

RECOVERY AFTER HARD EXERCISE

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FOODS FOR RECOVERY

When is a Recovery Diet necessary?

- **Twice a day exercise**
- **Repeated days of hard training**
- **Tournament participation**

To recover quickly from the first session of hard exercise and prepare for the next one, you want to refuel your muscles within 30 to 60 minutes after exercise (or as soon as tolerable).

Plan ahead! Have the best recovery foods and fluids readily available. Choices that do a poor job of refueling muscles include:

- **Too many greasy, fatty foods.** Donuts, hot dogs, burgers, nachos, French fries, chips have limited value in refueling.
- **Too much protein.** Protein repairs and builds muscles, but it does not refuel your muscles. Carbs, not protein, should be the focus of the recovery meal.

10 TIPS FOR RECOVERY

The following tips can help you choose an effective recovery plan.

#1 Focus your recovery meal on breads, cereals, grains, fruits, and vegetables. Your muscles need carbohydrate-rich foods to make glycogen. Glycogen is the fuel that supports hard exercise. Muscles don't make glycogen from protein and/or fat. Carbohydrates (carbs) refuel depleted muscle glycogen; protein repairs damaged muscle.

#2 Choose more carbs than protein. Some carb + protein suggestions include:

- Chocolate milk
- Peanut butter & banana sandwich
- Pasta + tomato sauce + meatballs.
- Cereal + milk
- Bagel + protein shake
- Fruit smoothie (fruit with Greek yogurt)



#3 Consume carbs as soon as tolerated after a hard workout. Consume another dose in 2 hours, 4 hours, and 6 hours. Muscles need a steady supply of carbs to refuel.

#4 Drink enough fluid to quench your thirst—and then drink more. You may not feel thirsty, but keep sipping on fluids until your urine is a light color (not dark and smelly). You are drinking enough if you need to urinate every two to four hours.

#5 If you crave salt, sprinkle some on your food. Eat salty foods such as soup, pretzels, pickles or salted crackers. If you will be exercising in hot conditions for more than 3 or 4 hours, consume salty foods before exercise, to get the salt into your system.

#6 Enjoy fruits, vegetables and juices that contain potassium, a mineral (electrolyte) that you lose in sweat. Some potassium-rich foods include oranges, orange juice, bananas, raisins, dried apricots, potatoes and tomato sauce.

#7 Chocolate milk and/or 100%-fruit juice are healthier post-exercise choices than a sports drink. Nutrient-rich milk and natural juices (orange, grape, tart cherry) are rich in the electrolytes and carbs that enhance recovery. In comparison, sports drinks are low in carbs and have little nutritional value. Sports drinks are meant to be taken during exercise, not afterwards.

#8 Every day, eat carb-based meals with a side of protein. This will help you replace depleted muscle glycogen stores, heal damaged muscles and prevent “dead legs.”

#9 Rest days are a critical part of a training program. Your muscles need 24 to 48 hours with no exercise to refuel. Hence, you aren't “being lazy” if you take a day off. You are investing in your ability to refuel, heal and perform better during your next workout.

#10 Train and then rest. “Good” things happen when you rest, rehydrate and refuel!

