

BURN EVEN MORE CALORIES - WHAT TO EAT BEFORE AND AFTER EXERCISING

In the last lesson, you learned how to adjust your workouts to burn more calories in less time. Did you know that what you eat directly before and after your workout also affects how many calories you burn? Discover what to eat around your workouts in this lesson.

If you want to lose weight, it's important to know what foods to eat, and when to eat them. **The meals and snacks you consume before and after exercising give you energy, prime your metabolism, and help you drop more pounds.** Study these tips before you head to the gym.

HOW TO EAT BEFORE YOU WORK OUT

Forget the myth about exercising on an empty stomach. You're likely to wind up losing muscle, and your performance will suffer.

GIVE YOUR BODY WHAT IT NEEDS TO TRAIN HARD WITH THESE CHOICES:

1. **Choose carbs and protein.** Gear up with a helping of complex carbohydrates and fast-digesting protein. Some good choices include Greek yogurt with fresh fruit or an egg with broccoli.
2. **Drink water.** The American College of Sports Medicine recommends drinking 2 to 3 cups of water within 2 or 3 hours of your workout. You may want to drink a little more or less based on your body size and the weather.

3. **Keep it light.** You want just enough calories to sustain you without weighing you down. Go easy on the fats. **Wait at least 3 hours after any large meal before starting intense exercise.**
4. **Limit fiber.** While a high-fiber diet is great for many reasons, including lowering cholesterol and stabilizing blood sugar, save the bran for later. You can fill up after you're done sweating.
5. **Play it safe.** Midway through a dance class is an awkward time to discover how your body will react to unfamiliar foods. Stick to your regular fare and save the culinary experiments for your downtime.

HOW TO EAT AFTER YOU WORK OUT

Exercise uses up the glycogen stored in your muscles. **In order for your body to recover and keep burning calories efficiently, it's important to replace those stored carbohydrates.**

HERE'S HOW TO REFUEL:

1. **Act fast.** Some studies suggest that your body's ability to replenish glycogen peaks soon after

your workout. Plan on eating right away or at least within 2 hours.

2. **Balance it out.** It's time to enjoy the same complex carbohydrates and proteins you ate before, but now you can add more healthy fats into the mix. Feast on baked salmon with your favorite vegetables or stir fry some tofu with bok choy and red peppers.
3. **Control portions.** Of course, if you're trying to lose weight, you want to burn up more calories than you take in. Online calorie counters can help you calculate your individual needs so you can figure out effective serving sizes for each meal and snack.
4. **Focus on quality.** At the same time, keep in mind that evidence is building that not all calories are the same. For the sake of your overall health and fitness, filling your plate with whole foods is preferable to eating the same amount of processed products.
5. **Replace fluids.** Plain water is usually adequate for staying hydrated. **Carry your water bottle with you so you can drink while you're exercising and drink at least 8 ounces afterwards.**
6. **Restore potassium.** If you sweat heavily or work out for more than an hour, consider sports drinks

to replace potassium and other electrolytes.
Coconut water and various fruit and vegetables
juices will work too.

Lose weight faster and more safely by putting the power of nutrition to work for you. Enjoying delicious and nutritious snacks and meals before and after exercise will give you the energy you need to lift weights or run for miles. You'll slim down without having to go hungry when you combine physical activity and a balanced diet.

Congratulations! You've made it through Module 3 and finished the lessons in this course! Let's take time to summarize and reflect on this module before you run off to burn more calories.

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO DO TODAY:

Using these guidelines, plan your menu for what to eat around your workouts for the next week. Pick up what you need from the grocery store so you can follow your plan.