

Nutrition Strategies for Speedy Recovery

Good nutrition helps you to train hard and recover quickly. Hard training sessions and intense matches use up your fuel stores, and these must be replaced if you are to be ready for the next session. The main fuel used in high intensity exercise is carbohydrate, which is stored as glycogen in muscles and the liver. So refuelling these stores is a priority during the recovery period. Getting some protein in is also important to provide the right raw materials for muscle conditioning and keeping the immune system healthy. You will also have lost fluid through sweating so re-hydrating is another thing you have to remember when your training or match is over.

Refuelling...

There is lots of evidence to show that carbohydrate-rich foods and drinks taken immediately after hard exercise will refuel your muscle glycogen stores quicker than if you delay eating, which is really important when your next session is less than 24 hours away. This will mean being organised to have suitable foods and drinks available - in your kit bag if necessary. Appetite is often reduced after a hard session, so it is important that you choose foods that are easily digested and use fluids that contain carbohydrate to kick start the refuelling process. Including protein in your recovery snack will help muscle growth and conditioning, especially after strength training sessions.

Practical guidelines for refuelling

How much you need will depend on your weight, the type of session and how long and hard it was. Here are some practical guidelines to get started.



EAT 2 COMPETE



After weights...

To meet your carbohydrate and protein recovery goals after weights, look at your weight category and the number of snacks you need to choose.

Your Weight	Number of Snacks to Choose
70-90kg	2
90-110kg	3
Greater than 110kg	4

Snack list

- 1 bagel or 1 pitta bread or 2 slices of bread or 1 roll with a meat or fish or egg filling
- 1 scone or 2 pancakes or 1 thick slice of currant bread
- A handful of dried fruit
- 1/2 large tin of baked beans
- 2 slices of bread or toast with peanut butter
- 1 cereal bar
- 1/2 pint of milk
- 1 muller rice or small tub of custard
- 1 low fat yogurt or 200ml drinking yogurt or smoothie



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EAT 2 COMPETE



After rugby fitness sessions..

Fitness sessions are often long (more than an hour) and intense. You will use up more energy (mainly carbohydrate) in these sessions than during weights, and so starting recovery quickly is important.

To meet your carbohydrate and protein recovery goals after fitness, look at your weight category and the number of snacks you need to choose.

Your Weight	Number of Snacks to Choose
70-90kg	3
90-110kg	4
Greater than 110kg	4-5

Snack list

- 1 bagel or 1 pitta bread or 2 slices bread or 1 roll with a meat or fish or egg filling
- 1 scone or 2 pancakes or 1 thick slice of currant bread
- A handful of dried fruit
- 2 pieces of fresh fruit
- 3 jaffa cakes or 3 fig rolls
- ½ large tin of baked beans
- 2 slices of bread or toast
- 1 bowl of breakfast cereal
- ½ pint of milk
- 1 cereal bar
- 1 muller rice or small tub of custard
- 1 low fat yogurt or 200ml drinking yogurt or smoothie



EAT 2 COMPETE



Rehydration...

You must replace fluid that you have lost through sweating so as not to slow up the recovery process. Starting the next session in a dehydrated state will reduce the quality of your training. Sweating is an individual thing and the amount players sweat varies a lot. Your daily fluid requirements can range between 3 to 4 litres a day (50mls for every kilo you weigh), and extra is needed for training sessions and matches. One way to check if you are drinking is by the pee test - look at the colour of your pee - light colour indicates better hydration that dark colour.



Practical guidelines for rehydration

- ✓ make sure an adequate supply of cool palatable drinks is available
- ✓ rehydration should start immediately with half or full strength isotonic drink. This could be a commercial sports drink or your own diluted squash. A fluid that contains some sodium (salt) and carbohydrate provide faster body water replacement than plain water, is more palatable and helps refuelling
- ✓ drink to a plan; do not rely on being thirsty
- ✓ remember that fluid continues to be lost during recovery through urine losses and ongoing sweating
- ✓ where possible, post-exercise activities that promote sweat losses e.g. hot spas, saunas and exposure to the sun should be avoided.

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