

HOW TO FUEL FOR LONG RIDES & RUNS - Real Food Versus Processed Nutrition

How to Prepare and Manage Your Diet For Endurance Fitness



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The most popular endurance events include running, swimming, and cycling. These can be single-activity events such as ultras, or multi-sport events such as triathlons. Regardless, any aerobic exercise lasting one hour or more counts as an endurance activity and you need proper nutrition for endurance

whether you take part at an elite or recreational level.

The very best athletes surprisingly eat or consume real food to get natural energy during races and training far more than the artificial gels on the market. Better for your teeth, better for your stomach, and tastier on the whole!

Events vary, so do athletes and your everyday personal training does too. So, it should be no surprise that an endurance diet is not a one size fits all solution. Factors to consider include bodyweight, environmental conditions, and nutrient timing among many others and each person will have slightly different needs for different events and finding the best solution may involve following recommendations mixed with trial and error, where to start?

What are the dietary needs for endurance?

Your stomach is the fuel tank for your body – and letting it run on empty overrides & runs in excess of 60 minutes is almost certain to leave you breaking down in the lanes and hills. There's a range of theories around the best way to keep your energy levels topped up, but the overriding belief is that Carbohydrates are the most efficient top-up tool during exercise.

This means a 75kg rider or runner needs to ingest about 75g of carbohydrate per hour, once the ride or run duration is over 90 minutes. The requirement will increase if the ride or exercise is intense, and decrease if it's not.

Carbohydrate requirement varies between individuals, but given that there is a ceiling as to how much your body can absorb, it is important not to overdo it. Finding the balance between avoiding the dreaded bonk and over-eating is vital.

Popular methods of getting the carbs in include energy drinks and gels, energy bars, and good old-fashioned traditional food. They've each got their benefits:

Energy drinks: The quickest to be absorbed, the dosage is spread out over the course of the time it takes to drink a bottle. Best combined with food, gels, blocks, or bars and sipped throughout a ride, these include electrolytes to replace those lost in sweat.

Energy gels: Second quickest to be absorbed, a quick hit of high-glucose carb will give you a kick when you need it. Gels are easy to swallow and are best for races and high intensity when chewing is hard work. Some include electrolytes.

Energy bars: Slower to release energy, bars are also lower in sugar than gels so are usually better for your gut and teeth. They require breaking up and chewing, and thus are more suited to endurance rides. Conveniently packaged to suit jersey pockets.

Natural energy (i.e. from real foods) Vegan-friendly nutrition and gluten-free nutritional supplements such as [Lucho Dillitos energy blocks](#), the humble banana, or the rice cake is not only great for your bank balance, your stomach and teeth will be grateful too as your body does not have to contend with artificial sweeteners or flavoring. Home-made oat, fruit, and nut bars are also a great option but they are sometimes harder to chew and store in pockets!

Should you replace energy gels and drinks with real food?

Bananas for instance have been found to offer similar, if not better, benefits as energy gel scientists say. Commercial energy gels supported by reams of science and studies are always present in runners, cyclists, and triathletes' larders up and down the country. But [Lucho Dillitos Colombian Bocadillo's & Bananas](#), on the other hand, are seen as parochial fuelling of yesteryear, which according to a recent study is a mistake, in fact, arguably a combination of banana & Guava offers much more than gels when antioxidant values, & Natural vitamins, as well as Carbs, are concerned!

When it comes to getting those valuable nutrients into your system, [Lucho Dillitos vegan energy bars](#) are super easy to digest and absorb, as close as we have found to that of the time taken with energy gels and energy drinks.

Whether you're an endurance athlete or just looking to improve your aerobic exercise, knowing the basic information on nutrients is the first step to improving your endurance training.

The Essential Carbohydrate There will be some differences based on the type and duration of training. The general rule is to increase carbohydrate consumption up to 70% of total daily calories to support the high volume of glucose needed for that level of physical activity. Carbohydrates have 4 calories per gram. Endurance athletes should eat 8 to 10 grams of carbohydrate per kilogram (kg) of body weight per day. This will depend on the duration of their endurance event. For endurance training lasting 4 to 5 hours, endurance athletes should consume 10 grams per kilogram of body weight. For example, endurance runners who weigh 70 kg and complete in an endurance event of 4 hours or more should consume a minimum of 700 grams of carbohydrate daily. In comparison, a power athlete would consume fewer carbs (around 4 to 5 grams per kilogram of body weight). A power athlete's focus will be to increase protein intake.

Fluid Intake

We lose water throughout the day through normal respiration, sweating, and urinary output. When we exercise, we lose more. In addition to water loss through sweating, we also lose electrolytes. When we sweat, we also lose sodium, chloride potassium, magnesium, and calcium. These electrolytes serve important roles in supporting bodily systems. There are many electrolyte drinks on the market. However, one of the best ways you can replenish your electrolytes after a long endurance training session is by eating whole natural foods.

Nutrient Timing

Having your body ready for peak performance means having nutrients available at the time you need them. Having a nutrient intake plan that includes consumption of carbohydrates, protein, fat, and water is essential to your success. You need to consider consumption before, during, and after endurance training and endurance events. Prior to endurance training:

- Consume 1 gram of carbohydrate per kilogram body weight 2 hours prior
- Consume 20 ounces of water 2 hours prior to the start of endurance training
- Carbohydrate loading should only occur leading up to an endurance event

During endurance training:

- Consume 10 ounces of fluid that has electrolytes and a 5% concentration of carbohydrate every 20 minutes

After endurance training:

- Consume 1.5 grams of carbohydrate per kg body weight within the first 30 minutes post-exercise
- Consume 15 to 25 grams of protein within the first 30 minutes post-exercise
- Consume 24 ounces of water for every pound of body weight lost

Nutrition for Endurance: Bringing it All Together

Nutrition for endurance involves a lot. When endurance athletes pay attention to the recommendations and figure out what methods work best for them, the outcome is improved athletic performance. Whether you are an elite athlete, a weekend warrior, or a personal trainer designing programs for athletes, it is important to fuel the body properly. Proper nutrients at the right time allow you to perform at your highest level.

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