

# Get your nutrition strategy right

**T**HINK of your body as a high-performance car engine. Without the right fuel, it will not get far or drive fast. You can build a structured training plan, but without a nutrition strategy to match your efforts, it may fall short.

Whether you are a weekend warrior or a seasoned marathoner, sports nutrition should be integrated into every phase of your workout journey.

## THE RIGHT NUTRIENTS FOR BEST RESULTS

Nutrition starts with the basics - calories, and macronutrients tailored to your fitness goals.

Here's how to break it down:

**Carbohydrates:** Your body's go-to fuel for endurance. Eating fast digesting carbs 30-45 minutes before a workout helps maintain energy without risking digestive distress.

General training needs range from 5.5-7g per kg of body weight, while endurance athletes may require 7-10g/kg. It's even higher for ultra-endurance events.

**Protein:** Essential for muscle



*You can build a structured training plan, but without a nutrition strategy to match your efforts, it may fall short.* PICTURES CREDIT: HERBALIFE



*Smart nutrition is more than what you eat, it is also about when you eat.*

recovery, repair, and sustained performance. Endurance athletes should aim for 1-1.3g/kg of body weight, and those involved in strength or high-intensity training may need up to 2g/kg.

**Fats:** Often overlooked, fats provide long-lasting energy and support cell function. They should make up 25-30 per cent of your daily calorie intake. Prioritise sources like avocados, nuts, seeds, fatty fish, and oils like sesame or olive.

Fats are best consumed throughout the day or after a workout to avoid slowed digestion during a workout.

## TIMING MATTERS

Smart nutrition is more than what you eat, it is also about when you eat:

**Pre-workout:** Fuel up 30-45 minutes before with a carb-rich snack, low in fibre to ease digestion. Also, drink plenty of fluids or you will be dehydrated before even starting your workout.

Adding electrolytes, especially in hot and humid Malaysian weather, can help prevent early fatigue.

**Post-workout:** Within 30 to 60 minutes after exercise, consume 20-40g of protein, whether from a shake, tofu, lean meat, or eggs with your choice of a carbohydrate source (fruit, rice, potatoes, or noodles). This helps repair muscle and optimise recovery.

## WATER IS GREAT, BUT IS IT ENOUGH?

Hydration plays a critical role in performance, but intense activity causes the body to lose water and electrolytes through sweat and heat regulation. In tropical and humid regions across Asia, this loss can be significant. In fact, according to the National Kidney Foundation of Malaysia, most mature adults lose about 2.5 to 3 litres of fluid per day, and more for those participating in high-intensity activities and sports.

During workouts over 30 minutes, especially outdoors, replace plain water with electrolyte drinks that contain sodium and potassium to maintain endurance and prevent cramps or dizziness.

For workouts lasting longer than 60 minutes, choose an electrolyte drink with added glucose to maintain energy levels and intensity.

## RECOVERY IS TRAINING, TOO

Do not underestimate the power of rest! While recovery is when real progress happens, rest is what makes that recovery possible. Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep and take at least one full rest day each week. Sleep helps regulate hormones, repair muscle tissue, and replenish energy stores.

➔ [meera@nst.com.my](mailto:meera@nst.com.my)

\*The writer is director, sports performance, nutrition and education, Herbalife.