

Top NUTRITION Strategies for Soccer

Develop a consistent FUELING routine

Recognize that nutrition & hydration contribute to soccer performance, energy level, and health.
Athletes' bodies perform better when they are fueled consistently...similar nutrients at similar times every day.
There is no off-limits food. 10% of an athlete's diet can be "junk food".
No one sticks to a meal plan that doesn't taste and feel good.
Don't eat it if you don't like it! Find creative ways to obtain all important nutrients and include favorites.

Eat frequently

Eat 3 meals and at least 2-3 snacks each day.
BREAKFAST is extremely important!
Spread calories equally throughout the day...many soccer players have "bottom-heavy" diets.
Plan meals and snacks ahead of time and have food and fluids with you at all times.

Eating the right amount

Calorie counting rarely necessary, but most soccer players require their weight in pounds X 25 (or kg X 55).
Everyone's metabolism is somewhat different, so some players may need a little less and some a little more.
For weight loss, reduce calories by 1000/day. For weight gain, increase by 1000/day.

Understand the important breakdown of carbs, protein, and fat

60% carbohydrates, 15% protein, 25% fat

This translates into:

about 4 grams of carbs/pound body weight

.7 grams of protein/pound body weight

.5 grams of fat/pound body weight

Many soccer players UNDEREAT carbs (or pick the poorest quality types)

Carbs- best choices are fruits, veggies, whole grains, beans

Sugar- look to reduce added sugars in daily diet

Use sugar when your body most needs it (DURING and AFTER exercise)

Carbs should fluctuate with training. Hard training=more carbs, off-season=less carbs

Include protein (meats, milk/cheese/yogurt, eggs, beans, nuts/peanut butter) in at least 4-5 meals/day

Increase healthy fats: nuts, fish, oils, avocado and decrease unhealthy fats: fried

foods, fatty meats, desserts, whole milk, butter, creamy dressings and sauces

Vitamins & minerals

Food first, multivitamin (with 100% DV) as a back-up

Best way to get all needed: fruits, veggies, grains, dairy, nuts, lean meat

ANTIOXIDANTS, especially Vitamin C, important for muscle recovery and preventing illness...sources: oranges or orange juice, berries, melon, potatoes, sweet potatoes, broccoli, spinach, fruit smoothies

Hydration

You're drinking enough if pee is clear and you're not thirsty!

WATER, sports drinks, 100% juices, or milk are best beverages all day

Sports drinks BEFORE, DURING, AFTER training.

Do not lose more than 1-2 pounds in practices or games.

Recognize that energy drinks like Red Bull can dehydrate you (in addition to sometimes causing other problems).

Before and after training

Need at least 30 grams of carbs 30-60 minutes before practice starts

RECOVERY NUTRITION- important to refuel with carbs and protein within 30 minutes of finishing practice

Pre-game meal

3-4 hours before first event: MIXED meal of carbs and protein, low fat, fluids, salt

1 hour before first event: 30 grams of carbs to "top off"

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