



QUICK ENERGY BOOSTERS

Are you a busy executive who's only able to squeeze in a quick 3km or 5km run after work or early in the morning? When pressed for time, a quick and easy snack can get your energy levels up instantly.

Text Jaclyn Reuters



ENERGISE



Nutritional strategies leading up to any race begins with what you eat during your training sessions. What you consume frequently determines your end performance result. Design a sound nutrition plan for yourself. Remember that everyone has their unique style and needs. Keep practising this plan until it becomes second nature.

Before your training run, a quick and easy snack can be highly advantageous to improve your performance. The whole idea for pre-run snacks is to boost your energy levels immediately so that you are at maximum output for your run. The snack should be high in carbohydrates, moderate in protein and relatively low in fat and fibre to assist gastric emptying. It has to be familiar with the runner to prevent gastrointestinal upset.

The pre-run meal must be high in carbohydrate to top up blood glucose and glycogen stores. Carbohydrate is the main source of fuel for the muscles. Fat delays digestion which will cause discomfort during the run, so keep it low. The amount of fibre varies between individual tolerance, hence, wholemeal foods may not be necessary. Protein is not a major concern at this stage; the snack that you have usually contains small amounts.

THE WHOLE IDEA FOR PRE-RUN SNACKS IS TO BOOST YOUR ENERGY LEVELS IMMEDIATELY SO THAT YOU ARE AT MAXIMUM OUTPUT FOR YOUR RUN.

For early morning runs, it is slightly more challenging to eat solid foods just before you head out. In this instance, the previous day's dinner is more crucial. That meal should be higher in carbohydrate, say an extra heaped ladle of rice or extra small baked potato. Upon waking up, the easiest thing to do is to drink. Therefore, drink 300-500ml of fluid and you are set to go.

A sports drink should be your first option followed by water. A sports drink tops up blood glucose levels quickly and gives you instant energy.

If you normally squeeze in a run straight after work which is usually about five hours after lunch, you will benefit from a small solid meal. This can be either half a sandwich, small bun, yoghurt with cereal or even liquid drinks like a smoothie.

Whether it is a training run or the actual race day, you have to start off well hydrated. Your pre-run snack can help to achieve this. Dehydration

PRE-RUN SNACKS THAT CONTAIN 20-30G OF CARBOHYDRATE



30
TO 60
MINS

BEFORE YOUR RUN

- ▶ 500ml sports drink
- ▶ Diluted fruit juice (200ml fruit juice and 200ml water)
- ▶ 1 medium banana
- ▶ 10-15 jelly beans
- ▶ 1 slice of bread and 1 tablespoon of jam

1 TO 2
HOURS

BEFORE YOUR RUN

- ▶ Fruit smoothie made up with 200ml skimmed milk with 1 banana
- ▶ 250g of fruit-flavoured yoghurt
- ▶ 1 sports bar
- ▶ 45g bowl of breakfast cereal with 200ml milk
- ▶ 120g of fruit flavoured yoghurt and a muesli bar
- ▶ 1 cheese or chicken sandwich
- ▶ 2 slices of bread with honey
- ▶ 120g carton of low fat fruit yoghurt with 40g of breakfast cereal
- ▶ 1 ½ large or 210g baked potato with cottage or grated cheese filling
- ▶ 250ml skimmed milk and 1 wedge of watermelon
- ▶ Handful of dried fruits (45g)
- ▶ 1 large banana

can cause cramping and impair running performance. The best way to know how well you are hydrated is the colour of your urine. It should be clear to light yellow at least 2-3 times before your run. For longer runs, weigh yourself before and after each run. The difference in weight is equivalent to the amount of fluid you have lost e.g. 2kg weight loss is 2 litres of fluid lost through perspiration. So be sure to drink the same amount as you have lost during the run. Sports drink is still the best option. Practice makes perfect. Many runners often forget to drink during a run and this does slow them down significantly.

Depending on your schedule, the timing can be 30 minutes to 2 hours before the run. The nearer your snack time, the less food you should consume. A 3km run may only require fluid levels to be topped up. If your main meal was relatively high in carbs, you may only need water before your run.

You can aim to have 20-30g of carbohydrate in the hour before you run. That should be enough to top up your blood glucose level and muscle glycogen stores. **R**

DIGESTION TIME

The timing of food and drinks must be carefully planned to avoid stomach discomfort and unnecessary bowel movements during the run.

- ▶ Liquid meals empty more quickly from the stomach. It takes about 30 minutes to 1 hour for the meal to digest.
- ▶ Small solid meals take around 45 minutes to 1 hour to digest.
- ▶ Larger solid meals can take 1-3 hours to digest.

QUICK FACTS

- Chilled fluids are absorbed faster and cool the body faster.
- Caffeine intake can cause the runner to want to urinate during the run.
- Protein supplements are unnecessary.
- The stomach empties fluids at around 1 litre per hour.
- Too much sodium and too little fluid intake can cause cramping.