

# Nutrition for Distance

Sloan Taylor, MS, CSSD, RD/LD

## Goals

- Train/condition by increasing distance with a structured plan
- Complete the workout
- Eliminate obstacles in your control (lack of fuel, hydration, sleep)
- Manage what you can't control (heat, humidity, traffic, unscheduled interruptions)
- Compete in the event you signed up for and feel accomplished crossing the finish line

## What is food anyway?

- Energy from protein, carbohydrate, fat (alcohol to discuss later)
- Water, vitamins, minerals that don't provide any calories
- Diets by name target one or more of the macronutrients (protein, carb, fat) or they target specific foods or food groups
- *Food and fluid are useless until it is out of your stomach, absorbed and then transported*

## Fuel (food and fluid intake)

- Your food choices yesterday affect your distance today
- Each end of the spectrum can have negative results (over consumption vs. restriction)
- Restricting too much can result in an inability to complete the workout well (and miss the full benefit of the training session)
- The fuel of choice by the human body during exercise remains to be carbohydrates
- Low carb diets (50 g per day or less) can be used but effort will be extremely diminished
- The brain actually utilizes 130 g of carb each day (so consider this your minimum)
- Discussion on gluconeogenesis provided
- Weight management can be easier if you don't fall into entitlement after long distance
- *Commit to your food choices like you have committed to your training schedule*

## Should I avoid caffeine?

- If you can tolerate it then caffeine can actually assist during endurance events
- Multiple research studies have proved it reduces the perception of effort
- It does not make you faster, just allows you to continue your pace
- It's a component in some carb gels (read your labels if you're sensitive)
- One 12-ounce can of soda = 1.5 ounces lost due to caffeine and not a strong diuretic
- Energy drinks prior to running can promote too much fluid loss (not recommended)

## Should I cut out alcohol?

- Alcohol does not improve your ability to train
- It's your decision on how much to cut back or ... to entirely cut out
- It can easily contribute to weight gain (each lb. gained = 4 lbs. of pressure)
- Muscle gain will add weight *but* it will assist in motion unlike fat weight (dead weight)
- Consider if your training is more important than alcohol intake

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## Do all athletes have to carb load?

- No they don't (the duration and mode is what dictates the need for carb loading)
- Runners competing in sprint events up to 5k distance do not need to carb load
- The intent is to have adequate carb storage to complete a long distance
- However it is recommended to have carb items with protein for dinner the night before

## When should I carb load?

- When you are planning to run more than 10-12 miles the next day
- Carb loading is supersaturating your cells with carbs
- Your plate would be predominately carbs both at lunch and dinner the day before
- This does not equate to overeating but your food composition is to be carb-heavy
- Carb entrée's include
  - Baked potatoes or sweet potatoes
  - Asian cuisine (avoid fried meats and aim for vegetables on noodles or rice)
  - Rice dishes (can include small portions of baked chicken, fish, lean meats)
  - Pasta dishes (aim for red sauce, go moderate-to-light on the meat sauce, Alfredo sauce can be used but very little)
  - Breakfast cereals (no rules against eating breakfast foods for dinner ☺)
- SUPERSATURATE the night before (aim for 8-12 hours before doing the mileage)
- Top off the carb amount next morning with the carb snack you're training with

## Do I HAVE to use those carb gels while I run?

- No – but a full marathoner benefits when eating a carb item while training > 10 miles
- Formulate your own strategy (mine is carb gel at mile 7 & 14; jelly beans Mile 16 on)
- Gels exist to deliver quick, easily digested carb to maintain steady effort and avoid the wall (bonking) during long distance
- Substitutes include: Honey Stingers, carb chews, granola bars, candy of your choice
- **SUGGESTION:** experiment with them as your training runs consistently exceed 10 miles

## Should I eat before running?

- Learn to eat *before running long distance* since you should do this on race day
  - It's a snack that caps off the carbs you consumed the night before
  - It promotes the endurance and the duration of your run
  - It works best if you eat ~60 minutes before you take off running
  - Coffee alone does not count (your body needs calories, carbs are preferred)
  - Piece of bread, or orange, or banana, or small amount of yogurt would be fine
  - Liquid empties the stomach the quickest (the more carb-based the better, the more fat-based or the more fiber-based then the longer it takes)
  - Biscuits, sausage, bacon, excessive milk, excessive peanut butter, excessive fiber take the longest to leave your stomach
  - Find something you can tolerate and start training with it now

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## Should I eat during running?

- Half Marathoners do not have to necessarily eat during their distance
  - The exception is if your duration exceeds 2 hours or if you physically are hungry
- Marathoners need to learn to eat **during** running (carb gels, carb blocks, jelly beans, candy, etc)
  - A guideline is to aim for ~ 60 g carb per hour (if protein use 1 protein:4 carb ratio)
  - Make sure you have water available before you open a carb gel

## Should I eat right after running (and what exactly is a recovery food?)

- A food or drink that supplies carbs *after exercising 1 hour or greater*
- An item that provides at least **50 g of carbohydrate** to replace what you used up
- Be a clock watcher – your last step after cool down means the clock just started
- You have 30 minutes to capitalize on the recovery window. You snooze – you lose
- You still recover without out but the rate is slower *and you lost a golden opportunity*
- The amount is truly based on body weight but a standard is 50 grams carb
- a 140# person needs 38-64 g carb whereas a 190# person needs 52-86 g carb
- Research indicates that eating the same amount again 2 hours later and then repeat 2 hours after that will facilitate recovery and promote adaptation
- This is a snack, not a meal, *so don't fear the calories*
  - 50 grapes = 50 g
  - 32 ounce Gatorade = 56 g
  - Sara Lee plain bagel = 57 g
  - 16 ounce choc milk = 56 g
  - Sun Maid raisins 3 oz = 66 g
  - Banana = 30 g
  - Apple = 15 g
  - Orange = 15 g
  - Granola bar = ~18 g
  - Panera Asiago bagel = 55 g
  - Panera Cinnamon bagel = 81 g
- If you are done with your distance and go straight to breakfast then you're covered
- You can also grab a small snack to begin the recovery as you head out/head home for breakfast

## Breakfast on race day

- Plan ahead what you need to have with you in your hotel room
- Aim to keep your breakfast items consistent just like your training

## Nutrition right after the race on race day

- ❖ **NOW welcome to your entitlement!!!**
- ❖ Plan to have a reward food waiting for you either at your hotel room or at home
- ❖ Half marathoners: You have 24 hours to eat whatever your heart desires (plan now!)
- ❖ Marathoners: You have 24-48 hours to eat the same way (whatever you want)
- ❖ Your pre-marathon training eating plan goes back into effect 48 hours after you cross the finish line; be mindful that you are not likely to train at high intensity (or at all) during the next 4-7 days after the race
- ❖ Some people experience weight gain the week after the race
- ❖ Keep your intake appropriate and you can avoid the weight gain OR begin training again for your next race (because we all know you want the next race)