

Gymnastics Nutrition Guidance



Understanding the fuel sources

Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are the most important fuel source for the body during high to moderate training. The body requires a constant source of energy in order to keep working at the given high intensity and carbohydrate is the only fuel source that can provide this energy quickly enough.

Prior to high intensity training, it is really important that sufficient carbohydrate is consumed in the 24-48 hours prior to this session and then again after in order to start rebuilding stores for your next session.

Base meals around nutrient dense carbohydrates listed below:

- Oats
- Sweet/white potato
- Wholegrain bread/pittas/wraps/bagels
- Wholegrain pasta
- Wholegrain rice/quinoa/couscous
- Milk and yoghurts
- Fruit and vegetables
- Beans and pulses

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Protein

Protein is required in the response to exercise and should not be used as a fuel source. It is necessary for the repair process post exercise; additionally in young athletes, it is also necessary for growth. However it is important to mention here that a diet high in protein but low in overall calories will not be sufficient for repair or growth. Aim to include protein at every meal –as a rule of thumb, a portion size is the equivalent to a pack of cards. Encourage smaller amounts of protein, around 10g as snacks throughout the day too.



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Fats

Fats are a great energy source and can be a useful when trying to meet energy requirements for those athletes that struggle. They have almost double the amount of energy per gram than that found in carbohydrate and protein, therefore foods high in fat can be eaten in smaller quantities to provide the same amount of energy.

It is important to keep intakes of saturated fats low, the exception to this are dairy products, that are really important for growth, bone and dental health.

Try to consume food sources that are high in essential fatty acids such as:

- Avocadoes
- Seeds/nuts
- Cooking oils such as olive or rapeseed
- Olives
- Nut butters such as peanut/almond
- Oily fish such as salmon, mackerel and sardines