

“Nutrition Package: Meal Planning/Timing”

By: Mind to Muscle Sports Conditioning Centre

The planning and timing of meals is essential for an athlete to maximize their performance, increase recovery time and accelerate muscle growth. Schedules can become busy and too often meals are nutritionally neglected and even forgotten. With a young athlete having a high amount of stress on their body this is a mistake that can become very costly not only to their immediate performance, but to their long-term health.

The athletes must choose more vegetables, whole grain and nutrient-rich foods to fill their diets. Processed foods and breads, pop, fast food meals and junk foods must be eliminated to experience a body full of energy. And changing the habit of eating 3 large meals must be addressed. Instead, an athlete should eat approximately 6 smaller meals per day always starting with an important nutritional breakfast.

Pre-Game Fuelling Guidelines

Players should be consuming a high-carbohydrate intake everyday to maintain muscle energy stores. It must be understood that one good meal before a competition, practice or training session does not make up for a week of poor eating.

The meals' food energy should contain 50% carbohydrate calories, 30% protein and 20% fat calories.

<u>Hours before event</u>	<u>Meal Type</u>
3-5 hours	Large Meal
2-3 hours	Small Meal
~1 hour	Snack

Depending on the athlete (size, age, metabolism) the specific number of calories for each meal would differ greatly. Each individual considers certain sized meals more or less filling depending on their differences, so some experimenting may be in order.

During Exercise Snacks

Eat in small amounts and low in fat and protein. For example, fruit, granola bars or low fat whole grain crackers.

Post-Event Recovery

Eat food high in complex carbohydrates and protein within 30 minutes after exercise. A large meal example would be suitable.