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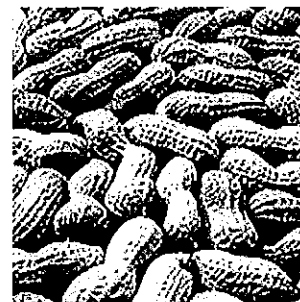
## How to eat well: A primer for athletes

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I hope the information will inspire you to choose a positive sports diet that repairs your muscles optimally, fuels them energetically, and protects your good health.

### Eating Tip #1

If you have weight to lose, eat -- don't diet. Diets are oppressive, unrealistic and ineffective. They tend to leave you hungry all day long and you will never win the war against hunger.



Eating Tip #3: Don't shy away from peanuts!

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As a client of mine said: "My mother put me on my first diet when I was 9 years old, I have gotten fatter and fatter with every successive attempt to lose weight. Diets have made me fat, not thin!" So true. Do not diet!

The best way to control your weight is to eat wholesome foods, quality calories, protective foods. Starting at breakfast, have a fruit smoothie, oatmeal topped with nuts and honey, multi-

grain toast smothered with peanut butter, yogurt with berries, or granola. All of these choices are quick and easy, tasty, health protective and energy enhancing.

Fear not that you'll "get fat" eating breakfast. Research indicates breakfast eaters are not only leaner than breakfast skippers, but also have better quality diets overall.

Plus, you need a hearty breakfast to fuel your afternoon workout (or refuel your morning workout) and dampen the desire for evening junk food. The best way to

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lose weight is to eat satiating food; you can feel fed but still lose body fat. See Tips #2 and #3 ...

### **Eating Tip #2**

Include more fiber-rich breads, cereals, fruits and vegetables on a daily basis. Fiber is satiating; it keeps you feeling fed. Think oatmeal, fruit smoothie, fruit on bran cereal, trail mix, fruit salad.

Enjoy abundant colorful vegetables -- red tomatoes, yellow squash, green beans, orange carrots. Visit the salad bar. Have a pile of stir-fried veggies with brown rice.

Take a break from Frosted Flakes, PopTarts, Oreos, soda pop, even non-essential sports drinks and highly processed energy bars. By eating all the colors of the rainbow, you'll consume a variety of health-protective fibers and phytochemicals that you'll never find in any vitamin pill, protein powder or gel. Diana eats at least 9 to 14 servings of fruits and vegetables per day -- that's two or three fruits with each meal plus abundant vegetables.

### **Eating Tip #3**

Eat more nuts and peanut butter. Nuts add crunch to a meal and substance to a snack. Peanut butter adds oomph to a sports diet. Feared as being fattening, research indicates that people who eat nuts or peanut butter five or more times a week are not fatter than those who stay away from nuts. That's because nuts offer a satisfying combination of fiber + protein -- two substances that abate hunger.

The fat in nuts is health-protective. It boosts your immune system and reduces your risk of heart disease and adult-onset diabetes by more than 20%.

Healthful fat is an important part of an athlete's diet, particularly if you do endurance exercise. Research suggests that runners who boosted their fat intake from a very low-fat diet to an average fat intake improved their performance. The researchers believe the additional fat replenished intra-muscular fat stores and provided more fuel for sustaining long workouts.

Instead of snacking on Pringles and Ritz, reach for almonds or peanuts. No hardship there! Enjoy peanut butter & honey sandwiches and PB on multigrain bagels. Even commercial peanut butters like Skippy and Jif have negligible amounts of the bad (trans) fats that contribute to heart disease. Enjoy this super sports food!

### **Eating Tip #4**

Boost your calcium intake -- not only for your bones but also for improving blood pressure and weight management. Aim for a calcium-rich food at each meal, be it lowfat milk on cereal, yogurt with lunch and/or a decaf latte for an afternoon boost.

Eight ounces of yogurt offers 400 milligrams of calcium; 8 ounces of milk, 300. Your target is 1,000 to 1,500 mg/day. Lowfat dairy foods are also excellent sources of high-quality, muscle building protein. Eating milk on cereal before a workout or enjoying a chocolate milk afterwards for a recovery food is a perfect

way to get a protein-carb combination that enhances muscle growth and repair, as well as optimizes refueling.

Inspired?

If so, here's a sample sports menu to fuel your good intentions! (Adjust the eating times according to your workout schedule.) The simplest guideline is to have at least three different types of wholesome foods at each meal.

7 a.m.: Oats (raw or cooked) + almonds + milk + banana + latte  
 11 a.m.: Whole wheat wrap + hummus + baby carrots + yogurt  
 3 p.m.: Peanut butter + graham crackers + chocolate milk  
 7 p.m.: Salmon + brown rice + broccoli + salad/olive oil dressing

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*Sports nutritionist Nancy Clark, MS RD counsels casual exercisers and competitive athletes. Her private practice is at Healthworks, the premier fitness center in Chestnut Hill, MA (617-383-6100). She is author of the best-selling "Nancy Clark's Sports Nutrition Guidebook," Third Edition (\$23) and her "Food Guide for Marathoners: Tips for Everyday Champions" (\$20) Both books have chapters on how to eat well for sports and health. See [www.nancyclarkrd.com](http://www.nancyclarkrd.com) or send a check to Sports Nutrition Services, PO Box 650124, West Newton MA 02465.*

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