

## What to Eat Before Your Next Workout

**The type, intensity, and duration of the exercise you do, and when you do it, can determine what exactly you need to make it through your workout feeling energized.**

Heading to the gym or studio for a long swim, training session, run, or yoga session, but your stomach is growling? Do you want a snack or meal but don't know what to choose? Here are a couple of questions to ask yourself to navigate the best bites to help you power through your workout!

### Glance at the Clock- How long do you have before your workout?

Keeping track of your meal patterns around your workouts will help you find a fueling strategy that works for you to take your workouts to the next level. Pay attention to your energy levels, fullness/hunger, and any stomach distress. This will help you navigate the types and quantity of food and ideal times to eat to get the most out of your workout. Meals and snacks higher in protein and fat take longer for your body to digest. They may cause more stomach upset, so it is best to focus on [snacks with carbohydrates](#) when you are eating close to your exercise.

#### 3-4 hours before:

Aim for a full meal that has a healthy mix of carbohydrates, lean protein, and [heart-healthy fats](#), as you likely have enough time to properly digest. You can pair this strategy with a small, easily digestible snack 30 minutes to 1 hour before your workout or wait for another full meal after your workout.

#### 1-3 hours before:

Not everyone needs a snack before a workout. It depends on the intensity and duration of your workout, your unique energy needs, and weight goals. If you're maintaining weight loss or trying to lose weight, adding a snack could be counterproductive. However, for athletes or exercisers with stable weight or a goal of weight gain, skipping a snack or small meal before a long and intensive workout could decrease exercise performance. If carbohydrate stores are depleted, then your muscles are utilized as an energy source.

Pay attention to your body's cues and track and trend performance and recovery. If you do need to fuel, your quantity of food should be slightly smaller since you have less time to digest. The further out you are from your exercise, the more you will likely be able to tolerate. Here are some examples of simple snacks and mini-meals:

- 1-2 dates or a [date ball](#)
- 1 small banana
- 1 medium banana + 1 Tbsp. of almond butter

- 2 rice cakes + 1 Tbsp. peanut butter + 1 Tbsp. jelly
- Oatmeal with [walnuts](#) and [berries](#)
- ½ turkey sandwich: whole grain bread, turkey, lettuce, tomato, mustard, avocado
- Whole grain toast + ½ small avocado + 1 sliced [hard-boiled egg](#)
- 1 serving dried fruit + 1 oz. mixed nuts