

Post Race Nutrition

By Allison Tannis, MSc.

Nutrition after the race is as important, if not more, than the nutrition before a race. Be sure to re-fuel effectively to ensure a speedy recovery and to get you back on course at a running pace. You need to consider alkalizing foods, complex carbohydrates, good fats and proteins.

Alkalizing foods are an integral part of the repair process after exercise. During a workout, lactic acid builds up in the muscles. If not dealt with, lactic acid build-up from physical exertion or acid forming foods (e.g. red meat) can lead to muscle fatigue and stiffness. Chronic acid problems in the body can lead to tissue degeneration and aging.

What are alkalizing foods? Examples include protein with a higher pH such as flax, hemp, most nuts and seeds, as well as vegetables and fruit. Dairy, animal meat and grains are acidic forming in the body.

Therefore, to ensure that your body is not depleted of calcium, magnesium and potassium from eating too many acidic foods, after a workout seek out flax, nuts, seeds, fruits and vegetables whenever possible. By adding these foods into your post-workout meals you'll help the acid-alkaline battle balance itself in a more favorable direction.

Researchers have noted that after a workout the body craves carbohydrates as it seeks to refill the glycogen cells, or batteries of the muscle. Japanese researchers from the University of Health and Sport Sciences in Osaka noted in a 2004 study that intake of carbohydrate-rich just after exercise is crucial for the body's recovery. Post-workout, the body does not prefer sweet carbohydrates, it craves high quality carbohydrates. Therefore, don't forget the high fibre carbohydrates.

Got an injury? Reduce the damaging effects of inflammation by ensuring your diet is sufficient in omega-3 fatty acids. The good fat found in fish and flax can help your body reduce the amount of damage that inflammation from injury can cause. For quick recoveries, be sure to supplement with omega-3 fatty acids or eat fish and flax regularly.

Protein is a well known important part of healthy post-workout meal. During the run, your muscles have been worked, stretched and torn-up. So, help them repair by giving them the building blocks they need to rebuild - amino acids. Amino acids are the building blocks of protein. They can be found in nuts, seeds, soy, some vegetables, beans, eggs, dairy and meat. To keep those muscles happy be sure that a good quality, low fat source of protein is a part of your post-race nutrition.

Here is to healthy running after the race. Eat right and you'll enjoy a successful and fast recovery. See you on the course!

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