



# SPORTS NUTRITION

Dan Young

## Does nutrition play a role in sports performance? You betcha!

When you make mistakes with your diet you are taking nutrition out of the equation and your performance will tank. Not to mention that you will never lose those stubborn pounds from your hips or love handles. Nutrition and training are the only two factors that you alone have complete control over; yet most people pay little attention to the most important element - nutrition.

We humans have evolved over 3.4 million years, converting certain compounds that occur in nature into muscle, bone, organs, glands and brain tissue. We are simply the interactions of these nutrients. Every time you screw around with them, they screw around with you.

Though every human is different from their heads to their toes. If he or she is active and engaged in a sport where exercise is required, that person can consider themselves an athlete. An athlete can be a 4th grade soccer player or a professional football player. They can range from under 75 pounds to over 300 pounds; 4' to 7' tall. They can play in a league or just workout in a gym. Chances are, if you are reading this, you're an athlete.

Athletes who scarf down fat-loaded burgers and nutrient-poor fries, do not understand how much they are disturbing the exquisite precision of nutrient use of their bodies. All athletes require sound nutrition to excel and, believe it or not, the nutritional needs within a given sport are surprisingly similar. Age, gender, body

size, and training schedule determine an athlete's dietary needs and while some variations exist in nutrient requirements, the variance in energy requirements is even greater.

## Calorie Requirements

Unless you write down your food intake religiously, you may never really know your true calorie requirements. To further complicate the issue, every activity uses a different amount of calories in a given period. When you add age, gender, body size, metabolic profile and intensity levels it can be overwhelming. Most folks just shrug their shoulders and give up. Let's make it simple:

Activity Level	Male	Female
Light	17	16
Moderate	19	17
Heavy	23	20
Very Heavy	26	23

Just determine your Activity Level and multiply the corresponding number by your weight in pounds. This number signifies your daily calories intake needed to maintain your weight and to best succeed in your activity. Remember, this is only an estimate to be used as your personal starting point. Therefore, you will have to adjust the number of calories to meet the demand you place on yourself. After adjusting your calorie intake, you can use your weight loss or gain as an indicator of what your true weight should be. Then, invest in a set of fat calipers and test yourself bi-weekly to determine if the changes in your body are due to muscle gain or fat loss.

## All Calories Are Not the Same

Okay, so maybe it's not as easy as just getting your calories right; you really need to know where they are coming from too. Every sport or activity requires a different ratio of macronutrients and micronutrients to satisfy the stresses placed on your body.

For instance, a swimmer who trains for 100-yard backstroke may need their mix of macros coming from 55% carbs, 30% protein and 15% fat while an endurance swimmer would need a mix of 60%-15%-25%, respectively. Having the right ratios of macros will fuel your body's energy system with the right forms of energy.

Note - It is important to understand that the government's Recommended Daily Allowances (RDA) of essential nutrients is just enough to prevent dietary deficiencies. Athletes require far more nutrition than what the RDA recommends. If you use the RDAs to plan your nutrition, you will never reach your athletic potential.

## Time to Focus

Take a little time each day to understand what foods you are eating and how they play a role in helping you to achieve your performance goals. Don't waste time day after day, month after month, without ever getting to the next level. Take control of your body - Nutrition is 80% of the battle.

## EAT WELL!

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