

THE SEVEN RULES OF NUTRITION FOR ATHLETES

Rule One: Always eat breakfast. Breakfast will make you feel better; it helps you start your day with your metabolism in high gear and your appetite in control. Think of your body as a campfire that dies down during the night. If it isn't stoked up in the morning the spark turns to ash.

Rule Two: Always eat at least 5 meals a day. Two or three meals simply aren't enough. By eating 5 meals your energy levels will remain high, and you'll get protein in small amounts throughout the day to support growth and recovery. Yes, it will be difficult, especially with classes/work, practice and other commitments on your schedule. However, it is NOT impossible. Bring a couple of extra sandwiches, hard-boiled eggs, potatoes or powerbars with you as you go through the day.

Rule Three: Remember the 1-2-3 rule. In each of your 5 meals, approximately 1 part of the calories should come from fats, 2 parts from protein and 3 parts from carbohydrates. Always eat a carbohydrate with a protein.

Rule Four: Another thing to remember, whether you're trying to lose fat or add lean muscle, is to fluctuate your caloric intake. For example, if you want to lose fat, reduce your calories for two days, but then eat plenty on the third day. Follow this two days low with one day high calorie fluctuation scheme throughout the week. This will 1) readjust your basal metabolic rate (the rate at which you're body burns calories at rest) upwards, 2) support lean tissue building, and 3) give you a psychological "lift."

Rule Five: Drink eight to ten glasses of pure water each day. This will ensure you're replacing fluids lost during exercise. DO NOT wait until you are thirsty. By then, you are in a depleted state. Drink these glasses of water throughout a day's time, not all at once. This rule deserves two notes of consideration: 1) you're an athlete and constantly active therefore you are losing more fluids than you realize; and 2) water is probably the one substance most often overlooked by athletes. Do not let dehydration limit your performance!

Rule Six: Not all proteins and carbohydrates are equal. The protein in fatty meat and whole dairy products is much more difficult to digest (if your body digests it at all) as compared to whey and soy protein, lean white meat and fat free dairy products. The highest quality proteins are found in egg whites, whey protein isolates and soy protein isolates. There are many types of carbohydrates. Simple processed sugars, found in candy bars and sodas, will send your energy levels sky-high and then they fall to lower levels quickly. Complex unprocessed carbohydrates, found in grains, fruits, and vegetables will give you a more constant supply of energy until your next meal. Eat your fruits and vegetables.

Rule Seven: Never go on a fad diet. If fat lose is needed, accomplish it through proper diet and exercise, never a fad diet.

Tips for Proper Hydration

Water is too often ignored as an important nutrient, but your body conducts all processes in this fluid medium, transporting glucose and amino acids, maintaining optimal electrolyte conditions and moving elevated lactic acid levels from working muscles. Get too little and your core body temperature begins to rise significantly, a potentially dangerous condition.

Drink at least eight 10-oz. Glasses of water each day, in addition to what you consume in fruit juice and/or sports drinks. On workout and running days, drink three glasses of water two hours before exercising, another two glasses 10-15 minutes before, one glass every 15 minutes during exercise, and two glasses for each pound of bodyweight lost during training after your workout.

If you wait until you're thirsty, you've waited too long – you've already lost about 1% of your body fluids and, as a result, your physical performance will suffer significantly.

Figure 4-5

Wise Food Choices

CHOOSE THIS FOOD	INSTEAD OF THIS FOOD
Baked Potatoes	French Fries
Boiled Egg Whites	Fried Eggs
100% Orange Juice	Sunny Delight
Steamed Brown Rice	Cocoa Puffs
Boiled Whole Wheat Spaghetti	Spaghetti-Os
Homemade Whole Wheat Brownies	Little Debbie Cakes
Homemade Food from Fresh Ingredients	Processed Foods
Fresh Fruit with its Skin	Canned Fruit
Water	Sodas
100% Stone Ground Whole Wheat Bread	White Bread
Broiled Skinless Chicken Breast	Fried Chicken
Bean Burrito with No Fat Cheese	Burrito Supreme
Fat Free Frozen Yogurt	Ice Cream
Shredded Wheat & Bran	Frosted Mini-Wheat
Broiled or Steamed Food	Breaded and Fried Food
Baked Potato Chips	Fried Potato Chips
Fresh Vegetables	Canned Vegetables
Whole Wheat Bagels	Donuts
Ground Lean Steak	Hamburger
Oatmeal	High Sugar Cereal
Skinless Chicken Breast	Chicken with Skin