

Eating Frequency for the Student-Athlete

As a student-athlete, I struggle to meet my daily nutrition needs around my schedule. With early morning workouts, I often skip breakfast, leaving me tired and sluggish during the day as I struggle to find time for consistent meals and snacks. This often leads to me being really hungry at night, causing me to eat a big meal before bed. This makes it hard to fall asleep, and I'm often not hungry when breakfast rolls around the next morning.

HOW CAN I SUSTAIN MY ENERGY THROUGHOUT THE DAY TO OPTIMIZE BOTH MY ACADEMIC AND ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE?

- **START DAY OFF RIGHT:** Finding a convenient and balanced food source first thing in the morning can help to ensure you are fueled through that busy morning of training and class.
- **PLAN AHEAD:** Have portable performance foods in your backpack for fuel every two to three hours between meals and around training.
- **ADAPT TO YOUR NEEDS:** Know what foods sit well with your body. Don't try new foods or meals during days that you have important training sessions or a competition.

(For food options and tips, turn the page.)



Nutrition, Sleep and Performance Resources



A · S · P · D · A
FUELING VICTORY™

Sports and Human Performance Nutrition

a dietetic practice group of the
eat right. Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics



SPORT SCIENCE INSTITUTE™

The key to optimizing your nutrition routine is developing a plan to meet the demands of your busy schedule and your body composition goals. There are lots of ways to strategize about eating frequently. Consult with a registered dietitian (RD) who specializes in sports, particularly a Certified Specialist in Sports Dietetics (CSSD), or an athletics health care provider who can help you create a strategy tailored to your health and performance goals, that also understands your busy lifestyle.

FUELING AROUND TRAINING

For early morning training sessions, eating a quick and easily digestible carbohydrate source can support optimal energy levels and performance.

- Plan to have a meal within one hour after training is completed with carbohydrate-rich foods, high-quality protein and ample fluids to meet your recovery needs.
- If a meal isn't possible at that time, a recovery snack after training can help start the recovery process. As a rule of thumb, aim for 20-40 grams of protein and a moderate-high serving of carbohydrates based on how hard your training session is.

Recovery snack ideas:

- Fruit smoothie with whey protein powder.
- Greek yogurt parfait with berries, nuts and granola.

FUELING THROUGH YOUR WHOLE DAY

Select meals that are balanced, combining a lean protein source, carbohydrates and are rounded out with fruits and vegetables rich in micronutrients.

Breakfast ideas:

- Egg omelet with ham and vegetables, oatmeal and fruit.
- Whole grain toast with peanut butter, banana and milk.
- Hardboiled eggs, cereal and fruit.

Lunch/dinner ideas:

- Turkey and cheese sub sandwich with pretzels and fruit.
- Pasta with meat sauce and Caesar salad.
- Stir-fry chicken with rice and vegetables.

FUELING AROUND MEALS

Smart snacks incorporate both carbohydrate and protein components to support your body's energy and recovery needs between meals.

Building a Smart Snack

Protein	+ Carbohydrate
Hardboiled Eggs	Granola Bar
Milk/Soy Milk	Pretzels
Greek Yogurt	Fruit
Beef/Turkey Jerky	Cereal
Tuna Packet	Tortilla/Bread
Edamame/Hummus	Crackers

Note: Some athletes prefer carbohydrate-rich fluids instead of whole foods to avoid feeling full.

Work with a sports dietitian or athletics health care provider to establish a nutrition routine that you can adjust to your daily training schedule. Athletes with consistent intake tend to have more energy and perform better through the day. Some days will be busier than others, so be flexible and focus on meeting your overall needs.

Written by ASPDA and SHPN Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs). For more information on healthy eating away from home or for an individualized fueling plan, consult a RDN who specializes in sports, particularly a Board Certified Specialist in Sports Dietetics (CSSD) or an athletics health care provider



Sports and Human Performance Nutrition
 a dietetic practice group of the
 Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

