



THE NO MEAT ATHLETE GUIDE TO EATING BEFORE YOUR WORKOUT



NO MEAT
ATHLETE

No Meat Athlete: The No Meat Athlete Guide to Eating Before Your Workout

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Hi, I'm Matt Frazier, a father, ultrarunner, vegan, and the founder of No Meat Athlete.

During my multi-year quest to qualify for the Boston Marathon, I tried every training technique out there.

I read the books, listened to expert coaches, and tested training techniques, but it wasn't until I began to examine my diet – and how I was fueling before, during, and after a run – that I started to make real gains towards my goal.

How you fuel throughout the day keeps you healthy and energized, and how you fuel during the hours leading up a workout or race has a direct impact on your ability to perform that day.

In this eBook, *The No Meat Athlete Guide to Eating Before Your Workout*, we focus specifically on those final hours and minutes before you run. I share the strategies and tips I've learned over years of running, testing, and tweaking.

And while I do provide specific foods and recipes, my hope is that you'll use this advice to discover exactly what works best for your body. We're all different, and our bodies react to and process foods in unique ways.

I just hope to make your discoveries a bit easier.

Good luck!



FUELING BEFORE YOUR WORKOUTS

Much of the following advice comes straight from my book [No Meat Athlete: Run on Plants and Discover Your Fittest, Fastest, Happiest Self](#).

Of all the meals you'll eat during your training, those surrounding your workouts are the most crucial to your success, particularly because they affect your ability to stay energized throughout the run.

Fortunately, the precepts of optimal workout nutrition are completely consistent with plant-based nutrition. In fact, vegan ultramarathon legend Scott Jurek once pointed out that most people eat a plant-based diet anyway while they're running.

However, the food that will maximize performance differs significantly from what you should eat as part of your normal diet—most noticeably, the focus shifts toward simple, sugary carbohydrates. The reason is simple; most of the time, you want your body to have to work a little to break down the food you take in. But a workout is one time when you want the opposite: easily-digestible, quick energy sources.

The following guidelines will help you to ensure that you're taking in adequate nutrition to power your workouts.

A PRE-WORKOUT NUTRITION PRIMER

1. Consume carbohydrates and protein in a 3:1 ratio.

The 3:1 ratio is almost universally advocated for optimal absorption of nutrients before a workout. For a big workout, it's best to eat a large meal three to four hours ahead of time, so that your stomach can be completely rid of the food by the time you start moving, and then eat a small snack of mostly carbohydrate (say, a banana or a few dates) just before the workout begins.

The less time you have until your workout, the smaller your "large" meal should be: if you've got an hour or more, thirty grams of carbs and ten grams of protein is great; otherwise, halve the amounts. Mark Verstegen of Athletes Performance Institute recommends a scoop of protein powder in about six ounces (175 ml) of Gatorade or watered-down orange juice.



I've found this little pre-workout drink to be easy and convenient when I don't have a lot of time between when I'm eating and my workout.

If you choose to include fat in your pre-workout meal (which can help with nutrient absorption) do so only in moderation because fat takes longer to convert to energy during physical activity than carbohydrate and causes gastrointestinal distress in some people. Five grams of fat should be plenty for this purpose.

2. Include quick-working, high-glycemic carbs for energy now, sustained release (but not necessarily starchy) carbs for energy later.

For example, if you're making your own pre-workout drink (like the one included later in this eBook), you might use dates (glucose) as the high- GI, instant-energy sugar, and agave nectar (fructose) for slower energy release, like *Thrive* author Brendan Brazier does in many of his concoctions.

Why no starchy bagels or bread?

To convert starch into usable sugar requires your body to work, and during a workout, you'd like to use your available energy for movement, not digestion. This guideline applies mainly to workouts that last up to three hours. For longer workouts and events, the intensity becomes low enough that it's not a problem to consume and digest starchier foods, and you'll likely find yourself craving them.

This is all assuming that you're not going to eat or fuel much during your workout, in which case you could eat simple carbs throughout the run.

3. Get a head start on electrolyte replacement.

Lack of electrolytes can do more than just bring on a nasty bonk; in fact, it's downright dangerous. Hyponatremia is the condition of having too much water and not enough sodium (an electrolyte) in your system, and it has proved fatal for endurance athletes who load up on water but don't replace electrolytes that are lost during physical activity.

Lots of electrolytes are lost through sweat, and you should take in salt and other electrolytes during your workout to replace them. Coconut water and most sports drinks and gels contain electrolytes, so you'll get them during your workout if you're consuming any of those drinks.

But you can get a head start on electrolyte replacement simply by adding 1/4 teaspoon of salt, which contains 500 to 600 mg sodium, to your pre-workout drink.



8 NATURAL FOODS

TO FUEL YOUR WORKOUT

Before your toughest or longest workouts, aim to eat one food from each group, at the appropriate time. For your easier workouts, just one food from the last category will probably be sufficient. **Most importantly:** Experiment to discover what works best for you!



2 HOURS BEFORE YOUR WORKOUT

1) PINOLE-CHIA WAFFLES

(1 TO 2 REGULAR SIZE WAFFLES)



2) OATMEAL

(1½ TO 2 CUPS COOKED)

3) TOAST OR BAGEL WITH NUT BUTTER

(1-2 SLICES OF TOAST OR ½ TO ONE WHOLE BAGEL + 1 TO 2 TABLESPOONS OF NUT BUTTER)



1 HOUR BEFORE YOUR WORKOUT

4) WHITE POTATOES OR RICE

(1 MEDIUM POTATO OR 1 CUP WHITE RICE)



5) APPLE WITH NUT BUTTER

(1 APPLE + 1 TABLESPOON NUT BUTTER)

6) SMOOTHIE

(16 OUNCES)



7) DATES

(2 TO 3 MEDJOL DATES)



LESS THAN 1 HOUR BEFORE YOUR WORKOUT



8) FRUIT JUICE

(8-12 OUNCES)

MORE DETAILS ON THE NEXT PAGE

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Most importantly: Experiment to discover what works best for you!

TWO HOURS BEFORE YOUR WORKOUT

Option 1: Pinole-Chia Waffles (1 to 2 regular size waffles)

- [Find the recipe here](#)

Option 2: Oatmeal (1½ to 2 cups cooked)

- Add fruit, a few nuts or seeds, or a little bit of protein powder to boost the nutrition of this classic pre-workout meal.

Option 3: Toast or Bagel with Nut Butter (1 to 2 slices of toast or ½ to one whole bagel + 1 to 2 tablespoons of nut butter)

- Around a workout is one time when refined, white bread or bagel is more useful than a whole-wheat version with more fiber.

ONE HOUR BEFORE YOUR WORKOUT

Option 1: White Potatoes or Rice (1 medium potato or 1 cup white rice)

- White potatoes and white rice aren't great choices for everyday carbohydrates, but before a workout the white carbohydrates become more quickly available and without unnecessary fiber.

Option 2: Apple with Nut Butter (1 apple + 1 tablespoon nut butter)

Options 3: Smoothie (16 ounces)

- Use the [Perfect Smoothie Formula](#) to create your own, customized smoothie. For pre-workout, focus mainly on fruit, with just a little protein and fat from nuts, seeds, or protein powder.

LESS THAN AN HOUR BEFORE YOUR WORKOUT

Option 1: Dates (2 to 3 medjool dates)

- A medjool date contains around 15 grams of sugar, most of which is glucose and reaches your muscles very quickly. Dates are like nature's energy gel!
- Get whole medjool dates with the pit, not the dried ones with the pit removed. Remove the pit yourself before eating, of course.

Option 2: Fruit Juice (8 to 12 ounces)

- Tip: add a half scoop of protein powder (about 10g) to get close to the optimal 3:1 carbohydrate-to-protein ratio before a tough workout.



A FANCIER SPORTS DRINK

RECIPE

My sports drink recipe featured in the July 2014 issue of [Runners World](#).

This delicious sports drink recipe combines whole dates with maple syrup and a little bit of salt (for electrolytes) and lemon juice (to pack in a little more sugar and balance the sweetness of the dates and syrup).

If desired, substitute coconut water for the water to add more potassium and other electrolytes as well as a different flavor. Because coconut water has sugar in it, you'll want to omit the maple syrup in that case.

Finally, use whole, fresh dates if you can find them, rather than the dried, packaged kind that come with the pits already removed— fresh dates blend with the other ingredients much more easily and taste better.

NATURAL SPORTS DRINK RECIPE

Ingredients:

- 2 cups (475 ml) water, more to taste
- 1 tablespoon (15 ml) lemon juice
- 2 fresh medjool dates, pits removed
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 1 teaspoon maple syrup

Process all the ingredients in a food processor or high-speed blender.

Strain through a metal strainer into a pitcher or bottle and discard any solids that remain in the strainer.

Two cups (475 ml) of water will produce a relatively sweet sports drink, but once you've blended everything together, you can dilute the drink as desired with more water.

Yield: 16 ounces

Per serving: 153 Calories; trace Fat (0.1% calories from fat); trace Protein; 42 g Carbohydrate; 4 g dietary Fiber; 0 mg Cholesterol; 485 mg sodium

