



Proper nutrition is important for athletic performance, recovery and preventing injury. While the needs of each individual athlete varies, the basics are important for every athlete.

## Macronutrients

### Protein is important for:

- rebuilding and repairing muscles after exercise
- supporting the immune system

Protein-containing foods include chicken, beef, pork, fish, soy products, legumes, dairy, nuts and seeds.

### Fat is important for:

- helping the body absorb vitamins A, D, E and K—vitamin D is important for strong bones
- immune function
- hormonal health
- feeling satiated after a meal
- essential fatty acids to maintain body function

Fats and fat-containing products include olive oil, canola oil, butter, avocado, nuts and nut butters, seeds, and fatty fish.

### Carbohydrates are important for:

- fueling for optimal performance—carbs are your body's primary source of energy
- training longer and faster
- replenishing carbohydrate storage in muscles

Carbohydrate-containing foods include fruits, bread, pasta, rice, quinoa, farro, barley, potatoes and squash.

## Recovery

Timing is important when it comes to recovery nutrition. Eating a combination of carbohydrates and protein within 30–45 minutes after a workout or game will help your muscles recover so you can get back to practicing and performing at your best.

Our favorite recovery snacks include:

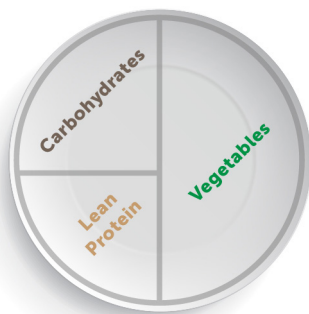
- chocolate milk
- smoothies
- yogurt and fruit
- banana and nut butter toast
- granola bars

## The Athlete's Plate

Carbohydrates, vegetables and lean protein are the key elements of an ideal diet for athletes. Dietitians for the U.S. Olympic Committee have taken this age-old wisdom and created Athlete's Plates. These guidelines can help you adjust your diet based on the intensity of your training. Be sure to incorporate fat into these meals as well. For example, sauté your vegetables in olive oil or spread some butter on your bread.

On days when you do a light workout or take a day off, you may choose to shift your plate to an "easy training" plate. When you exercise harder, you need more carbohydrates to help your body keep up with the demands of your training. On hard training days or days of a competition, consider selecting the "hard training" day plate which has more carbohydrates.

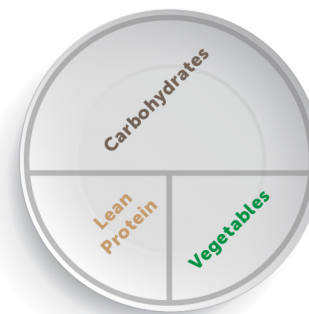
**EASY TRAINING**



**MODERATE TRAINING**



**HARD TRAINING**



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This piece is part of an informational series on sports injury prevention produced by the Orthopedics and Sports Medicine Center at Boston Children's. For materials on preventing injuries in other sports, call **617-355-3501** or visit [bostonchildrens.org/sportsmed](http://bostonchildrens.org/sportsmed).

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