

Carbohydrates

It is essential that your body is fueled with good carbohydrates. This is especially important if you are just starting a training program or if you are a competitive athlete. So, my recommendation is to focus your meals on wholesome carbs before working out. For example, black rice, mung beans, brown rice, smashed sweet potatoes, oatmeal or even multi-grain bagels may help your body to be ready for the whatever training session you are about to have. Also, if you are recover slowly from your workouts, keep in mind to immediately refuel your body with good carbs (the window of opportunity to maximize and optimize recovery is about 30 to 60 minutes after working out).

Protein

As important as it is to have carbs in your diet, you also need to have certain portion of protein. Again, here the trick is to have the correct amount of protein your body requires and not to over do the protein, which may not be optimal for your performance and recovery. The amount of protein should be based on your body type, body composition, weight and fitness goals and type of strength you are looking for. As you know, as people age, their protein needs increase slightly, it is even more important when people are working out and following a competitive training program which pose a lot of demand on your muscles. Therefore, make sure to include protein in your regular meals to build, repair and protect your muscles. A whole grain/multi-grain slice of bread with natural almond butter or even peanut butter, lentils with vegetables and greens, or even a turkey/tuna sandwich with a bit of avocado with multi grain bread or a good plate of mung beans with potatoes and greens will do the job.

Red meat, reputed to be bad for heart health, can be a actually a welcome addition to a sports diet as long as it is lean. For example, you can have a lean ground bison beef (grass fed) with vegetables and greens. Lean beef offers not only protein but also iron, zinc, B-vitamins and other nutrients important for athletes. Others, may opt for plant based protein food, and protein rich fish (wild caught salmon, wild caught cod, swordfish, tuna fish in water, sardines, albacore, and many other oily fishes). Target three to four servings per week, you will notice the difference in how fast your body recovers after working out. Now, some athletes may prefer the vegetarian diet based on either plant based foods, which also they can benefit by having good amounts of beans, nuts and soy. These types of foods fuel your body and muscles in a nice way. If you like this diet, try to extra firm tofu with turmeric and ginger, greens like spinach, broccoli, mixed of greens, and a combination of a variety of vegetables with different colors. Enjoy also, hummus with pita bread, or even a slice of an “arepa” with a spread of avocado. The “arepa” believe it or not has 11 grams of protein and very low sodium.

Fat

There is a lot of research done in how the good fats in your daily diet with the correct amounts based on your body type is beneficial for your health and sorts performance. In fact, certain plant and fish oils have a health protective, anti-inflammatory effect. What has been working for me is to have a little healthy fat at each meal – slivered almonds on arugula, a good amount of wasabi peas, or pistachios,

and/or all kinds of nuts and sparkle canola oil or olive oil or avocado oil or sesame oil in your salads. I have actually found myself that canola oil provides only 1 gram of saturated fat versus some other oils which have 2 grams of saturated oil. Again, the good fats not only curb your appetite and keeps your body satisfied for longer periods of time, but also your body will appreciate these fats on competitive endurance events.