

— DO —

Boost your

# WORKOUT RESULTS

Break through a frustrating plateau—here's how to eat for peak fitness performance

BY KRISTENE QUAN

CONSULTING DIETITIAN ANDREA HOLWEGNER  
CONSULTING NUTRITIONIST TRIONNE MOORE  
CONSULTING PHYSIOLOGIST GREG WELLS



DO

## HYDRATE HALFWAY THROUGH

If you're planning to work up a sweat for a while, consider hydrating at the midway point with a drink that contains both sugar and electrolytes. Sports drinks act like liquid fuel, explains Calgary dietitian Andrea Holwegner, and will help keep your muscles energized for the whole workout. For shorter bouts of exercise, all you need is H<sub>2</sub>O.

DO

## POP PROTEIN AFTER YOU WORK OUT

When you exercise, your muscles get stressed and start to break down, which is a good thing. But if you don't give them the raw materials they need to recover, they'll break down more than you can build up. The fix? Protein. "Protein helps your body repair protein structures," says Toronto sports nutritionist Trionne Moore. So if you want to be stronger and faster, end your workouts with a handful of nuts or seeds, she says. "Roasted pumpkin seeds are one of my favourite post-workout snacks."



→ CHATELAINE.COM/DODIET

## EXERCISE ON SCHEDULE



So when is the best time to work out? "There are pros and cons to exercising at all times of day," says Greg Wells, a physiologist in Toronto. A morning workout after a light breakfast is good because it kick-starts your metabolism, while afternoon exercise helps dissolve some of the stress (and calories) from the day, he says. "But the best time of all to exercise is when you can do it most consistently." Think of your day in terms of managing your priorities rather than managing your time. "If exercise is a priority, it gets scheduled first, and everything else gets booked around it."





## DO FOLLOW THE 30-MINUTE RULE

Attention, fitness fanatics: Seize your metabolic window of opportunity! You have only 30 minutes after your workout to give your body the nutrients it needs to recover, says Moore. "If you wait too long to refuel, your body becomes 'over-trained' and won't repair itself equally to how much you worked out," she says. "Your stress hormones linger, and your muscles continue to break down." **Bonus:** Eating a post-workout snack within 30 minutes means your body uses the fuel more efficiently and is less likely to store it as fat.

DO

## UP THE ANTIOXIDANT ANTE



Turns out there is a downside to exercise: When your body is physically stressed and converting food into energy, it produces free radicals, which can damage cells, says Holwegner. But that doesn't mean you should spend more time on the couch. Instead, make sure your post-workout meals are packed with free-radical-fighting antioxidants, which means (you guessed it) eating more fruit and veggies. Holwegner recommends eating broccoli and sweet peppers to get a dose of vitamin C, as well as nuts, seeds and avocado to replenish vitamin E.



DO

## GRAB A BITE BEFOREHAND

Want to beat your time or score more points for your team? Then don't go in hungry, says Wells. He recommends eating a light pre-workout snack that's easy to digest to improve your performance. "It will put some glucose into your bloodstream, giving your muscles the fuel they need to function better," he says. Moore's favourite performance-boosting snack is a banana, which is high in carbohydrates and low in fibre. (You don't want to eat a lot of fibre before a workout, because your digestion takes a back seat when you're exercising, she says.) Other perfect pre-workout snacks include a rice cake with almond butter, half a peanut butter sandwich or a small bowl of oatmeal.

DO

## MIX HOT AND COLD

If the cold weather is keeping you gym-bound, you may want to trade the treadmill for a toque and head outside. A recent study in the *Journal of Clinical Investigation* shows that brown fat (yes, it's actually brown in colour) is activated when your body is exposed to cold temperatures. The colder the temperature, the more brown fat is burned to produce heat. The same study found you might want to warm up with a bowl of chili after your run: Capsinoids, found in chili peppers, also boost brown-fat activity and help you burn more energy.



YOGURT PHOTO: FABIO VASINI/GETTY IMAGES; BROCCOLI PHOTO: IDICATS/GETTY IMAGES; RICE CAKE PHOTO: ISTOCKPHOTO; WOMAN RUNNING PHOTO: ANDREW RICH/GETTY IMAGES

