Meal Frequency for Student-Athletes

As a student-athlete, fitting my daily nutrition needs into a busy schedule is difficult. I often miss breakfast before early workouts, then feel tired and sluggish as I try to make time for regular meals and snacks. By evening I am very hungry and eat a large meal just before bed. That makes falling asleep difficult, and I usually have little appetite for breakfast the next morning.

HOW CAN I KEEP MY ENERGY UP ALL DAY TO PERFORM MY BEST IN THE CLASSROOM AND IN SPORT?

- **START WELL:** A convenient, balanced food choice first thing in the morning helps fuel a busy start filled with training and classes.
- **PREPARE AHEAD:** Carry portable performance foods in your backpack to refuel every two to three hours between meals and around training.
- **FOLLOW YOUR NEEDS:** Learn which foods agree with you. Save new foods or meals for days without key training sessions or competition.

(Turn over for food ideas and practical tips.)

Resources for Nutrition, Sleep and Performance



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Sports and Human Performance Nutrition
a dietetic practice group of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
eat right.

A useful nutrition routine starts with a plan that fits your busy schedule and body composition goals. Frequent eating can be approached in many ways. Work with a registered dietitian (RD) specializing in sports, ideally a Certified Specialist in Sports Dietetics (CSSD), or an athletics health care provider to develop an approach that supports your health and performance goals while fitting your daily demands.

FUEL FOR TRAINING

Before an early workout, choose a quick, easily digested carbohydrate food to support energy and performance.

- Eat a meal within one hour after training. Include carbohydrate-rich foods, quality protein and plenty of fluids to support recovery.
- If a meal is not possible then, begin recovery with a snack. As a general guide, aim for 20-40 grams of protein and a moderate-to-high carbohydrate serving matched to the intensity of your session.

Snacks for recovery:

- Whey protein powder in a fruit smoothie.
- Greek yogurt layered with berries, nuts and granola.

FUEL THROUGHOUT THE DAY

Build balanced meals with lean protein and carbohydrates, plus fruits and vegetables that supply micronutrients.

Breakfast ideas:

- Ham and vegetable omelet, with oatmeal and fruit.
- Whole grain toast, peanut butter, banana and milk.
- Eggs (hard-boiled), cereal and fruit.

Main-meal ideas:

- Turkey-cheese sub served with pretzels and fruit.
- Meat-sauce pasta alongside Caesar salad.
- Chicken stir-fry with vegetables and rice.

FUEL BETWEEN MEALS

Combine carbohydrates and protein in your snacks to help meet energy and recovery needs between meals.

Create a Smart Snack

Protein	+ Carbohydrate
Hard-boiled Eggs	Granola Bar
Milk or Soy Milk	Pretzels
Greek Yogurt	Fruit
Beef or Turkey Jerky	Cereal
Packaged Tuna	Tortilla or Bread
Edamame or Hummus	Crackers

Note: To avoid feeling full, some athletes choose carbohydrate-rich drinks in place of whole foods.

Build a nutrition routine with a sports dietitian or athletics health care provider that can adapt to each day's training. Consistent intake tends to improve athletes' energy and performance across the day. Since some days are busier, stay flexible and aim to meet your total needs.

Prepared by ASPDA and SHPN Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs). For guidance on eating well away from home or a tailored fueling plan, consult a sports RDN, especially a Board Certified Specialist in Sports Dietetics (CSSD), or an athletics health care provider.



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