

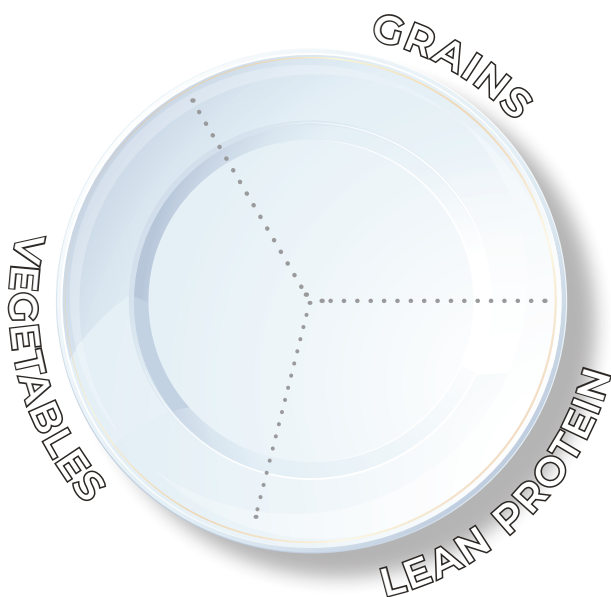


Powered by Protein



PROTEIN TIMING

Many athletes think as long as they eat enough protein, when they eat it does not really matter. However, emerging research suggests for optimal benefits, protein intake should also be paced throughout the day, meaning an athlete should be consuming protein at all meals and snacks.



So, how much protein do you need?

While protein recommendations are very individualized to the size of an athlete, as well as the training season he/she is in, according to recent research, consuming 20 to 30 grams of protein per meal may optimize muscle protein synthesis. A good way to think about it is making one-third of your plate protein at meals. This could be beef, fish, chicken, pork, or eggs.

You should also aim to get protein in snacks. Eating protein at each meal and snack can help ensure you're getting the protein needed to train, perform, and recover.

PROTEIN TIMING

Why should you eat protein throughout the day?

- **Sets the pace for the day** – Adding protein to breakfast is essential for setting the pace to your whole day of eating. If you skip on protein and choose an all-carbohydrate breakfast, you are setting yourself up to crave sugar later in the day, and likely suffer low energy slumps. Adding protein to breakfast, and all meals, helps regulate your blood sugar thus giving you steady energy throughout the day. High-quality breakfast proteins include lean beef sausage, eggs, cow's milk, cheese, and yogurt. Other foods like peanut butter, nuts, and seeds can also provide a few grams of plant-based protein.
- **Keeps your fuel clock in check** – Though carbohydrate is the body's preferred source of energy, if you eat it by itself you are likely to be hungry again soon after. Protein, on the other hand, slows down digestion helping you stay on a balanced eating schedule of meals and snacks every 2-4 hours. The addition of protein to a meal of carbohydrate will help you manage hunger throughout the day and can help you avoid energy crashes. Think of adding peanut butter to a bagel, eating beef jerky with a granola bar, or having string cheese when you eat fruit.
- **Helps prevent energy slumps** – Without protein at a meal, your blood sugar is likely to spike and drop throughout the day, potentially making you feel dizzy, shaky, somewhat nauseous, and likely to experience a headache. This is not good for focus at school, mental acuity, and especially not for practice and workouts! Adding protein to meals and snacks will help you think more clearly throughout your day whether you are doing math or running a football route.
- **Keeps you strong** – Powering meals and snacks with protein provides the body with the amino acids it needs to adequately build and repair lean muscle mass. You may have multiple training sessions throughout the day between athletics period and before/after school practices, making the demand for protein distribution even more important to properly fuel your body.
- **Helps with recovery** – Physical activity of any kind is most effective when paired with a protein-rich diet. Post-workout, the protein consumed provides the amino acids necessary for muscle repair and recovery, helping to stimulate further muscle protein synthesis. A good goal is to consume 15-25 grams of high-quality protein within the two hours following exercise.

| TYPICAL ATHLETE'S MEAL/SNACK | MEALS AND SNACKS POWERED WITH PROTEIN |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Bagel | → Bagel with peanut butter |
| Banana | → Banana and beef jerky |
| Granola bar | → Granola bar and string cheese |
| Crackers | → Crackers with turkey roll-ups |
| Cereal and milk | → Cereal and milk with eggs |
| Pasta | → Pasta with meat sauce |
| Smoothie with fruit and juice | → Smoothie with milk, yogurt, and fruit |
| Stir-fried rice bowl | → Stir-fried rice bowl with beef or chicken |
| Pretzels | → Pretzels in beef jerky trail mix with nuts/seeds |
| Waffles or pancakes | → Waffles or pancakes with Greek yogurt, berries, and nuts on top |

