

# NUTRITION for Marathon training during Summer/Fall

SLOAN TAYLOR, MS, RD, CSSD, LD

*A marathon is hundreds of miles ... the finish is the last 26.2*

- 1) Appetite differences between summer and fall
  - a. **Appetite can be decreased by the effects of hot conditions**
  - b. **Comfort foods may be pursued in colder conditions**
  - c. **The effort of weight control may be perceived more during colder conditions**
- 2) Your relationship with your scale
  - a. **It is important to monitor your weight but remember, it's just a number**
  - b. **Body fat is a better indicator of health**
  - c. **Use the scale to monitor fluid loss during training (regardless of the season)**
  - d. **Progressive weight loss can be expected if you were overweight**
  - e. **Strength/Endurance vs. mass (airplane example)**
  - f. **The fit of your clothes is the better indicator of change than just your scale**
- 3) The salt trick
  - a. **Contrary to public health concerns, you can intentionally use salt to maintain your serum sodium levels**
  - b. **What kind of sweat do you have (excessive, nothing but water?, salty and gritty?)**
  - c. **Salt can help with each of these situations**
  - d. **Careful with pickle juice (small amounts and diluted are safer)**
- 4) Hydration
  - a. **Research is now indicating that it may be safer to drink to thirst (as opposed to fluid loading)**
  - b. **Simple logic explains that excessive fluid loss without replacement impairs you and your effort**
  - c. **Fluid replacements have a purpose (fluid and sodium)**
  - d. **Potassium is not a loss as expected (you lose 16x more sodium than potassium in your sweat)**
- 5) Cramping
  - a. **Can occur with one (or more): isolated muscle fatigue, electrolyte imbalance, fluid loss**
  - b. **Muscle fatigue cannot be corrected with fluid replacement (cramping can)**
  - c. **Do NOT drink straight water during temps over 60 degrees and/or long duration exercise**
  - d. **Hyponatremia is a deadly situation and fluid replacement may not be able to correct it (so this is where the salty sweaters need to learn to consume high salt the night before a long run)**
- 6) Fuel tank empty
  - a. **Consider if you are restricting your intake too much?**
  - b. **Your training session each time will build on itself but only if you complete the distance**
  - c. **Fueling yourself (in other words: giving yourself permission to eat) is required to safely train**
  - d. **Making weight loss your priority over your upcoming race will make for a long season**
- 7) Fuel tank overfilled
  - a. **Incorrect timing of meals will impair your training session**
  - b. **Seek to complete your food intake 1 hour prior to running (liquids empty quicker)**
  - c. **High fat items take the longest to empty the stomach compared to carb**
  - d. **High protein items are still faster often than high fat items however they can impair also**
- 8) The danger of entitlement
  - a. **This is a struggle that many seasoned runners face; you are likely no different**
  - b. **Just because you completed a certain distance does not entitle you to excess**
  - c. **Consider how you are treating alcohol (habit? Reward?) and know that alcohol has never improved a runner's health or training ☺**
  - d. **One reward you can begin planning now is what meal you will eat for dinner after your race**

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## When/how to eat on days of training

- **Carb snack before your morning run if 5 miles or greater (breakfast when done)**
- **If lunch run, then try a carb snack 1-2 hours before your run (lunch when done)**
- **If pre-dinner run then carb snack 1-2 hours before you run (dinner when done)**
- **Carbs empty the stomach quickest and do not often provide intestinal distress**
- **The higher the fat content, the longer you need to empty the stomach (peanut butter example)**

## Pre-Distance Meals (distance of more than 10 miles)

- **The meal 12 hours before your long distance run/race is one key to success**
- **You want carb-dominant (not carb-heavy which can lead to overeating)**
  - **beans**
  - **rice**
  - **potatoes**
  - **pasta**
  - **fruit**
  - **bread**
- **You want moderate to low fat (no Mexican, watch the Italian food choices)**
- **You want moderate to low fiber content (unless you usually consume 30 g fiber each day)**
- **In a perfect world you want to go to bed no sooner than 3 hours after that meal**
- **The snack in the morning of your long run/race then “caps off” the carbs from the night before**
- **That means the snack needs to be carbs (coffee alone does not count as your snack)**
- **Milk, peanut butter, fiber foods can be consumed but you don’t want excessive milk/excessive peanut butter/excessive fiber)**

## Eating **while** running

- **marathoners absolutely benefit from calories during distance of greater than 10-15 miles**
- **use the training time now to learn what you can tolerate while running**
- **a rule of thumb is minimum of 100 calories for each hour you are running while training for a full marathon (carb gels work out to be this amount)**
- **carb based items with protein is the optimal choice (25 g carb within the hour up to 60 g)**
- **Gu, Cliff Shot, Honey Stingers, certain candy bars, granola, the carb of your choice that you can run with**
- **Peanut butter items don’t have the carb content that you’re looking for but can still be used if combined with a carb item**

## Eating **after** running

- **Use a recovery food within 30 minutes after consistent strenuous exercise of longer than 1 hour**
- **Food made available by Runners World is a quick snack for you (not a meal)**
- **Consuming 50 g of carb within the recovery time assists with resynthesis (recovery) of muscles**
- **The true amount is based on body weight but the easy standard is the 50 g (TU uses up to 100 g)**
  - **32 ounces of Gatorade = 56 g**
  - **4-ounce bagels = 52-70 g**
  - **Banana = 30 g**
  - **16-ounce choc milk = 56 g**
- **You can further utilize carbs by eating again within 2 hours of your recovery snack (this is typically covered by your breakfast if you had an early morning run)**

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## Nutritional Goals

- **Adequate calories (performance issues)**
- **Adequate carb (not the time to go low carb and expect performance improvement)**
  - **140# female can utilize 318-445 g (5-7 g/kg) per day while in a marathon program**
  - **180# male can utilize 409-573 g (5-7 g/kg) per day while in a marathon program**
- **Adequate protein**
  - **140# female would need 51-64 g if no exercise / 70-89 g if moderate intensity exercise**
  - **180# male would need 65-82 g if no exercise / 90-115 g if mod intensity exercise**
- **Low calorie, carb, or protein intake will present itself as excessive fatigue**

## Rewards/Entitlement Issues

- **No need to reward yourself with food after every long Saturday run**
- **Training is to improve your efficiency (not to be entitled to Cheesecake Factory)**
- **If you are hungry then eat (physiological hunger after a run is warranted)**
- **Alcohol after a long training run absolutely does not count towards your recovery (it actually impairs your ability to deliver your carbs in a timely fashion thanks to your liver going into “detox status” with the arrival of alcohol)**
- **Your daily intake during the week will absolutely affect your training (don’t fall into the “it’s okay, I’m running” mode)**
- **Feel free to plan your “reward foods” for the hours after the race**
- **NOW you can be entitled ☺**
- **You can enjoy whatever you please during the 48 hours after your race BUT Tuesday morning it’s back to reality**
- **Your week after the marathon can be a pitfall to weight gain to be on alert to avoid eating the same exact way while you were in ‘high training mode’**

## Nutritionally controversial hot topics

- **detox diets**
- **low carb (20 g per day)**
- **excessive protein**
- **intermittent fasting**
- **Paleo Diet**