



Athletes have unique nutrition needs. See some tips below using the word “ATHLETES”!

A – Assess your reality and unique needs based on your sport and goals. Be real with yourself and your current habits. You want to be balancing your nutrient intake throughout the day as evenly as possible and consuming a variety of foods. Allow yourself to engage in some fun foods but try to eat healthy 80% of the time.

T – Trifecta of complex carbohydrates (fiber-containing), lean proteins, and healthy fats. This is how you should be balancing meals throughout the day. Each meal should contain about the same amount of carbohydrate and protein to regulate metabolism and keep you in a positive protein balance. Healthy fats should be consumed in moderation to allow for vitamin absorption and support growth and development.

H – Hydrate! Drink mostly water to stay hydrated. Take your body weight in pounds and multiple it by 0.6. That is the minimum amount of water ounces you should be drinking daily. If you are thirsty, drink more. If you are exercising outside in a hot and humid environment, stay ahead of your thirst and drink often (consider a sports drink in this situation).

L – Lean proteins are key! These include fish, poultry, non-fat dairy, eggs and egg whites, and lean cuts of red meat (lean ground beef, pork tenderloin).

E – Eat fruits and/or vegetables with every meal. They contain vital nutrients and antioxidants to help with growth of new muscle tissue and recovery after hard workouts.

T – Time snacks before and after exercise for optimal performance. 1 hour before exercise – consume a little protein (<10 grams) with easily digested carbohydrate (bagel, oatmeal, toast, yogurt, cereal, crackers, fruit). Within 30 minutes after exercise – consume a mix of protein and carbohydrate. Examples include a smoothie with fruit and Greek yogurt; a sandwich with turkey and cheese;

E – Eat with the Earth in mind. Choose minimally processed foods, such as fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

S – Sleep! Getting at least 8 hours of sleep is critical to help your body recover from strenuous exercise. It also helps control your appetite and improve your mental focus.

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