercise to improve athletic performance and or reducing body fat and maintaining muscle mass? Obviously this depends greatly on exactly what people's exact aims are and the type of activity/exercise they are taking part in. However, in this article I have tried to provide some general useful tips and suggestions.

Remember the main objective is to give your body enough fuel or energy to be able to perform at your maximum potential, but do not go over the top and eat more than you need. It will only irritate your stomach and may cause nausea and cramping and will not result in fat loss. A meal should be consumed 1-4 hours before the start of your exercise session to give time to be fully digested. We are all slightly different so experiment to work out what time between these works for you.

The major source of fuel for active muscles is complex carbohydrate which gets stored in the muscles as glycogen in the days before you exercise. It takes time to completely fill these stores and what you eat post exercise can help this process (more on this later).

If you are competing in your 1<sup>st</sup> 5K race then graze before on easily digestible high complex carbohydrate foods with protein. Consuming good sources of fruits and vegetables are also important, but pick the vegetables that are not quite as high in fibre. This helps avoid stomach cramps during exercise E.G. carrots, green beans, asparagus, tomatoes, and cucumbers. These provide good sources of carbohydrates and a little bit of fibre, but not enough to give you discomfort or potential gas.

Protein is the next important ingredient to the balance in your pre-exercise workout. But remember, unless you are competing in an Iron Man contest, you don't need an excessive amount of protein. Perhaps 56-84g of turkey breast, 2 hard boiled eggs, or 80-100g of cottage cheese should be sufficient amount of protein before a typical workout or 5K.

Bananas are also an amazing source of energy and contain potassium which may reduce the risk of high blood pressure and stroke. They also contain fibre, protein and electrolytes, which are essential for maintaining fluid levels and preventing dehydration. They also come in a convenient pre packaged serving/portion (Skin) and will digest fairly quickly, making them the ideal pre and post exercise snack

### **Post Exercise**

What you eat after your workout is crucial for optimizing the recovery process that begins immediately after your workout ends. The two important nutrients that we need in a post workout meal/snack are carbohydrates and protein. Carbohydrates will replenish muscle glycogen that was depleted during your workout. Protein will raise your metabolism, curb your hunger, stabilise your blood sugar and reduce muscle breakdown caused by exercise (re builds muscle tissue). This is vital if we are trying to reduce body fat. We absolutely do not want to lose our muscle content as our muscle will continually be burning fat even at rest. Ideally try and eat our post exercise meal as soon as possible within 1 hour after the session has finished or 2 hours maximum. Try and get the right balance such as low fat yogurt and berries, low fat cottage cheese and an apple, 56 grams of chicken breast on a slice of whole wheat bread, or even 14 grams of walnuts with a banana.

Here are a few more post workout meal ideas:

- Banana (carbohydrate) and hardboiled egg (protein)
- Apple (carbohydrate) and protein shake (protein) mixed with water or blended with ice.
- Whole wheat bread (carbohydrate) and Almond butter (protein)
- Academy 4 Wellbeing Smoothie Super Six: mixed berries, yogurt, and skim-milk (carbohydrate and protein) **See Academy 4 Wellbeing recipe**
- Pineapple (carbohydrate) and low-fat cottage cheese (protein)
- Academy 4 Wellbeing eye-opener oatmeal (carbohydrate and protein) **See Academy 4 Wellbeing recipe**
- Fresh fruit (carbohydrate) and low-fat yogurt (protein)

Like we discussed in last month's article also make sure you are also full hydrated before AND after your workouts!

A general hydration plan looks like this:

- 1-2 hours before exercise drink 450-600ml of water
- 15 mins before exercises drink another 240-300ml
- During exercise, drink 240ml every 15 mins
- For activity lasting over an hour, you may want to consider an electrolyte replacement drink or supplement.

The Academy 4 Wellbeing provides personal individual tailored fat loss and health and fitness packages, small group training and Fun, Functional, Non-Military Bootcamps. So if you want to shred some body fat, become slimmer, healthier or simply just get fitter to run a 5K, complete your 1<sup>st</sup> Tough Mudder or improve your sporting fitness then book yourself a FREE consultation with Daniel himself so he can tailor a package to suit your needs.

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