

Competing Better

IN ORDER TO REACH YOUR POTENTIAL AT COMPETITIONS YOU NEED TO HAVE MAXIMAL ENERGY LEVELS BEFORE RACE TIME. THE FOOD YOU EAT ON THE DAY, AND DAY BEFORE COMPETITION NEEDS TO BE CARB RICH.

WHAT SHOULD I EAT AND WHEN?

Your diet needs to be slightly different and adjusted a few days before your competition. A few days before your competition you should increase carbohydrate levels by consuming slightly more by ratio, and snacking more often to keep the energy stores very high. Fat levels need to be closely monitored, to ensure a slightly less amount than required during training phase is consumed. We need to make sure no excess weight is put on close to competition, Fats won't really be used during competition, and therefore we don't need much. Again, proteins are not really used on day of competition too; therefore protein intake is reduced also. The main focus on food is the carb intake; we need to ensure it is kept high, consisting of complex and simple carbohydrates needed at different times. So our last meal the night before should be almost 85% carbohydrates if possible.

Actually on race day we need to get a good breakfast and good meals at the appropriate intervals between sessions and races. The key is to not overfill ourselves, but to eat smaller amounts- more often. This is to ensure the food we eat is being adequately digested and to maximise the effect of the nutrients it contains. Main meals on competition day need to be consumed within 2-4 hours before a race; these meals need to be full of complex carbohydrates with little or no fat and protein. If you struggle to eat a lot, especially during a competition, then you need to be extra careful in ensuring you have consumed enough carbs to race well. In order to take precaution, you need to consume energy and high carb drinks (hypertonic fluids); this will help to increase carb levels. Isotonic drinks will help to boost energy also but the glycogen it contains is not as concentrated as the hypertonic drink, making it less effective.

Eating between races is a good idea, but only in the form of a small meal or snack, as you need to replenish energy and carb stores. If you have less than one hour, it is not advisable to eat anything substantial, this could cause a decline in performance. So if this is the case, then a hypertonic or even an isotonic drink would be more suitable. The snacks that you eat should be in the form of simple carbohydrates, such as sugars. This is because simple carbohydrates offer a more quick energy release and breakdown, compared to complex carbohydrates which offer energy releases over a sustained period of time. After your last race you need to consume a high carbohydrate meal as soon possible, preferably within half an hour after the last event, but again keep the fats to a minimum and don't bother with much protein, these won't help your energy levels much.

HERE'S A FEW MEAL SUGGESTIONS AND FOODS THAT CAN HELP YOU GET STARTED!

FOODS - NIGHT BEFORE COMP. - CEREALS, PASTA OR HIGH RICE DISHES, JACKET POTATO, POTATO DISHES, SOUP, SANDWICHES, BEANS ON TOAST, DEEP PAN PIZZA.

PRE-COMP / BETWEEN RACE MEAL - CURRANT BUNS! SCONES! TEACAKES, TOAST WITH JAM OR HONEY. RICE OR PASTA MEAL, TOASTED SANDWICHES, MUFFINS.

SNACKS THROUGH THE DAY - CEREALS, POPCORN, TORTILLA CHIPS, TINNED AND DRIED FRUIT, MUESLI BAR, YOGHURTS, RICE PUDDING.

POST COMPETITION - CHICKEN FILLETS IN PITTA BREAD, PIZZA. PASTA DISH, CHINESE NOODLES, GRILLED STEAK, INDIAN NAAN WITH RICE, VEGETABLES.