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## THE ATHLETE'S COMPLETE BREAKFAST

Breakfast is “kick-off” fuel for the whole day! Just like you fill your car up with gas before a road trip, it is essential that athletes fuel their bodies for the day and activities ahead. Starting the day without breakfast is like starting with your car on empty.

It's important to note that a “complete” breakfast is not a banana, bagel, or chewy bar. It should consist of as many food groups as possible to help fuel the body for the day. And for athletes, skipping breakfast is simply not an option. To perform optimally, you have to eat optimally and that starts in the morning.

### Breakfast helps athletes meet their goals in lots of ways:

- It sets the base for stable blood sugar and energy levels to start the day
- It provides energy for the brain to be mentally sharp in school
- It provides a portion of the nutrients needed throughout the day for growth, development, performance, and recovery
- If you train or practice in the morning, it powers training and performance
- It promotes optimal hydration

### To shape an athlete's breakfast plate:

- 1/3 high-quality protein
- 1/3 whole grain carbohydrate
- 1/3 colorful fruit

Breakfast is also an optimal time for a serving of dairy.

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**While it's often hard for athletes to get up early in the morning, making time for breakfast is essential! There are lots of nutrient-rich, quick options that can be utilized as breakfast fuel!**

**CARBOHYDRATES** like oats, whole grain cereal, bagels, toast, and waffles help provide athletes the energy they need throughout the day. Without adequate carbohydrate in the morning, it is likely that athletes will experience fatigue and may not have the energy they need to perform at the highest level.



**FRUIT** provides athletes the vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and plant compounds they need to help keep their immune systems strong, assist in recovery, and aid in growth and development. They also provide fiber, which is essential for both gut and heart health. Fruit in the morning can also assist in hydration since fruit has a large water content.



**DAIRY** foods provide additional high-quality protein to an athlete's plate, as well as calcium, vitamin D, and other nutrients to help build and strengthen bones, as well as fuel growth and development. Consuming milk or yogurt with breakfast, or adding cheese to a breakfast sandwich, is an excellent way to add dairy first thing!



**PROTEIN** like eggs, sausage, ham, peanut butter, or protein powder in a smoothie help provide the amino acids necessary to help athletes build and repair lean muscle. Because protein slows down digestion, it helps to stabilize both blood sugar and energy levels.



### TOP 10 QUICK BREAKFASTS

1. Peanut butter and honey toast with banana, pre-made egg cups, and milk
2. Whole grain bagel with cream cheese and berries, sausage links, and milk
3. Overnight oats made with milk, nuts, and berries, hard-boiled eggs, and fruit
4. Large yogurt parfait with Greek yogurt, whole grain granola, fruit, and nuts
5. Pre-made energy bites made with oats, honey, peanut butter, protein powder and your favorite nuts, seeds, and dried fruit with a side of fruit and milk
6. Whole wheat breakfast tacos with eggs, cheese, and breakfast sausage paired with fruit and chocolate milk
7. Breakfast pizza with whole grain crust (or pita bread), sausage, veggies, and cheese with grapes and milk
8. Whole grain avocado toast with fried eggs, paired with a banana and Greek yogurt
9. Whole grain cereal with milk, scrambled eggs, Greek yogurt, and apple slices
10. Smoothie made with milk, Greek yogurt, berries, banana, peanut butter, and ice

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**Many athletes have morning practices and don't get to go home to eat a complete breakfast before going to school. Athletes with this type of training schedule should bring Brown Bag Breakfasts to eat after practice. There are lots of nutrient-rich, shelf-stable foods that can work for a gym bag to help fuel athletes before class.**

### BROWN BAG BREAKFASTS

1. Beef jerky, baggie of whole grain granola, and nuts with a banana
2. Hard-boiled eggs, whole grain granola bar, peanut butter to-go cup, and apple slices
3. Whole grain blueberry muffin, almond butter, strawberries, and hard-boiled eggs
4. Beef jerky trail mix made with nuts, seeds, dried fruit, and granola with milk from cafeteria
5. Oat-based granola bar, pistachios mixed with dried fruit, banana, and milk from cafeteria
6. Whole wheat tortillas with peanut butter, banana, and honey paired with trail mix
7. Whole grain bagel with peanut butter or cream cheese, fruit, and beef jerky
8. Ready-to-drink protein shake with an apple and peanut butter to-go cup
9. Pre-made energy bites made with oats, honey, peanut butter, protein powder and your favorites nuts, seeds, and dried fruit with grapes and chocolate milk from cafeteria
10. Protein bar, fruit, baggie of whole grain granola, and milk from cafeteria

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