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10 Best Diet Tips for Athletes

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By:

Good nutrition plays a pivotal role for athletes who participate in rigorous activities. A well-balanced diet with the correct proportions of carbohydrates, fats, and proteins provides much-needed energy and stamina to athletes. Endurance athletes need adequate intake of a variety of foods in their diet for better utilization of glycogen stores and enhanced performance.

The 10 best diet tips for athletes are:

- 1. Watch your carbs.** Carbohydrates are the chief source of energy in a diet plan for athletes. Stocking up on the right carbs at regular intervals ensures that athletes have enough fuel to sustain high intensity training for long durations. Experts recommend taking in extra carbohydrates (up to 70% of daily calorie intake) two to three days prior to the event. This is especially true for long distance athletes, cyclists, etc.
- 2. Maintain a healthy level of daily calorie intake.** A healthy individual requires approx. 1200 to 1800 calories daily, but an active athlete needs much more (ranging from 2200 to 3000 calories daily, depending on age, body weight, and activity level) to maintain peak performance levels.
- 3. Stay hydrated.** Athletes must have optimum fluid intake to maintain electrolyte balance in the body and prevent dehydration.
- 4. The right fats.** Another healthy diet tip for athletes is to ensure that they maintain an adequate intake of the right kind of fats. Fats serve as fuel to meet the increased energy demands of trained athletes. Restrict intake of saturated and trans fatty acids and include omega 3 fatty acids through dietary and supplemental sources.
- 5. Proteins pack punch.** Proteins are essential to build strength and body weight. Around 10 to 12 % of daily calorie intake should be lean proteins which may be derived from a varied diet. Excessive intake of protein may result in dehydration.
- 6. Variety is the key.** A healthy diet tip for athletes is to ensure a wide variety of food groups are included in the diet plan. Include a range of fruits, veggies, nuts, dairy products, and whole grains in the diet.
- 7. Minerals are a must.** Strenuous training may have an impact on the levels of vital minerals such as calcium, iron, selenium, and zinc. Eating fruits like bananas, oranges, and potatoes help maintain potassium levels.
- 8. Before you go in.** Pre-sport meals must be small, easily digestible, and usually not more than 500 to 1000 calories. Complex carbs and starch must be added in the meal along with adequate fluids.
- 9. Sweet nothings.** Stay away from sugary drinks and sweets as they result in drastic blood glucose level fluctuations which may cause premature exhaustion and dehydration.
- 10. Curb the caffeine.** Caffeine intake may adversely affect performance levels of athletes and should be avoided.

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