



NUTRITION BEFORE ENDURANCE EXERCISE

BY: Angela Leach / DATE: February 2018

A car can have the biggest engine, the most expensive wheels and the loudest sound system, but without the right fuel, you are going nowhere. The same is true for your body, no matter how much effort you have put in during training, it is unlikely that you will perform at your optimum unless you have been getting the correct nutrition.

So what exactly should your nutrition plan before exercise look like? In this article I'll take a look at the ins and outs of eating and drinking before endurance exercise.

WHY IS NUTRITION IMPORTANT BEFORE EXERCISE?

Your nutritional choices before exercise have a direct effect on how well you are fuelled and hydrated during the session. Good choices will also prevent gastrointestinal upsets and hunger during exercise. These factors all can have a direct effect on your performance during training or on race day.

Another essential is learning what foods and drinks you best tolerate before exercise. One person may swear by an option which leaves another with tummy complaints. Learn what works for you!






WHEN AND WHAT TO CONSUME?

Your final main meal should be consumed 2-4 hours before the session begins, thereafter easily digested, carbohydrate rich snacks can be added in the last two hours. The ideal pre-race meal is high in low glycaemic index (GI) carbohydrates to maximise glycogen (energy) stores and allow sustained energy release. It should also be moderate in protein and low in fat. If you are prone to tummy issues during exercise it is also advisable to lower the fibre content.


Remember to start your run properly hydrated as this is essential for both performance and health, as it will help to control your body temperature. The aim is to take in sufficient fluids without over drinking. Aim to drink 400-600ml of fluid around the same time that you have your final big meal.



Examples of suitable pre-endurance meals (2-4 hours before)

FUTURELIFE® Smart food™ or Smart Oats® as a meal or smoothie	 
Cold oats with honey/jam and fruit	
French toast with honeyed bananas: http://futurelife.co.za/french-toast-with-honeyed-bananas/	
FUTURELIFE® Smart Drink™ and fruit salad (watch fibre content of fruit).	

Examples of suitable pre-endurance top up snacks

FUTURELIFE® High Energy SmartBar	
Sports drinks	
Banana	
Jelly sweets	
Energy gels	

CONCLUSION

Making good nutrition choices before exercise can be hugely beneficial in getting the most out of your endurance exercise. Practice your nutrition during training, learn what works for you and see how it assists your performance. For more sports nutrition education, eating plans, recipes and product information visit www.futurelife.co.za.