

Top Nutritional Tips for Marathon Runners

Nutrition is important - what we feed our bodies will directly affect how we perform and how we feel.

Good quality nutrition = Good quality cells = Good health

1. Aim for roughly 55% of calories to come from carbohydrate, 15% from protein and 30% from fat.
2. Choose natural unrefined products – if it looks like it does in its natural state then eat it; if it is refined, processed or altered in any way leave it alone.
3. Choose unrefined carbohydrates such as wholemeal or wholegrain breads and pasta, wholegrain rice, potatoes, sweet potatoes and fresh fruit.
4. Become familiar with the Glycaemic index and choose low to moderate GI carbohydrates.
5. You need protein to rebuild the structures damaged during training so choose good quality eggs, fish, poultry and meat to give your body the best building blocks
6. Fat is vital to the health of the cells so choose fats which are naturally occurring e.g. butter, olive oil, full fat dairy products, quality meats and oily fish. Avoid cheap margarines, deep fat fried foods and cheap cuts of meats or processed products.
7. Eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables to keep vitamins and minerals high.
8. Eat breakfast and eat regularly, roughly every 3 hours as it maintains high blood glucose levels and keeps you energised.
9. Eat a pre-training meal two hours before running – it should be a small carbohydrate based meal with some low fat protein and some fruit or vegetables. E.g. a chicken salad wholemeal sandwich, pasta or rice with chicken and some vegetables or a bowl of wholemeal muesli with semi skimmed milk. This is also what you eat on race day.
10. Immediately after training eat around 50g of high GI foods to replenish glucose stores. E.g. a sports drink, jaffa cakes, jelly beans, a crunch bar or a ripe banana
11. Eat a normal mixed meal about an hour after training.
12. For the 3 days before the race eat an extra 300-400 calories of carbohydrate to give you extra stores of glucose.
13. Aim to drink around 2 litres of water a day and drink regularly (2-3 sips every 15 minutes) and keep sipping fluids as you train.
14. Always practice your eating and drinking routines so that you know what works for you.
15. Get enough sleep and rest as this is when you recover and repair muscle damage; look to leave 2 hours between eating and sleeping.