

Nutrition guide for WCBC

This guide is just a few thoughts put together to help those who are new to regular sport/training sessions and who would like either to maximise their progress, minimise tiredness and either gain/lose weight in a controlled manner. Good nutrition habits can make a big difference to your training and progress. Sufficient quantity and quality of food is crucial to enabling your body to cope with the rigours of training on top of academic work and day-to-day life.

General rules

**** Avoid working out on an empty stomach**

With regards to eating before sessions, it can be a little tricky. I know some people who can't eat close to exercise without feeling ill, and some who are fine. Also a lot of people (myself included!) are reluctant to get up early to eat before morning sessions. For most sessions I would encourage you to eat a meal ~2-3 hours before the session, and if you haven't had anything to eat in the 2h prior to training, having a small snack with quick energy and some protein in it around an hour before exercising is a good idea.

**** Don't skip breakfast**

Similar to the above, it's important to have some energy in your system before you go training. You can prepare food the night before to have it ready when you wake, or have a quick snack first thing.

**** Always have a recovery snack/meal.**

After any training session, you should aim to consume around 20-30g of protein within around 30-45 minutes of finishing the session. This will help your body to repair the damage done to your muscles in the training session faster.

Within 2-3 hours of a session you should aim to eat a full meal, again with 20-30g of protein, as well as a good mix of vegetables and some more complex carbohydrates (a good rule is to have 1 fist of green veg, 1 of protein and 2 of carbs). This will help replenish glycogen stores and thus make the next training session / rest of your day that much easier.

**** Have a nutrient rich snack before bed**

Ideally not right before you sleep, but shortly before bed it's a good idea to have a snack high in protein and some healthy fats (nuts, berries, yoghurt etc), which won't spike your blood sugar but will keep you fuelled up over night.

**** Find foods that you like, and have a good balanced diet.**

Although it can be tempting at first to go straight for the '*optimal*' nutritional intake, it's important to eat foods that you like. Don't make yourself unhappy by eating things you find unpleasant! In addition to protein intake, complex carbs are very important for providing energy for your body, and fruit and veg intake is essential too. Don't feel bad having nice snacks like cake and chocolate on occasion either!

Example day (for heavy training)

06:15 – wake up & (smallish) breakfast

07:00 – Boat on the water or start up the erg.

08:30 – post-workout high-protein snack

12:30 – Lunch

16:00 – snack

18:00 – gym / erg session.

19:30 – dinner (if time needed to cook, have a protein rich snack before cooking)

21:00 – pre-bed snack

22:00 – bedtime!

If your training load is lighter (for instance, one session a day), then simply cut out the 4PM snack!

Suggestions for breakfast food items

- oats
- muesli
- banana (or other fruit for putting in oats/fruit)
- Greek yoghurt and (dried) fruit or berries
- Wholegrain bread with jam/peanut butter/eggs
- Overnight oats (basically porridge/muesli made by soaking in fridge overnight)

Good sources of protein

- Eggs (boiled/poached/scrambled) – 1 egg contains ~6g of Protein
- Wholemeal bread – often contains around 5g per slice
- Tuna & other fish
- Chicken/turkey
- other lean meats
- Quark
- Skyr
- Cottage Cheese (other cheese good too)
- milk

Lentils, Chickpeas, Tofu, edamame and other beans are all good plant-based protein sources too.

Good Carbohydrates

- Wholemeal bread
- oats
- rice (esp brown rice)
- pasta
- quinoa
- Jacket Potato

Good Snacks

- Cereal bars (such as nakd, Trek, Rude Health, Nature Valley)
- bananas
- Quark
- teacakes, hot cross buns etc.

- rice cakes, crisp breads etc.
- cereal (muesli, oats, Weetabix etc)
- dried or fresh fruit
- nuts
- pint of milk

In terms of bulking and cutting, it's about not doing it too fast. If you are trying to lose weight, probably aiming for a 200-calorie deficit is as strict as you want to be. You can do that by slightly reducing the amount of carbs you have (in particular anything sugary), and avoiding too much oil in cooking. Similarly for bulking I would suggest only a small calorie gain, but in both cases focus on protein intake. You should be aiming to have between 1.2g and 1.5g of protein per KG of body weight, per day, if you are exercising daily and looking to increase muscle mass (and thereby increase strength and stamina). The important thing above all for regular training is to refuel for the next session, or you will very quickly become tired, grumpy and see your performance drop off.

Hydration

- If your urine is yellow or dark, you're dehydrated. That reduces your performance in many ways; less strength, endurance, brain function and longer recovery times. i.e. it's quite bad for you!

Always bring a water bottle to training, and make sure to drink regularly. Downing 2 pints of fluid right before training will only make you uncomfortable! A rough guide is that if you're training 1-2 times per day and sweating, you should be drinking at least 3l of water a day.