

AN ATHLETE'S GUIDE TO BASIC FOOD PREP AND COOKING

Evidence-based sport science and
medicine guidance for developing athletes



These resources have been compiled based on the expertise and experiences of practitioners working with our GB Olympic and Paralympic programmes, across the Home Country Sports Institutes, together with other expert opinions and current literature findings.

The aim is to bring the most appropriate and useful knowledge being applied at the top end of British sports to the athletes, parents and coaches who are currently at an earlier stage of their development journeys.

We are confident that if this guidance is followed from an early point in an athlete's career, as well as by those supporting them, positive habits will be formed that will actively contribute to the athlete achieving a great deal of success, both in and out of competitive sport.

This practical food prep and cooking resource aims to complement our other nutrition resource titled 'Sports Nutrition Fundamentals To Improve Performance', which is also freely available.

Editable and presentable versions of these resources are available on a case-by-case basis; if you'd like to request these please email us at talent.matters@eis2win.co.uk.

Lauren Delany, MSc, BSc, RD, SENr (Performance Nutritionist / Dietitian) &
Dr Ben Holliss, PhD (Senior Performance Pathways Scientist).

An athlete's guide to basic food prep and cooking

Meal planning:

Keep it simple, make it enjoyable and convenient, and try something new



Shopping & shopping on a budget:

Have a plan, shop smart, and never, never, NEVER shop when you're hungry!



Kitchen literacy:

Essential utensils, develop your skills!



Travel nutrition:

Plan ahead, don't get caught out!



Recipe ideas:

A starter for 10!



Batch-cooking:

Home-made freezer meals, cook for the week, plan for leftovers



Reading food labels:

Ingredients, nutrition, and use by vs. best before dates



Food hygiene:

Safe food preparation, cooking, storage, defrosting & reheating



Eating out:

Have a plan, be sensible, but enjoy it!

Meal planning

Busy schedules, travel and fatigue can often have a big impact on nutrition behaviour.

Just as training is proactively planned, to help with achieving nutrition goals it's important to plan and prepare meals and snacks to ensure appropriate fuelling and recovery.

The benefits of meal planning:

Saves money

Saves time cooking during the week

Ensures there is always quality food in the house, allowing better nutrition decision making

Ensures there are always ingredients in the cupboards for cooking

Facilitates batch cooking to ensure nutritious food is available when busy or tired

Ensures a supply of homemade frozen 'back up meals'

Minimises food waste

Saves brain space by not having to think about what to cook each day

Helps with buying the weekly food shop

Top tips for successful meal planning:

Keep it simple:

Develop a basic structure around simple meals which you just make a couple of changes to based on your training programme each week.

Make it enjoyable:

Choose tasty meals and snacks that you like and include lots of variety (options, flavours, textures).

Make it convenient:

On busy days plan quick meals or have a batch cooked meal that's been stored in the fridge or freezer. Buy pre-chopped fruit / vegetables / meats to speed up prep. Use online shopping / home delivery at a convenient time, save shopping lists to account and use weekly.

Try something new:

Consider using a recipe box company e.g. Mindful Chef, Hello Fresh, Gousto.

Meal planning

0 1

Build a meal bank of recipes for different meals and snacks e.g. 10 breakfasts, 10 lunches, 10 dinner options, 10 post training snacks etc.

0 2

Plan your weekly activities into a weekly structure (including training, studies / work and other commitments)

0 3

Choose your meals from your recipe bank to add into your weekly structure taking into account when you have time to cook. E.g. are you going to use a batch cooked meal from the freezer on busy days or cook double portions at dinner to have lunch on the go the next day?

0 4

Write a shopping list taking account of what you already have in your cupboards. Structure you list using the isles in your local supermarket e.g. fruit & vegetables or dairy foods



Batch cooking

Batch cooking can be done in three different ways:

Freezer meals

Batch cooking meals to put in the freezer for you to defrost on a day when there is little time to cook

Meal prep

Dedicating 1-2 hours of your time to prep a selection of meals and snacks for the week

Plan leftovers

Cooking double portions at a meal so that you can use leftovers for lunch / dinner the next day

Having some ready-made homemade meals in the freezer is handy for busy days and days in which the unexpected happens, leaving you coming home late with little time to cook. Homemade freezer meals can be more nutritious than store bought ready-made meals as you are in complete control of what goes in. Not everything freezes well! Generally, 'wet dishes' which contain a sauce work best, for example:

Lasagne/ pasta bake
(beef, chicken, tuna)

Cottage pie
(beef, lamb)

Chilli con carne
(beef, turkey, beans, quorn)

Bolognese
(beef, turkey, beans, quorn)

Tagines
(beef, lamb, chicken, beans)

Fish pie
(salmon, cod, haddock, prawns)

Curry
(chicken, beef, prawns, lentils, pork)

Stews, casseroles, soups

Bulk out options with vegetables, beans and lentils so you have more of a complete meal only needing to cook some quick cooking carbohydrates to go with it e.g. pasta, rice, gnocchi, baked potato, quinoa, couscous.

Example weekly meal planner

	Monday (example day)	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast	Porridge with ss milk, yoghurt, mixed fruit and honey Tea						
Training	Gym: Before: Soreen x 1 During: Water Recovery: fruit and milk smoothie						
Lunch	Chicken, pesto and salad sandwich, yoghurt with granola						
Training	Team training: During: 500 mL water Recovery: 500 mL chocolate milk						
Dinner	Spaghetti bolognaise Side salad Water						
Pre-bed snack	Cottage cheese and wholemeal crackers						

Shopping on a budget



Be organised

Plan meals ahead.

Write a shopping list and stick to it.

Check 'use by' dates and eat accordingly.



Frozen foods

Frozen fruit, veg, meat and fish is cheaper, with the same nutritional content.

Buy 'reduced' items and freeze for cooking another day



Online resources

The 'comparasaurus' app compares product prices across supermarkets.

Online shopping is quick, easy and reduces temptations.



Where to buy?

Larger supermarkets are often cheaper than local convenience stores.

Compare prices of different supermarkets.

Avoid buying food at petrol / train stations.



In the supermarket

Look out for deals and buy in bulk.

Buy 'own' brands.

Collect coupons, use discounts and sign up for reward cards (i.e. Clubcard / Nectar Card).

Buy seasonal fruit and veg – often cheaper and more nutritious.



Reduce food waste

Check 'use by' dates and freeze to avoid waste.

Only cook the amount needed and eat any leftovers for lunch the next day.

Store food correctly (check which foods require refrigeration and avoid storing foods with high ethylene gas production (e.g. bananas, avocados) with ethylene-sensitive produce (e.g. potatoes, berries).



Where can you save money?

Spending too much in cafes?

Buying too many coffees instead of making your own?

Buying meal deals instead of preparing lunch at home?

Never shop when you're hungry!

Reading food labels

Checking the nutrition label is a good way to compare products, make healthier choices and ensure products meet your nutritional goals.

Ingredients list

Read the ingredients list to find out what a food is made of.

Ingredients are listed in order of weight in the product i.e. the ingredient in the biggest proportion is listed first.

Nutrition information

Compare products by checking out the nutrition information.

Use the 'per 100 g' column rather than per portion to compare products equally.



Dates on food labels

Understanding the difference between 'use-by' and 'best before' dates ensures you only consume food that is safe to consume and helps to minimise food wastage.

Use-by is about **food safety** and is the most important date. After the use-by date, don't eat it, cook it or freeze it.

Best before is about **food quality** and not food safety. The food will be safe to eat after this date but may not be at its best. Its flavour and texture might not be as good.

For both the use-by and best before dates to be valid you must **carefully follow the storage instructions**.

Check out [this video](#) from the Food Standards Agency.

	High	Medium	Low
Fat	>17.5 g / 100 g	3-17.5 g / 100 g	<3 g / 100 g
Saturated fat	>5 g / 100 g	>1.5-5 g / 100 g	<1.5 g / 100 g
Sugar	>22.5 g / 100 g	5-22.5 g / 100 g	<5 g / 100 g
Salt	>1.5 g / 100 g	0.3-1.5 g / 100 g	<0.3 g / 100 g

Store cupboard and freezer staples

The store cupboard is the hub of the kitchen!

Keeping a good stock of staple items means you'll be able to whip up a tasty meal at any time...



Flavours, oils & condiment

Herbs and spices
Olive oil
Balsamic vinegar
Stock cubes
Honey and Jam
Light soy sauce
Dijon mustard
Worcestershire sauce
Nut butters e.g. peanut, almond
Lazy ginger / garlic



Snacks

Oatcakes
Rice cakes
Cereal bars
Dried fruit
Nuts
Seeds



Tins, cartons and jars

Tinned tomatoes
Tomato passata
Tomato puree
Sundried tomatoes
Olives
Tinned fish e.g. tuna, mackerel, salmon, sardines
Tinned sweetcorn
Beans e.g. baked beans, kidney beans, three bean mix
Chickpeas
Tinned fruit (in juice) e.g. peaches, pineapple



Cereals, grains, legumes

Oats
Wholemeal pasta
Wholemeal noodles
Basmati rice
Quinoa
Couscous
Lentils
Wholemeal flour



Freezer

Meats: chicken, turkey, mince beef, salmon, white fish, prawns

Fruits: berries, mango, cherries

Veg: edamame beans, peas, broccoli, chopped onions, chopped garlic, butternut squash chunks, spinach, green beans, cauliflower

Herbs: coriander, basil, parsley

Freeze it yourself: sliced bananas, bolognaise sauce, homemade curry sauce, spice / stock cubes, wholemeal bread, fruit ice cubes, smoothie lollies

Cooking videos

There are loads of online cooking / food prep tutorials; here are some of our top recommendations:



[Kaltura cooking and knife skills](#)

A selection of quick cooking and knife skill videos



[SafeFood – 30 second 'how to' videos](#)

30 second videos on how to do useful tasks in the kitchen



[Jamie Oliver](#)

A selection of quick recipe videos and 'how to' videos



[Tasty](#)

A selection of video recipes



[Mindful Chef](#)

A selection of quick recipe videos and 'how to' videos



[BBC Good Food](#)

A selection of food preparation videos and basic recipes



[Eat Well For Less](#)

A selection of video recipes



Essential utensils

Having the proper kitchen equipment is essential to being able to cook delicious nutritious meals.



Chopping and preparing

Set of chopping boards (different colours help to keep raw vs cooked foods separate)

Knives and knife sharpener

Vegetable peeler

Grater

Can opener

Kitchen scales

Measuring jug

Whisk

Scissors



Pots, pans and bowls

Steamer

Saucepans (non-stick)

Frying pans (non-stick)

Wok (non-stick)

Grill pan

Colander

Sieve

Mixing bowl

Roasting trays

Casserole dish



Cooking and serving

Tongs

Spatula

Wooden spoon

Plastic spoon

Slotted spoon

Potato masher

Oven mitts

Food storage containers

Tea towels



Other useful 'nice to haves'

Blender

Hand blender

Food processor

Ladle

Slow cooker

Cooling rack

Meat thermometer

Garlic crusher

Lemon / lime squeezer

Cheese slicer

Quicker, easier and safer cooking for disabled athletes

Hygiene

Everything should have its place in the kitchen.

If you are visually-impaired, ensure lighting is sufficient.

Ensure all surfaces and equipment are properly cleaned, including the use of antibacterial spray or wipes.

Use different chopping boards for raw and cooked ingredients, and consider labelling / colour coding or adding braille stickers to indicate the raw food / meat boards.

Gather

Ensure your kitchen is set-up logically so you don't need to walk around a lot. For example put the tea, coffee and mugs next to the kettle.

Consider a storage system whereby similar ingredients are stored together. For example, put the carbohydrates such as pasta, rice, couscous and noodles together, store tinned proteins such as tuna, beans and lentils in the same place, and put herbs and spices in the same cupboard.

Get all necessary equipment and ingredients including any preparation such as chopping vegetables done prior to cooking.

For visually-impaired athletes, purchase crockery in suitable colours to ensure colour clash between surface and ingredients (e.g. coffee in a white mug).

Consider a regular online shop for all your basics to reduce the need to shop if this is time-consuming or stressful.

Consider using helpful equipment such as a long grabber, a tray for ingredients, non-slip mats or a kettle tipper.



Quicker, easier and safer cooking for disabled athletes

Prepare

Consider the height of your oven, hob and work surface.

Consider using pre-prepped foods such as chopped fruits or vegetables, spice and herb pastes or powders, and cooked meat to reduce the need to chop.

A silicone grip or electric tin opener can help to open food products

An auto-chopper, pizza cutter, scissors, food slicer or mandolin may reduce the need for knife skills require to chop vegetables. A bendy chopping board can also be useful to transfer foods.

Consider the use of equipment such as a cooking basket for safe draining of pasta and vegetables, a kettle tipper to help prevent dangerous hot water spillages, a spiked chopping board and non-slip Dycem mats to prevent ingredients and boards moving around.

Consider using a talking scales or a level indicator for those who are visually-impaired, or simply using measuring cups may be easier.

Cook

Use a talking temperature probe to check if meat / fish are cooked properly.

BBQ oven gloves may give you more grip and protection when using the oven.

An audible timer will help you know when food is cooked.

Consider using alternative cooking methods such as a microwave steamer or slow cooker.

Store

If you are visually-impaired, consider introducing a labelling system in large print or braille, or purchase a voice recorded label system using PenFriend. Use QR codes to scan labels and read more information on your phone in larger print.

Eating and drinking

Consider using helpful equipment to eat e.g. bendy grip cutlery, deep edged plate, plastic plates and cutlery, non slip mats or straws.



Food hygiene: preparation

Wash hands with soap and water before preparing / eating any food



Tie back long hair and **wear an apron**



Wash hands after touching **raw food** and before handling ready-to-eat food



Sanitise surfaces by first washing with hot, soapy water and then spraying and wiping down with anti-bacterial sprays



Use different utensils, plates and chopping boards for raw and cooked food



Wash utensils, plates and chopping boards for raw and cooked food thoroughly between tasks



Rinse fresh fruit and veg under running water before eating / cooking



Do not wash raw meat



Wash or change dish cloths, tea towels, sponges and oven gloves regularly and let them dry before using again



Food hygiene: cooking

Cooking food at the right temperature and for the correct length of time will ensure that any harmful bacteria are killed.

Always check the advice on food packaging and follow the cooking instructions provided.

How time and temperature kill bacteria:

- Bacteria usually grow in the 'Danger Zone' between 5°C and 60°C. Below 5°C, growth is stopped or significantly slowed down. Above 60°C the bacteria start to die.
- Minimise the time that foods are within the 'Danger Zone'.
- Cook food until it has reached 70°C and stayed at that temperature or hotter for 2 minutes or more (hot food needs to be kept at 60°C or above).

Meat:

Before serving pork, poultry and minced meat, make sure it is steaming hot and cooked all the way through.

When meat is minced to make a burger, any harmful bacteria from the surface of the meat can get spread throughout the burger. As a result, rare and undercooked burgers can have harmful bacteria on the inside and may cause food poisoning if not fully cooked.

When cutting into the thickest part of the meat, check that none of the meat is pink and that any juices run clear.

When roasting a whole bird such as chicken or turkey, cook the stuffing separately, not inside the bird.

100 °

Hot food zone

Bacteria is destroyed

60 °

Temperature danger zone

Bacteria grows quickly

5 °

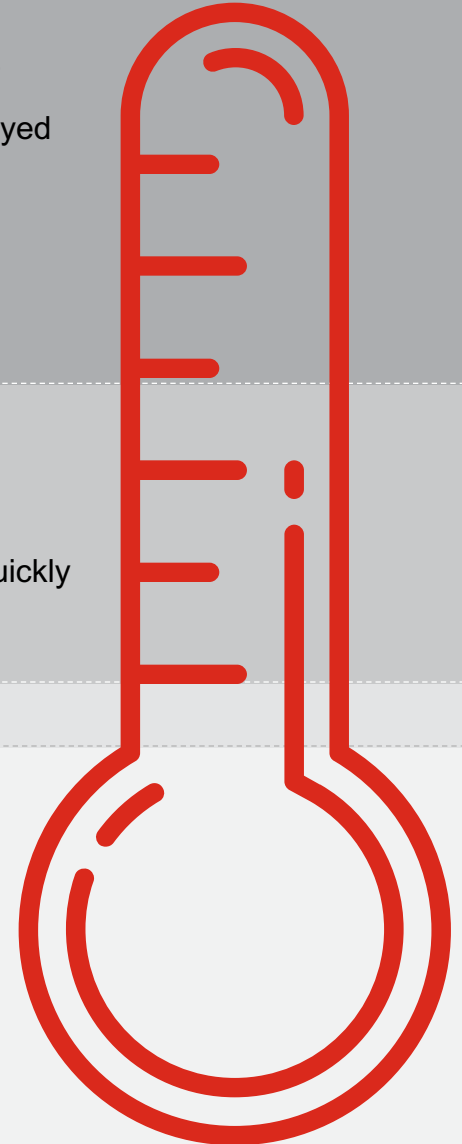
Cold food zone

0 °

Frozen food zone

Bacteria does not grow

-18 °



Food hygiene: storage

Chilling food properly helps stop harmful bacteria from growing:

Store any food with a 'use by' date, as well as cooked dishes, salads and dairy products, in your fridge.

Keep chilled food out of the fridge for the shortest time possible during preparation.

Cool cooked food quickly at room temperature and then place in the fridge within one to two hours.

Follow the storage instructions on packaging.

Use a fridge thermometer to check the temperature is 5°C or below.

Don't overfill your fridge. Leaving space allows air to circulate and maintains the set temperature.

Freezing food

A freezer acts as a pause button - food in a freezer won't deteriorate and most bacteria cannot grow in it, though note that food should only be frozen in the freezer for up to three months.

Pre-packaged food can be frozen right up to the 'use by' date. Leftovers and homemade goods should be frozen as soon as possible. Make sure any warm dishes are cooled before putting them in the freezer.

To stop the cold air in the freezer from drying food out place food in an air-tight container or wrap it well in a freezer bag / wrap.

It doesn't matter if you cook your meat from frozen or fresh; you can use your leftovers to make a new meal. This new meal can then be frozen, but make sure you only reheat it once.



Fridge organisation

Door shelf:

Condiments

Upper shelves

Foods that don't need cooking

Lower/middle shelves

Dairy

Bottom shelves

Raw meat and fish

Drawers

Vegetables and salads



Food hygiene: defrosting and reheating



Defrost frozen food safely before cooking or eating it



Avoid defrosting food at room temperature; ideally defrost it fully in the fridge (check the guidance on food packaging and allow enough time for it to defrost properly)



If this isn't possible, put food into a container and **defrost using cold running water** or use a microwave on the defrost setting just before cooking



Make sure your food is **fully defrosted before cooking**. Partially defrosted food may not cook evenly, meaning that harmful bacteria could survive the cooking process



Once food has been defrosted, **eat it within 24 h**



Previously cooked and frozen meat should **only be reheated once**

Seven food safety myths

How long can you safely eat rice for after cooking?

Rice may be eaten cold if it is cooled down quickly. Put the rice in the fridge and consume within 24 h. Keep rice in the fridge for no more than one day until reheating. When you reheat any rice always check the dish is steaming hot all the way through.

Should you store eggs in the fridge?

Eggs should be stored in a cool, dry place, ideally in the fridge.

Can you eat brown bananas?

Fruit that is a bit overripe, such as brown bananas, wrinkly apples and slightly mushy strawberries, can be eaten as long as they don't contain any mould.

Should you wash fruit?

Yes, always wash fruit and vegetables with water before you eat them.

Can you eat potatoes when they go green and start to sprout?

If potatoes have sprouted, remove the sprouts before use and cut off any green or rotten bits before using. Store them in a dark, cool and dry place.

How long can you eat vegetables after their best before date?

Vegetables past their best before date may become wrinkly or mushy, but are safe to eat as long as there is no visible sign of decay. Make sure to check for rotting or mould before eating.

Is it safe to reheat meat in the microwave?

You can reheat meat in a microwave once. Make sure that it is steaming hot all the way through before eating.

Travel nutrition

Travel is often a period that can be challenging to stick to nutrition goals. Following the below tips will help you stick to your goals and minimise the risk of illness during travel.



Plan ahead

Follow a checklist.

Plan all your meals and snacks in advance.

Bring back-up foods in case travel is delayed or availability of food at your destination is not adequate.

Research what the food will be like at your destination and plan some back-up options.

Ensure you are well rested and hydrated in the days leading up to travel.



Travel

Prioritise sleep and rest during travel.

Set watch to local time on boarding the plane.

Fill up a water bottle when through security, and stay hydrated throughout.

Ensure you can be self-sufficient for your food and hydration needs.

Avoid boredom eating.

Avoid caffeine after 4pm at the time of your destination.

Avoid alcohol.



On arrival

Acclimatise to the new time zone to minimise jet lag symptoms.

Adopt a good sleep routine upon arrival to maximise recovery and immunity.

If concerned about the availability/convenience of fresh fruit and veg, consider taking a daily multivitamin (Informed Sport certified).

Please see our separate [‘MINIMISING YOUR RISK AND RECOVERING QUICKLY FROM ILLNESS’](#) resource, which includes some practical tips to avoid illness when travelling.

Travel / kitbag packing list

Maintaining a quality diet whilst traveling to camps and competitions can be a challenge.

As a result, there may at times be a greater reliance on easily transportable options to optimise your nutrition when food quality and availability is compromised:



Fuel foods

- Popcorn
- Porridge pots
- Malt loaf
- Nakd bars
- Eat Natural bars
- Bagels
- Wraps
- Flapjacks
- Oatcakes
- Pots of rice pudding
- Pre-cooked rice & grain packs



Recovery foods

- Biltong
- Nuts
- Seeds
- UHT milk cartoons
- Tinned fish (tuna, mackerel, salmon)
- Tuna sachets
- Pre-cooked meats
- Yoghurts
- Cottage cheese
- Snap pack baked beans



Support foods

- Fresh fruit
- Dried fruit
- Raw vegetables sticks with hummus
- Fruit juice cartons



Hydration

- No-sugar squash squeeze
- Tea bags (variety)
- Coffee
- Hot chocolate sachets



Meals

- Sport Kitchen pots (main meals only as no added protein)
- John West snack pots and pouches
- Quorn pots
- Merchant Gourmet precooked grains



Equipment

- Cutlery
- Cool bag
- Water bottle
- Lunch boxes
- Shaker
- Spare water bottle to fill with ice & use as a cool pack



Immune support

- Chewing gum
- Byotrol hand foam
- Coldzyme mouth spray
- Vicks First Defence spray
- Anti bacterial wipes
- Face mask
- Milton tablets (to clean drinks bottles)



Other

- Compression tights / socks
- Eye mask
- Ear plugs
- Travel pillow
- Entertainment

Eating out top tips

Always **plan ahead** and aim to make the right choices when eating out according to your training, body composition and performance goals.



When possible, **research restaurants** and menus in advance.



Always **explore the complete menu** or buffet before making your choices.



Aim to **replicate meal choices** and portion sizes eaten at home.



Look for items on the menu that are **baked, grilled, boiled, poached, or steamed**. These cooking techniques use less fat and so are more likely to support nutritional goals.



Tomato-based sauces are usually lower in calories and fat than cream-based sauces.



Fish dishes are great choices for lean sources of protein.



For meat dishes, look for **leaner cuts**, such as skinless chicken breasts, turkey breasts, pork loin and beef sirloin.



If you having a dessert, opt for **fruit dishes or a sorbet** as something lower in calories.



If you have questions, **ask your server or other restaurant staff** about how items are prepared and what the ingredients are.



Be aware of **breads and group starters** as this can easily lead to over-eating.



Take a **relaxed attitude to eating** among a large group and focus on your goals and not the goals of other athletes.



Many salads can be quite high in calories due to the additional dressings added to them. Ask for **salad dressings to be served on the side** so you can add as little or as much as you require.



Check your meal against the **performance meal wheel** to ensure you have a balance of fuel, recover and support foods.



Eating out top tips

Customize your order

- Don't be afraid to ask for a healthier option of a menu item.
- Choose water or low sugar drinks to go with your meal e.g. sparkling water with fresh lime juice. If you are looking to increase carbohydrate intake then fruit juices may be a good option.
- If you have a choice of side dishes, opt for baked potato or steamed vegetables.
- Ask for sauces on the side.

Enjoy your restaurant experience!



Pre-training breakfasts

Get the most out of your training with a breakfast that packs it all in.....

Chia, raspberry and banana porridge

Cook jumbo oats with milk and chia seeds. Add some frozen raspberries and cook through. Mash a banana, stir in and serve straight away. Require more protein? Add some Greek yoghurt.

Eggs and avo on wholemeal seeded toast

Cook your eggs your way: scrambled, poached, boiled etc. Mash some avo onto some wholemeal seeded toast. Serve with grilled tomatoes / mushrooms, wilted spinach etc. Require more protein? Have with a large latte.

Chia yoghurt bowl

Mash a banana and mix with oats and chia seeds. Mix in some high protein Greek yoghurt and serve with fresh berries, red grapes and pecan halves. Require more protein? Stir in some extra Greek yoghurt and a little milk.

Wholemeal raspberry and banana pancakes

Mix 2 large eggs with 90 g wholemeal flour, 1/4 tsp baking powder, 40 mL milk. Mash a medium banana, crush a large handful of frozen raspberries and stir both in. Cook the pancakes (should make 4-6) and serve with Greek yoghurt, fresh berries and crushed nuts. Require more protein? Have with a large latte.



Rest day breakfasts

Shakshuka

Fry a diced red onion with some chopped garlic and chilli (optional).
Stir in 2 tins of chopped tomatoes with a tsp of smoked paprika, ground cumin & ground coriander, plus salt & pepper.
Cook for 10 mins.
Using the back of a ladle, make 4 wells in the sauce and crack an egg into each.
Put a lid on the pan and cook on a low heat for 6-8 mins.
The egg white should be cooked & the yolk soft & runny.
Serve straight away with some steamed broccoli or chopped spinach.
Can add some crumbled feta & serve with some malt sourdough.



Cottage cheese pancakes

Blend 100 g cottage cheese, 50 g rolled oats (no pre-cooking necessary) and 3 medium eggs together until smooth using a blender or whisk.
Fry small pancakes in a pan with a little coconut oil on a medium heat in batches.
Serve with Greek yoghurt and fresh / tinned / stewed fruit.

Recipe adapted from [this website](#) with thanks (check it out for further info).



Quick meals ideas

Wrap / pita bread pizzas – ham, pineapple, tomatoes and mozzarella

Chicken and bean quesadilla

Prawn, vegetable and rice stir fry

Chicken and mixed vegetable fajitas

Tuna sweetcorn salad wrap

Potato and vegetable frittata

Beans and eggs on toast



Quick meals ideas

Moroccan Mince and Couscous

10 min to prepare,
20 min to cook

Serves 4

Ingredients

2 tbsp olive oil
2 medium onions, roughly chopped
500 g extra lean beef mince
1 tbsp ground cumin
1 tsp ground cinnamon
2 tsp ground turmeric
100 g dried apricots, quartered
600 mL vegetable stock
280 g couscous
Grated zest of 2 lemons
4 tbsp fresh mint, chopped
50 g unsalted cashews, toasted under the grill



Steps

1. Heat the oil in a large non-stick pan, add the onions and cook gently for 5 min until they soften. Stir in the beef mince and spices and cook until browned, about 6-8 min.
2. Add the apricots and stock. Bring to the boil, then turn the heat down and cook gently for 10-15 min. Continue cooking until juice is reduced.
3. Meanwhile, make up the couscous following the packet instructions – it will take about 450 mL boiling water to give it a nice fluffy texture. Fork through the lemon zest and mint. Season to taste.
4. Spoon the couscous onto serving plates, pile the mince mixture on top and scatter with the cashews.

Grilled Chicken with Zesty Rice

10 min to prepare,
20 min to cook

Serves 4

Ingredients

200 g basmati rice
185 g runner beans, sliced
200 g frozen British garden peas
460 g British chicken fillet portions
1 orange pepper, deseeded, cut into chunks
3 tbsp olive oil
2 tsp Dijon mustard
2 lemons (zest and juice of 1 ½, the other ½ cut into wedges)
100 g baby leaf spinach



Steps

1. Bring a large pan of water to the boil, add the rice and cook for 12-13 min, adding the runner beans and peas for the final 3 min. Drain and rinse under cold water, transfer to a large bowl.
2. Meanwhile, heat a griddle pan over a high heat. Rub the chicken fillets and pepper slices with 1 tbsp of the oil and cook on the griddle for 10 min, turning once, until the chicken is cooked through with no pink remaining and the peppers are charred and tender. You may need to do this in 2 batches. Slice the chicken breasts.
3. Make the dressing: whisk together the remaining olive oil, the mustard, 50 mL of water and the lemon juice, then season with freshly ground black pepper.
4. Add the griddled pepper to the rice and runner bean mixture and stir through the spinach. Pour over the dressing and toss to combine.
5. Divide the rice salad between plates, top with the sliced chicken and garnish with the lemon zest. Serve with the lemon wedges.

Quick meals ideas

Eat a Rainbow Omelette

Makes 1 serving

Ingredients

- 1 tsp rapeseed oil
- 1 small red onion, finely diced
- ½ an orange / yellow pepper, finely diced
- 10 baby plum tomatoes, finely diced
- Small handful spinach leaves, chopped
- 20 g feta cheese, cubed
- 2-3 free range eggs
- Salt and pepper

Steps

1. Crack the eggs into a jug or bowl and whisk with a little salt and pepper. Add the chopped feta and set aside.
2. Turn the grill on high.
3. On the hob, heat the oil on a medium heat in a small non-stick frying pan. Fry the onion until golden brown, add the pepper and cook for 2 min. Add the tomatoes and cook for a further min. Add the spinach and mix the vegetables well.
4. Pour in the eggs and feta, quickly stirring to coat the vegetables. Leave to cook through for a few minutes, then place the pan under the grill to brown the top of the omelette (be careful; the pan handle will likely get very hot, so use an oven glove when moving it!)
5. Serve with a mixed salad and eat immediately.



Evening meal ideas

Chicken, Lime and Cashew Stir Fry

Makes 2 servings

Ingredients

2 skinless chicken breasts
1 tbsp sesame oil
1 red chilli
1 tbsp finely chopped ginger
2 cloves garlic finely chopped
Juice and zest of 1 lime
1 bunch of coriander chopped
4 tbsp cashew nuts
1 large handful beansprouts
4 kale leaves finely chopped
4 tbsp soy sauce
1 tbsp fish sauce

Steps

1. Slice the chicken breasts lengthways into thin slivers and set aside. Now ensure your remaining ingredients are already prepared and close to hand as the cooking process is very quick.
2. Now heat a large wok over a high heat and add the sesame oil. Add the chicken and cook until coloured.
3. Add the ginger and chilli and cook for a further 1 min.
4. Add the cashew nuts, bean sprouts and kale leaves and cook for 1-2 min. Next add the lime juice and zest, soy sauce and fish sauce and give the pan a good toss. Allow the sauce to reduce slightly and add the coriander. Give it one last toss and serve.
5. This is perfect served with steamed pak choi and steamed rice



Evening meal ideas

Healthy Fish Pie

Makes 4 servings (adapted from Tesco.com)

Ingredients

450 mL milk
2 bay leaves
3 spring onions, finely chopped
3 tbsp cornflour
1 heaped tsp Dijon mustard
2 tbsp chopped dill
160 g cod, cut into chunks
160 g haddock, cut into chunks
160 g salmon, cut into chunks
150 g raw king prawns
100 g frozen peas
2 potatoes, peeled (about 200 g)
2 tbsp olive oil
25 g Cheddar cheese, grated
Steamed broccoli, to serve

Steps

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C (fan). Pour the milk into a large saucepan, add the bay leaves and spring onion and simmer. Mix the cornflour and 3 tbsp cold water to form a paste, then stir into the milk and simmer for 3-4 min, until thickened slightly. Season well, add the mustard and dill and cook for another 2 min. Remove the bay leaves and discard. Stir in the fish mix, prawns and peas and pour into a 1.5 litre ovenproof dish.
2. Place the whole peeled potatoes into a large pan of boiling salted water and blanch for 1 minute. Remove from the pan, cool slightly, grate into a large clean tea towel and squeeze gently to remove excess liquid. Tip the potato into a bowl, add the olive oil and Cheddar cheese and season well. Then scatter over the fish.
3. Place in the preheated oven and bake for 30 min or until bubbling hot and golden on top. Serve with steamed green vegetables.



Evening meal ideas

Spaghetti bolognese

Chilli con carne with basmati rice

Tuna and broccoli pasta bake

Chicken Thai red curry with basmati rice

Tofu pad Thai with wholegrain noodles

Fish kedgeree with boiled eggs

Beef stew with vegetables and potatoes

Bean and vegetable curry with basmati rice

Lemon and herb baked seabass with steamed greens and new potatoes

Teriyaki tofu and mixed vegetable stir fry served with rice noodles

Cajun spiced salmon fillets with roasted vegetables potatoes



Snacks - fuelling

Granola Breakfast Bar

Ingredients

- 12 g blueberries
- 1 pinch ground cinnamon
- 34 g dates
- 17 g dried figs
- 11 g goji berries
- 5 g flaxseeds
- 34 g rolled oats
- 4 g pumpkin seeds
- 2 g agave nectar
- ½ tsp vanilla essence



Steps

1. Toast the porridge oats until golden brown.
2. Place the dates and figs into a pan of water simmer for 45 min. Reduce this by half, ensuring the natural sugars don't burn.
3. To this mixture place the goji berries, blue berries and flax seeds and leave for 10 min. Stir in the remaining ingredients.
4. Place mixture into a baking tray and cook for 15-20 min at 150oc. Allow to cool and cut.

Banana Oat Muffins

10 mins to prep,
25 mins to cook

Makes 12 muffins

Ingredients

- 50 mL olive oil
- 1 kcal olive oil spray
- 70 mL olive / coconut oil
- 150 g honey
- 2 free range eggs
- 3 mashed banana
- 60 mL milk
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 80 g oats
- 200 g wholemeal flour



Steps

1. Preheat oven to 175°C (fan).
2. Grease a muffin tin with 1 kcal olive oil spray.
3. Whisk together in a bowl olive / coconut oil, honey, eggs, 3 mashed bananas & milk.
4. Then whisk in cinnamon, vanilla extract, baking soda & salt.
5. Finally mix in with a spoon the oats & wholemeal flour.
6. Spoon out into the 12 muffin cups and top with a sprinkle of oats.
7. Bake in oven for 25 min or until a skewer comes out clean.

No bake energy balls

Mix all ingredients together in a bowl. Make balls and chill in the fridge for 1hr min or overnight.

Oat & honey balls

Serves 12

- 1 ½ cups rolled oats
- ¾ cup nut butter e.g. peanut butter
- ½ cup raisins
- 2 tbsp honey

Kcal	Carbs	Pro	Fat
173	15g	5.5g	9.5g

Cranberry & oat balls

Serves 10

- ½ cup (125 g) peanut butter
- 1 ½ cups (125 g) uncooked oatmeal (quick oats)
- 3.5 oz (100 g) dried cranberries
- 1 semi-ripe banana

Kcal	Carbs	Pro	Fat
196	24g	4.2g	8.8g

Oat, coconut & flaxseed balls

Serves 12

- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1 cup coconut flakes
- ½ cup ground flax seed
- ½ cup raisins
- ½ cup peanut butter (or other nut/non-nut butter)
- ⅓ cup honey
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

Kcal	Carbs	Pro	Fat
214	17g	4g	4g

Date & peanut butter balls

Serves 10

- 1 cup oats
- 8 tbsp peanut butter
- 36 dates (chopped)

Kcal	Carbs	Pro	Fat
221	24g	5.2g	11.2g



No bake energy balls

Mix all ingredients together in a blender. Make balls, roll in oats or desiccated coconut and chill in the fridge for 1hr min or overnight

Lemon pie energy balls

Serves 10

- 1 ½ cups rolled oats
- 1 cup chopped dates
- 4 tbsp lemon juice (or juice ½ - 1 lemon)
- 1 tsp vanilla extract (optional)

Kcal	Carbs	Pro	Fat
92	18g	2.2g	1g

Banana bread energy balls

Serves 8

- 2 cups rolled oats
- 1 large banana
- 3 tbsp honey
- Oats / desiccated coconut to roll balls in

Kcal	Carbs	Pro	Fat
127	24g	3g	1.6g

Carrot cake energy balls

Serves 10

- 1 ½ cups oats, blended into flour
- 2 carrots, chopped/ grated
- ½ cup dates
- 1 cup raisins
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- ½ tsp nutmeg
- ¼ tsp ginger
- ¼ - ½ cup water

Kcal	Carbs	Pro	Fat
126	24g	1.4g	1.3g

'Nakd' balls

Serves 3-6

- ½ cup dried dates
- ½ cup cashew nuts
- 3 tbsp sultanas
- 2 tbsp cocoa powder
- ½-1 tsp peppermint or orange essence

Serves	Kcal	Carbs	Pro	Fat
3	273	34g	6g	12g
6	136	17g	3g	6g



Snacks – high protein

Egg muffins

Great healthy snacks that can be made with any combination of vegetables

Makes 12 muffins



Ingredients

6 free range eggs
Salt & pepper
Fresh coriander
+ any combination of:
12 cherry tomatoes (chopped) & 50 g feta (crumbled)
½ red pepper (diced) & 80 g ham (chopped)
6 mushrooms (sliced) & 3 spring onions (finely chopped)

Steps

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C (fan).
2. Crack the eggs into a jug, add roughly chopped coriander and some salt & pepper, then whisk lightly.
3. Brush the muffin tin with a little oil (or use your finger). Pour the mixture equally between the 12 x holes.
4. Add your desired ingredients to each.
5. Bake for 15 min, or until muffins have risen and golden.
6. Take out of the oven and allow to cool for 2-3 min, then remove from the tin. Enjoy warm, or allow to cool before storing in the fridge in Tupperware for 1-2 days.

Frozen Yoghurt Bark

A great high protein dessert!

Makes 3 servings

Ingredients

500 mL Skyr natural yoghurt
20 g honey (to taste)
100 g fresh raspberries (cut into small pieces)
100 g fresh strawberries (cut into small pieces)
10 g pomegranate seeds
30 g dried cranberries
20 g pistachio nuts

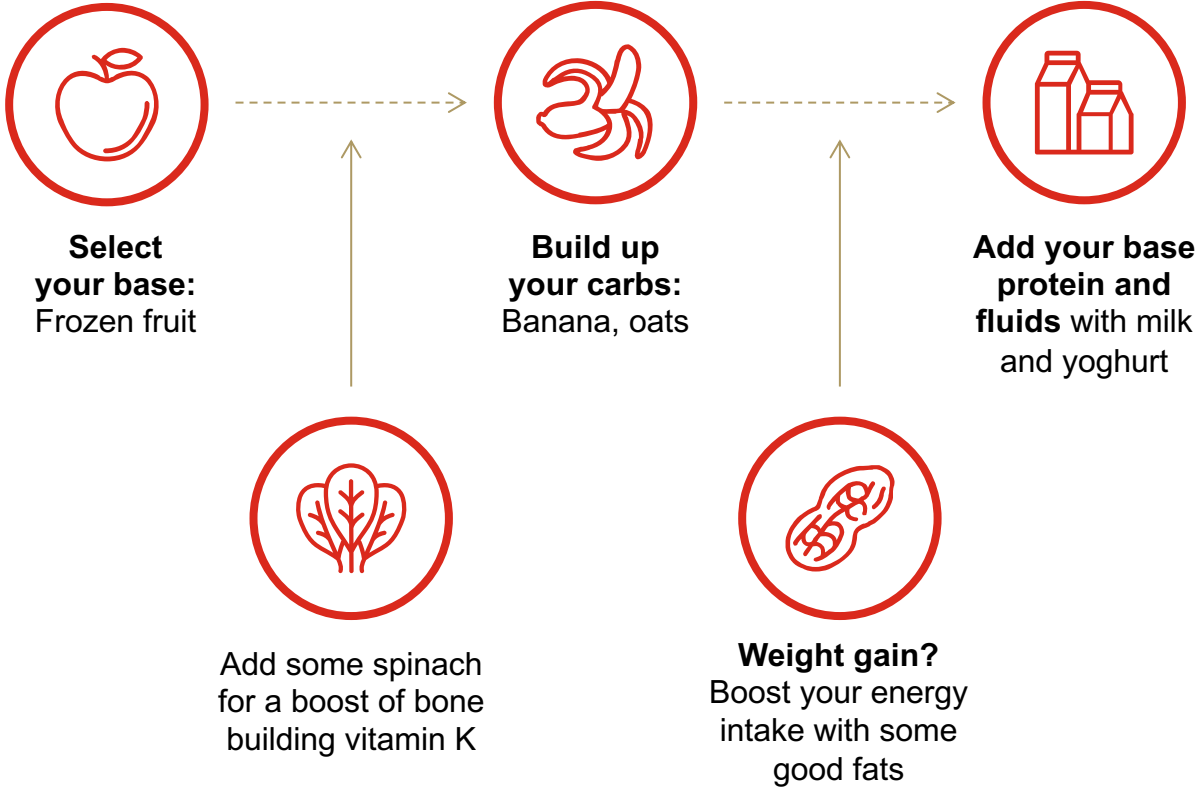


Steps

1. In a bowl combine the yogurt with the honey to get your desired sweetness.
2. Add the berries, cranberries and pomegranate seeds into the mixture, and spread the mix on a small baking tray lined with cling film.
3. Scatter over the pistachios and place tray in freezer for a minimum of 3 h to harden
4. Break into pieces and enjoy immediately!

Recovery smoothie

Train hard; eat smart; be the best you can



Cherry & coconut cocktail

- ½ cup of frozen cherries
- 1 banana
- 1 tbsp oats
- 1 tbsp chia seeds
- 1 tbsp high protein Greek yoghurt
- 200 mL milk
- 1 scoop unflavoured protein powder
- 1 tbsp desiccated coconut

Tropical twist

- ½ cup frozen pineapple & mango
- 1 banana
- 1 tbsp high protein Greek yoghurt
- 100 mL pineapple juice
- 100 mL Alpro/Koko coconut milk
- 1 scoop unflavoured protein powder
- 1 tbsp desiccated coconut

The Hulk

- ½ cup of frozen mango
- 1 banana
- 1 handful of spinach
- 1 tbsp oats
- 1 tbsp cashew nuts (optional)
- 1 tbsp high protein Greek yoghurt
- 150-200 mL milk
- 1 scoop unflavoured protein powder

Berry Blast

- ½ cup of frozen mixed berries
- 1 handful of spinach
- 1 banana
- 1 tbsp oats
- 1 tbsp chia seeds
- 1 tbsp high protein Greek yoghurt
- 200 mL milk
- 1 scoop unflavoured protein powder

The Gainer

- 2 bananas
- 2 tbsp peanut butter
- ½ tbsp cacao powder
- 1 tbsp high protein Greek yoghurt
- 200 mL milk
- 1 scoop chocolate protein powder

Choco Banana

- 2 bananas
- 1 tbsp oats
- ½ tbsp cacao powder
- 1 tbsp chia seeds
- 1 tbsp high protein Greek yoghurt
- 200 mL milk
- 1 scoop chocolate protein powder

5 practical nutrition behaviour change strategies

There is a lot of information in this resource, so below are 5 top strategies to support athletes to make practical nutrition behaviour changes:

1: Start small

It can be easy to read the information in these resources and try to overhaul your whole diet, making loads of big changes. However, it is unlikely that these changes will be stuck to long-term. Start by focusing on 2-3 small diet changes that you believe to be a priority for health or performance.



2: Create smart goals

Set small goals for yourself to achieve based on the information in this resource. Ensure that any new changes or food goals you set are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound (SMART).

For example, I will increase my fruit and vegetable intake by two portions every day for the next two weeks by including one piece of medium fruit (e.g. pear, apple or banana) with my post training mid-morning snack and one bowl of soup or salad with lunch.



3: Habit formation

Building healthy habits can involve putting yourself in situations in which you are more likely to engage in a food behaviour, planning to repeat the behaviour, and attaching a small reward or deterrent to the behaviour. Stacking habits, by attaching a new habit to an existing one (e.g. drinking a pint of water with your breakfast every morning) can also help, as well as exchanging a current habit for a new one (e.g. every Sunday evening you plan your training for the week, why not also plan your meals and snacks too?)



4: Peer-modelling

Parents and coaches are role models for younger athletes so they should practice what they preach. Successful senior athletes can also be hugely influential.



5: Promote trial and error

A process of trial and error is important for athletes to go through with food to learn what foods work well and what food don't suit. Encourage athletes to try new foods or different timings around training, evaluate it afterwards and decide whether to keep it in or leave it out. Patience is important as you might need to trial foods a few times in different situations to find which works out best, for example for a competition day.



FURTHER INFORMATION

RECIPIE RESOURCES :

Leftovers:

<https://www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/recipes>

EIS Nutrition Hub:

<https://www.eis2win.co.uk/resources/nutrition-hub/>

BBC Good Food:

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes>

Mindful Chef:

<https://app.mindfulchef.com/recipes>

Tesco Real Food:

<https://realfood.tesco.com/>

GENERAL NUTRITION INFORMATION

BDA Food fact sheets <https://www.bda.uk.com/food-health/food-facts.html>

SPORTS NUTRITION INFORMATION

BDA food factsheets on sport <https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/sport-exercise-nutrition.html>

AIS fact sheets <https://www.ais.gov.au/nutrition>

Sports Dietitians Australia factsheets <https://www.sportsdietitians.com.au/factsheets/>

Team USA sport nutrition factsheets <https://www.teamusa.org/nutrition>

IOC Nutrition for athletes booklet <https://www.sportsoracle.com/Nutrition/Resources/>

FIND A QUALIFIED SPORTS NUTRITIONIST

Sport and Exercise Nutrition Register (SENR): <http://www.senr.org.uk/>

ANTI-DOPING

[UK Anti-Doping - 100% me](#)

Supports and educates athletes by providing anti-doping advice and guidance. Five key values: hard work, determination, passion, respect and integrity.

[BASES - inadvertent doping in sport](#)

Outlines the most common ways that athletes and others inadvertently commit anti-doping rule violations, including contaminated supplements and foods, and gives suggestions to minimise the risks.

[Informed-Sport](#)

A global quality assurance program for sports nutrition products. Every batch of a supplement product and/or raw material that bears the Informed-Sport logo has been tested for banned substances. Use the search function and cross reference both numbers before consuming.

[Global Drug Reference Online \(Global DRO\)](#)

Provides athletes and support personnel with information about the prohibited status of specific medications based on the current WADA Prohibited List. Global DRO does not apply to dietary supplements, and can only be used for products sold in the UK, Canada, the US, Japan, Australia and Switzerland.

Evidence-based sport science and medicine guidance for developing athletes

DESIGNED BY WWW.FRANCSEEMMA.COM

