Competition Nutrition

Nutrition is part of proper recovery on a daily basis, but this becomes even more important in the days leading up to competition.

Here are 5 tips to take into consideration for daily fueling but especially in the week leading up to a day of competition.

5 Tips for Nutrition leading up to a competition

1. Fuel your workouts properly – fast acting carbs
2. Recover with nutrition – carbs and protein after each workout
3. Hydration – stay properly hydrated all week – don’t just pound water the day before and day of
4. Add more slow acting carbs the day before and decrease fat content
5. Sleep and rest days

Simple carbohydrates are ideal for right before (30-60 minutes) workouts. These types of snacks include fruit, diluted fruit juice, white bread, pretzels, fruit snacks, graham crackers, small granola bars, or sports drinks.

A carbohydrate and protein-based snack as soon as practical after a workout helps replenish muscles and support muscle growth. Ideas for snacks 15-60 minutes post-workout include chocolate milk, fruit and yogurt parfait, cheese and fruit, egg and English muffin, bread and peanut butter.

A well-balanced meal within a few hours after a workout helps to further support energy and muscle recovery.

Dehydration can cause negative impacts on performance and early fatigue. Fluid intake should be prioritized all day every day. Drink ½ your body weight in ounces daily. If you’re not quite there, make this a goal to work on approaching competition day. Don’t just chug water the night before and morning of, this won’t contribute to proper utilization of the fluids you’re taking in and you’ll just have to pee... a lot.

In order to prepare for the large volume of activity, the day before competition, modestly increase complex carbohydrate intake. These carbohydrates include whole grain breads, rice, oats, pasta, beans, and potatoes. In order to make sure you’re not overloading on calories, cut back on some of your fat for the day to make room for the extra carbs.

Although not directly related to nutrition, sleep and rest days are essential leading up to a competition. Even if you’re nutrition is on point, you’re not getting the full gamut of benefits if you’re not getting enough sleep or over working your body. Aim for 7 hours of sleep each day and give yourself a day or two of rest before competition day.