



RESOURCE

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Finding Fuel for the Workout Ahead

What to Eat Before and After Hitting the Gym

You wouldn't leave home for a road trip without filling your car's gas tank, and you certainly wouldn't fill your high-performance car with regular gas. The same goes for your body and exercise. It's important that you eat the right foods and drink the best beverages before and after a workout, to ensure your engine receives the maximum benefits from exercise.

Life Fitness, a leader in exercise equipment, offers its tips on what to eat before, and after, a workout.

- **Mix carbs with protein:** Carbohydrates, like pasta, provide the body with energy, and protein, like chicken is important for muscle building and repair. It's essential to eat moderate amounts of both before exercising. Low-fat meats and carbohydrates filled with whole grains are the best bet.
- **Timing matters:** Having something in your stomach before exercising provides needed energy, but eating just before a workout could upset your stomach. Aim to eat a meal three-to-four hours before exercising and then a small snack a half-hour to 45-minutes before. Expect your cardio workout to last more than two hours? You may want to eat a meal filled with carbohydrates like brown rice or wheat pasta.
- **Calories still count:** Just because you finished a heart-pumping session at the gym doesn't give you a free pass to the all-you-can-eat buffet. To ensure you're not eating more than you burned on the treadmill; eat a low-fat snack such as fruit or yogurt immediately after working out. Also watch out at the gym's café. Smoothies or protein bars can pack a surprising number of calories and sugar that may cancel out a good workout.
- **Remember the fluids:** Most exercisers will lose about four cups of fluid per hour of exercise. Stay hydrated by taking in water before, during and after your workout. If you sweat a lot or the weather is humid, you may need a sports drink after your workout to replace lost electrolytes and minerals.