What to Eat Before and After Workouts

By: The Go Red for Women Editors

There are many opinions as to what you should eat before, during and after your workouts. The reality is that your body is your vehicle, so you’ve got to keep your engine, your heart, running while you work out.

That means fueling up with the right foods before your workout, hydrating with the right fluids throughout your regimen, and eating the right amounts at the right times.

“You don’t have to adhere to a rigid schedule, and there are no hard-fast rules,” says Riska Platt, M.S., R.D., a nutrition consultant for the Cardiac Rehabilitation Center at Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York. “But there are some things you should do before, during and after you work out.”

Before your workout: eat healthy carbs, hydrate with water

Not fueling up before you work out is like “driving a car on empty,” says Platt, an American Heart Association volunteer. You also won’t have enough energy to maximize your workout and you limit your ability to burn calories.

Ideally, fuel up two hours before you exercise by:

- Hydrating with water
- Eating healthy carbohydrates such as whole-grain cereals (with low-fat or skim milk), whole-wheat toast (without the fatty cream cheese), low-fat or fat-free yogurt, whole-grain pasta, brown rice, fruits and vegetables
- Avoiding saturated fats and even a lot of healthy protein — because these types of fuels digest slower in your stomach and take away oxygen and energy-delivering blood from your muscles

If you only have 5-10 minutes before you exercise, eat a piece of fruit such as an apple or banana.

“The key is to consume easily digested carbohydrates, so you don’t feel sluggish,” Platt says.

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During your workout: hydrate with water
Whether you’re a professional athlete who trains for several hours or you have a low to moderate routine, keep your body hydrated with small, frequent sips of water.

You don’t need to eat during a workout that’s an hour or less. But, for longer, high intensity, vigorous workouts, eat every half hour 50-100 calories of carbohydrates such as raisins, an energy bar or banana.

After your workout: have fluids, healthy carbs and protein
After your workout, it’s time to refuel with:

- **Fluids.** Drink water, of course. Blend your water with 100 percent juice such as orange juice, which provides fluids, carbohydrates and potassium.
- **Carbohydrates.** You burn a lot of carbohydrates — the main fuel for your muscles — when you exercise. In the 20-60 minutes after your workout, your muscles can store carbohydrates and protein as energy and help in recovery.
- **Protein.** Eat foods with protein to help repair and grow your muscles, including a whole grain bagel, baked potato, peanut butter sandwich, etc.

It’s important to realize that these are general guidelines. We have different digestive systems and “a lot depends on what kind of workout you’re doing,” Platt says.

So, do what works best for you. Know that what you put in your body (nutrition) is as important as you what you do with your body (exercise). Both are crucial to keeping your engine performing at its best.

References

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TIPS for BEING a Wise HEALTH CARE consumer.

1. Take the time to carefully select a doctor or health care provider. Ask friends or relatives for recommendations. Investigate whether or not the doctor participates with your health insurance plan.

2. Prepare for visits to your health care provider by compiling lists of questions or concerns you wish to discuss during your appointment. By making the most of the time you have, you can avoid unnecessary calls and repeat visits.

3. Ask questions about medications you are prescribed. Understand why you are taking it and how it should be taken. Finish all medications, even if you are feeling better.

4. Keep a checklist of all medications you are taking and share this list with your health care provider. This is especially important if you are seeing more than one doctor.

5. Be aware of routine medical tests and examinations, and the recommended times to have them. You may be able to avoid unnecessary and expensive tests.

6. Use home medical tests when available. They are less costly and can be used without a visit to the doctor.

7. Keep a well stocked home pharmacy with commonly used medicinal items. This can help you deal with common problems and save costly trips to the doctor or emergency room.

8. Understand your health insurance plan. A list of basic questions about what is covered and knowing the answers to these questions can save time and money.

9. Take care of your mental health as well as you would your physical health. States of emotional upset can interfere with daily living routines, and can ultimately affect your physical well being.

Featured Recipe:
Heart Healthy Maple-Cinnamon Applesauce

Yield: Serves: 7 servings, 1/2 cup each

Each month, Wellworks For You features a healthy recipe! If you wish to submit a healthy recipe, please email your recipe to Wellworks For You at info@wellworksforyou.com by March 1st in order for it to appear in next month’s Newsletter!

Ingredients
- 6 McIntosh or other tart apples, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 Golden Delicious or other sweet apple, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1/4 cup water
- 2 tablespoons pure maple syrup
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Preparation
1. Combine apple pieces and water in a large saucepan. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to maintain a simmer. Cover and cook, stirring once or twice, until the apples are very soft and falling apart, about 30 minutes.
2. Mash the apples to the desired consistency and stir in maple syrup and cinnamon.

To Make Ahead
Refrigerate for up to 2 weeks or freeze for up to 6 months.

Nutritional Content
Per serving: 77 calories; 29 g carbohydrates; 127 mg potassium; 1 mg sodium; 2 g fiber.

Wellworks For You partners with Fitbit Pedometer Technology!

To help members more easily integrate fitness into their daily routines, Wellworks For You is pleased to announce the integration of its advanced wellness platform with Fitbit pedometer devices. By offering Fitbit device connectivity with Wellworks For You features, employees are offered expanded options and flexibility, and can now take full advantage of the benefits offered through their employer’s corporate wellness program.

The Wellworks For You platform is also compatible with other devices. In addition to Fitbit devices, participants can still use Wellworks For You’s extremely accurate USB pedometers, including the #1 rated Omron HJ-720 pedometer as well as our Smartphone App which works as a pedometer. These pedometers are designed for seamless upload to the member’s personal dashboard, and compatible with both PC and Mac operating systems.

February Winter Skin Tips

1. Hook Up the Humidifier

Central heating systems (as well as space heaters) blast hot, dry air throughout our homes and offices. Humidifiers get more moisture in the air, which helps prevent your skin from drying out. Place several small humidifiers throughout your home; they help disperse the moisture more evenly.

2. Grease Up Your Feet

Yes, those minty foot lotions are lovely in the hot summer months, but during the winter, your feet need stronger stuff. Try finding lotions that contain petroleum jelly or glycerine instead. And use exfoliants to get the dead skin off periodically; that helps any moisturizers you use to sink in faster and deeper.