

EARLY MORNING FUELING for Training & Competition

Many athletes train early in the morning often leaving an athlete breakfast-free going into their workout. This is a problem because when athletes sleep at night, their bodies use the food consumed at dinner and nighttime snack to repair and rebuild and are in need of energy to start the next day. Breakfast or “breaking the fast” is essential before a workout, but many athletes don’t wake up in time to eat a full breakfast and let it digest before they start running, jumping and lifting. So, providing athletes with a dense, nutrient-rich snack of carbohydrates and protein with fluid can help give them energy to start their workout.

The type, intensity, and duration of a training session dictates what type of snack and how much an athlete should ideally consume. Lighter, shorter workouts don’t demand the same amount of energy as longer, more intense workouts.

Shorter cardio/conditioning workouts

- Typically carbohydrate and fluid can fuel a lighter workout
- Easy-to-digest foods are ideal to help reduce gut distress
- Consume at least 16-20 ounces water or sports drink
- Simple carbohydrate snacks include:

> Granola bars, dry granola or cereal, bagel, banana, etc.

Longer, more intense workouts or heavier weight training

- More intense workouts benefit from a snack of protein and carbohydrate to help stabilize blood sugar for a longer duration
 - Easy-to-digest foods are ideal, but athletes might be able to handle a little more food if the workout is centered around weight lifting versus conditioning
 - Consume at least 16-20 ounces water or sports drink
 - Carbohydrate-protein snacks include:
- > Energy bar with carbohydrates and 10-15 grams of protein
- > Peanut butter and jelly/banana sandwich on whole grain bread
- > Beef jerky trail mix made with granola, dried fruit, and nuts

Some athletes struggle with eating anything before a workout so they might have to start with eating a small amount and work up to eating more. However, just like they go to practice to get stronger and faster, they can learn how to eat more pre-workout too. It just takes practice. Oftentimes eating dense foods, foods with more calories per bite, can help provide adequate nutrition to fuel training for less food volume.



Dense Snacks for Finicky Stomachs

Peanut butter filled pretzels	High-calorie protein bars or cookies
Peanut butter and jelly sandwich on whole grain bread	Energy bites made with nut butter, oats, protein powder, honey, nuts, and seeds
Beef jerky trail mix made with granola, Homemade	granola made with oats, nuts, and dried fruit
Ready-to-drink protein shake	Mini muffins with peanut/almond butter

For athletes participating in long runs, tournament play or on game/competition days, it is necessary for them to wake up in enough time to consume a complete breakfast and allow it time to digest before the run, game or event begins. The breakfast should include:

- Easy-to-digest and familiar foods
- Complex carbohydrates for sustained energy
- Lean protein to help stabilize blood sugar
- Fruit for added electrolytes and hydration
- Water or sports drink for hydration

Early Morning Race/Competition/Game Day Breakfasts

Bagel with peanut butter and honey, banana and sports drink	Oatmeal with nuts, and dried fruit, 1-2 eggs, fruit, and sports drink
2 slices thick whole grain toast with almond butter and banana paired with a smoothie made with protein powder, fruit, and water	Beef jerky trail mix with granola, nuts, and dried fruit, a banana with peanut butter, and sports drink

Many athletes have morning practices and don't get to go home to eat a complete breakfast before going to school. Athletes with this type of training schedule should bring Brown Bag Breakfasts to eat and refuel after practice. There are lots of nutrient-rich, shelf-stable foods that can work for a gym bag to help fuel athletes before class.

Top 10 Brown Bag Breakfasts

Beef jerky, baggie of whole grain granola, and nuts with a banana	Hard-boiled eggs, whole grain granola bar, peanut butter to-go cup, and apple slices
Whole grain blueberry muffin, almond butter squirt packet, strawberries, and hard-boiled eggs	Beef jerky trail mix made with nuts, seeds, dried fruit, and granola with milk from cafeteria
Whole wheat tortillas with peanut butter, banana, and honey paired with trail mix	Oat-based granola bar, pistachios mixed with dried fruit, banana, and milk from cafeteria
Whole grain bagel with peanut butter or cream cheese, fruit, and beef jerky	Ready-to-drink protein shake with an apple, and peanut butter to-go cup
Pre-made energy bites made with oats, honey, peanut butter, protein powder and your favorites nuts, seeds, and dried fruit with grapes, and chocolate milk from cafeteria	Protein-bar, fruit, baggie of whole grain granola, and milk from cafeteria