

Track & Field includes several events, and so the nutritional needs of T&F athletes vary. But regardless of your event, the benefits of feeding your body well are numerous. Good nutrition will optimize your training program; promote consistency in performance; enhance recovery after workouts and events; maintain or gain (if desired) weight; reduce risk of injury and illness; and give you confidence to face competition.

Below, I provide basic guidelines for all track athletes, plus sample meal plans. Look for your event (endurance, sprinting, throwing) and follow your specific meal plan.

## Basic Nutritional Guidelines for T&F Athletes

- Eat small meals every two to three hours
- Meals should include protein and complex carbohydrates
- Stay hydrated with at least eight ounces of water per hour, depending on climate conditions (you may need more if it's hot out)
- Eat post-workout meal within 30 minutes
- Never skip meals

## Sample Track & Field Meal Plans

### Guidelines

- Pre-workout meal = three hours before practice or competition
- Pre-workout snack = one hour before practice or competition
- Post-workout snack = within 30 minutes after practice or competition
- Post-workout meal = six hours following practice or competition
- Evening snack = Two to three hours after last meal

### Endurance Events

- Pre-workout meal: 16-20 ounces of water, lean meat on whole grain bread, fruits and nuts
- Pre-workout snack: Five to 10 ounces of water, low-fat granola bar
- During practice or competition: Six ounces of water per 20 minutes of activity; six ounces of sports drink per hour; energy liquid gel for sessions over two hours
- Post-workout snack: Fruit, granola bar, chocolate milk or yogurt
- Post-workout meal: Lean meat or grilled fish, vegetables, whole grain pasta, rice or bread
- Evening snack: Fruit, cheese slices or chocolate milk

**Endurance Nutrition Tip:** Decreasing fiber and protein intake pre-workout can help reduce stomach discomfort during long training sessions. Liquid meal supplements or shakes are good alternatives.

### Sprinters, Hurdlers, Jumpers

- Pre-workout meal: 16 ounces of milk, beans and/or lean meats on whole grain bread, fruits and nuts
- Pre-workout snack: Eight ounces of water, low-fat granola bar and fruit
- During practice or competition: Eight ounces of water per 20 minutes of activity; eight ounces of sports drink with electrolytes per hour

- Post-workout snack: Fruit, yogurt and granola bar; pretzels or bagel with peanut butter; or 16-ounce meal replacement bar with protein and carbohydrates
- Post-workout meal: Lean meat or grilled fish, vegetables and whole grain pasta, rice or bread
- Evening snack: Fruit, cheese slices or chocolate milk

**Sprint, Hurdler and Jumper Nutrition Tip:** As speed and power athletes, you need to consume adequate calories with a balance of protein, fat and carbohydrates.

## Throwers

- Pre-workout meal: 16 ounces of chocolate milk, beans and/or lean meats on whole grain bread, fruits and nuts
- Pre-workout snack: Eight ounces of milk or protein shake, granola bar or fruit
- During practice or competition: Eight ounces of water per 20 minutes of activity; eight ounces of sports drink with electrolytes per hour
- Post-workout snack: Fruit, yogurt and granola bar; pretzels or bagel with peanut butter; or 16-ounce meal replacement bar with protein and carbohydrates
- Post-workout meal: Lean meat or grilled fish, vegetables and whole grain pasta, rice or bread
- Evening snack: Fruit, cheese slices or chocolate milk

**Throwers Nutrition Tip:** Achieve weight gain by eating more breads, fruits and nuts and full-fat dairy products.