

WIN WITH FOOD

THE WINNING DIET

As important as it is to focus your time and energy on hard exercise training, you also need to pay attention to fuelling your body and mind optimally. A well-planned diet before, during, and after training and competition will help you to maximise your performance.

DIET CAN IMPACT ON YOUR PERFORMANCE BY:

1. **Providing enough fuel (energy) and fluid for optimal training and competition.**

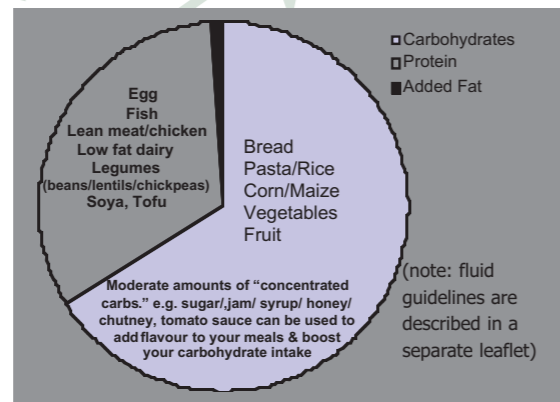
Carbohydrates provide the most efficient source of energy and should thus form the bulk of your diet (see carbohydrate leaflet for more details). A high carbohydrate intake (before, during, after training) is the first step, towards optimising your performance.

Protein needs are also increased with training, but can easily be met on well-planned diets providing adequate energy (see protein leaflet).

Fat intake should be low to prevent undesirable high body fat levels, which can impact negatively on performance and health (see fat leaflet).

Note: Completely fat free diets are not advisable, nor healthy!

Below is a model of what your plate should look like when you dish-up your meals: Carbohydrate-rich foods should cover 2/3 of your plate, whilst the rest (1/3) should be reserved for protein-rich foods, with a minimal amount of added fat (i.e. butter, margarine, oil, cream).



2. **Promoting recovery after training and competition.**

By following specific dietary strategies you can rapidly replenish your stores of fuel (e.g. in your muscles) and replace the fluid and electrolytes lost in sweat. This will improve your recovery from training and competitions - especially important when training or competing repeatedly within a 24-hour period! (see carbohydrate and protein leaflets).

3. **Helping you to achieve and/or manage your body weight goals.**

The correct diet can help you achieve and maintain optimal body fat and muscle mass levels which will aid your specific sporting performance (See fat and protein leaflets for further details).

As an athlete, you might find it challenging to follow an optimal eating plan. Some of these challenges are listed below, with tips on how to overcome them:

- Hectic schedules and having to "eat on-the run".
Tips: see carbohydrate leaflet.
- Frequent travel to competition destinations.
Tips: Pack your own "travel pack" to ensure that you maintain an adequate and nutritious intake.

Ideas for a "travel pack"

- ❖ High carbohydrate, low fat breakfast cereals and quick cooking porridge (e.g. Oats-so-Easy).
- ❖ Long-life milk/yoghurt or skim milk powder (eg. Elite, Klim, Protea).
- ❖ Meal / snack replacement formula (eg Nestlé BuildUp, Complian, Evox, Glycopro).
- ❖ Sports drinks, gels and carbohydrate powders.
- ❖ Fruit: fresh, canned, dried, mebos, fruit juice.
- ❖ Provita / Ryvita crackers / rice and corn crackers + jam / marmite / Bovril / fish paste / low fat cheese wedges.
- ❖ Lean beef, ostridge or other game biltong.
- ❖ Low fat energy and breakfast bars (Bokomo

breakfast bars, Safari fruit bar, Fast Fuel Bars, Power bars).

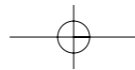
- ❖ Quick cooking noodles.
- ❖ Canned foods like tuna / pilchards / mackerel, sweetcorn, baked beans, spaghetti in tomato sauce.
- ❖ Pretzels, low fat microwave popcorn.
- ❖ Fat free sweets (as a treat) eg. jelly-type or hard-boiled sweets, marshmallows, liquorice, nougat.

- Managing a balanced, nutritious diet on a limited budget.

Tips to stretch your food budget:

- ❖ Buy non-perishable foods on "specials", and in bulk.
- ❖ Prepare your own meals & snacks instead of eating out or ordering take-aways.
- ❖ Instead of cold drinks like Coke / Fanta / Sprite etc., rather buy fruit juice and low fat flavoured milk.
- ❖ Instead of chocolates & sweets, rather buy fruit, fruit rolls, canned fruit, jelly, low fat flavoured yoghurt, Yogisip, Ultramel low fat custard (enjoy this with chopped fruit / jelly).
- ❖ Instead of pies and hot potato chips, rather buy / make sandwiches or rolls or baked potatoes with low fat fillings.
- ❖ Try a more cost-effective brand of carbohydrate energy drink e.g. Refuel / Fast fuel / Energade concentrate / Game.
- ❖ Instead of buying an expensive protein supplement, rather make use of skim milk powder to supplement your protein intake – it's just as effective! (see protein leaflet).

- Making the right choices when eating out / ordering take-outs.



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Eating out tips:

- ❖ When ordering, keep the plate-model concept in mind. To top-up the carbohydrate, you may need to order extra portions of steamed rice, noodles or unbuttered bread / rolls.
- ❖ Choose foods that have been grilled, baked, steamed, stewed or lightly stir-fried.
- ❖ Instead of crumbed and deep-fried chicken or fish served with fries, choose flame-grilled chicken or fish (or kebabs or curry) and rice (or pita bread) or potatoes with salad / vegetables.
- ❖ Instead of creamy sauces rather have a tomato-based sauce, sweet & sour sauce, monkey-gland or BBQ sauce.
- ❖ Choose thick-based pizza with fruit or vegetable toppings and replace the salami and sausage and pepperoni with lean ham or chicken.
- ❖ Request unbuttered toasted sandwiches or salad subs with a lean filling of ham / chicken / tuna / lean meat and a dash of mayonnaise.
- ❖ For dessert enjoy fruit salad, meringues (no cream), fruit sorbet, frozen yoghurt, pancakes with cinnamon & lemon.

Make informed decisions with regard to supplementation.

Supplement-use is a highly individualised strategy, which should be accompanied by overall sound dietary and lifestyle habits.

- Taking supplements in a hap-hazard way can create nutrient interactions and imbalances with negative consequences and will never make up for poor dietary, training and lifestyle habits!
- Before taking a supplement, first have your current diet assessed and optimised and then only resort to supplements if they will make a practical and meaningful difference in helping you to achieve your goals.
- Athletes who might need special supplementation include those on very restrictive weight loss diets, injured athletes, strict vegetarians, those with a

poor appetite needing to bulk up, and others who struggle to meet energy or nutrient requirements on diet alone.

- The supplement industry in South Africa is currently poorly regulated which means that manufacturers can make unrealistic claims without providing credible proof to substantiate them. Furthermore, supplements need not be tested to establish purity and safety – this means that a supplement might contain “illegal” ingredients not stated on the label, which can lead to a failed drug test, thereby destroying your career.
- It is thus in your interest to seek objective, professional advice on supplementation.

A sports dietician has the expertise to quantify a specific and practical eating plan for you and will be able to advise you on appropriate supplementation.

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