

PROTEIN

UP YOUR PROTEIN GAME!



PROTEIN'S MANY FUNCTIONS

IN THE BODY

Protein does a lot, but is best known for being a key nutrient for recovery. Exercise breaks down muscle and body tissues, stressing the system to rebuild before the next bout of training. Cue the protein!

IN FOOD

Protein-rich foods are made up of amino acids, small building blocks that help the body maintain health and performance.

IN COMPETITION

Your body prefers to run on carbohydrates during exercise. It can be forced to use protein if necessary, but that leaves less protein to do its best job: recovery and repair. Eat enough carbs and fat so that protein can do its work to rebuild your body!

THE BIG 3: QUALITY, TIMING, TASTE



Quality: Some proteins will react faster and have greater impact on your recovery than others. Different types of protein contain different packages of amino acids. Aim to include a variety of protein-rich foods throughout the day.

Examples: Milk, Yogurt, Cottage Cheese Beef, Nuts, Beans, Poultry, Lentils, Eggs, Whole Grains, Fish, Seeds, Soy, and Quinoa.



Timing: Experts agree that athletes should include protein-rich foods throughout the day. Start with breakfast! Don't miss this high-performing opportunity. Aim to have high-quality protein in 4 to 5 doses spread throughout the day. Ideally, one of these "doses" would be within 30 minutes following a workout.

An athlete's day might look something like this:

8:00 AM	Breakfast	6 oz Greek yogurt, berries, granola and nuts
10:00 AM	Snack	Orange and string cheese
12:30 PM	Lunch	Turkey sandwich on whole wheat with veggies, cheese and avocado, pita chips and hummus on the side
3:00 PM	Pre-workout Snack	Banana and nut butter packet
4:30 PM	Pre-workout Refuel	12 oz chocolate milk
6:30 PM	Dinner	1 cup pasta with red sauce, 4 oz chicken breast and parmesan with a side of steamed veggies



Taste: It's best to focus on real food sources of protein and save powders, bars and other supplements for when you really need them.



Find ways to enjoy protein in lots of different forms.

Here's some inspiration:

- Make a high-protein smoothie with fruit, spinach, milk, yogurt and ice
- Prep a batch of tuna or chicken salad to eat with crackers or throw in a wrap
- Bring boiled eggs or string cheese for a protein-packed snack
- Add a shredded cheese to soup or salad
- Mix beans into a favorite grain side-dish
- Add nuts and seeds to oatmeal
- Use Greek yogurt as an ingredient in baked goods



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