

TRAINING TABLE TIPS FROM THE PROS



Athletes of all levels and ages need to get the right balance of nutrients every day to maintain overall performance and health. These tips from leading sports nutrition experts can help ensure a proper training table diet to fit an active lifestyle.

Eat for Activity

Depending on activity level, the caloric needs of an active individual may be more than those of a less-active person. The sports nutrition Food Guide Pyramid is easy to follow and can help ensure that active people are eating right to help fuel their physical activity.

Protein Power

Not only does protein help provide some energy during physical activity, but it also helps keep muscles strong and the immune system running. Drinking three or four glasses of milk throughout the day can make a significant contribution to protein needs.

Energy Packed Carbs

Carbohydrates are the body's main source of energy during physical activity. Eating foods that include carbohydrates, such as whole grains, fruits, vegetables and milk, three to four hours before exercising will help keep energy levels high.

Building Bones

Although exercise plays an important role in keeping bones strong, calcium and other nutrients play another important role. Most Americans are not getting the recommended amount of calcium in their diet, increasing their risk for osteoporosis and other diseases. Physically active people should include milk on their training table to help keep their bones strong and reduce their risk for injury. Here are recommendations made by the National Academy of Sciences on how much calcium people should be getting each day, based on their age: ages 4-8 need 800 mg of calcium, which is 3 milk servings; ages 9-18 need 1,300 mg of calcium, which is 4 milk servings; ages 19-50 need 1,000 mg of calcium, which is 3 milk servings; and ages 51 and over need 1,200 mg of calcium, which is 4 milk servings.

Growing Years

Active teens and kids need even more calcium each day during this bone-building period to keep their bones strong and their bodies growing. Drinking just four glasses of milk per day will help them meet the daily calcium intake goals of 1,300 mg, set by the National Academy of Sciences.

Staying Hydrated

It's important to drink plenty of fluids throughout the day, especially before, during and after physical activity. Dehydration can affect performance and can be very dangerous. Milk not only contains protein and carbohydrates that provide energy, but milk is also 90% water, making it a nutrient-packed thirst quencher. For those who need a flavor burst, a single-serve container of flavored milk, such as chocolate or strawberry, has the same nutrients as regular milk and offers a great beverage alternative for an energy boost.