

Eating for Recovery

Athlete Scenario

The day after a hard soccer practice, my legs feel heavy, I feel sluggish, and I'm often sore even if I didn't have a resistance training session the day before. My performance at practice suffers because I'm unable to put forth 100%. I usually drink water and sometimes a sports drink during practice and games, but afterward I don't usually feel like eating much. What can I do so I have more energy at practice and feel better about my performance?



The Goals of Recovery Nutrition Include

- Restore fluid and electrolytes (sodium and potassium) lost in sweat; weigh before and after exercise and replenish what was lost
- Replace muscle fuel (carbohydrate) utilized during practice
- Provide protein to aid in repair of damaged muscle tissue and to stimulate development of new tissue
- Begin nutrition recovery with a snack or meal within 15-60 minutes following practice or competition

Rehydration Fluids

- Carbohydrate-electrolyte sport drink to replenish fluids and electrolytes lost in sweat

Recovery Snack Ideas

- Smoothie made with yogurt and frozen berries
- Sports drink (carbohydrate, electrolyte, fluid) + sport bar (carbohydrate, protein)
- Graham crackers with peanut butter + low-fat chocolate milk + banana

Recovery Meal Ideas

- Whole wheat pita sandwich with turkey and veggies + pretzels + low-fat milk
- Rice bowl with beans, cheese, salsa, avocado + whole grain tortilla chips or whole wheat tortilla
- Stir fry with lean steak, broccoli, bell peppers, carrots + brown rice

Written by SCAN registered dietitians (RDs). The key to optimal meal planning for athletes is individualization. For personalized nutrition plans contact a SCAN sports dietitian or Board Certified Specialist in Sports Dietetics (CSSD) by accessing "Find a SCAN Dietitian" at www.scandpg.org | 800.249.2875.

Tips to Take With You

1. If you have 2 training sessions per day or your next training session is within 8 hours, recovery nutrition is crucial
2. If you do not have an appetite following a training session, choose liquid foods that meet your recovery goals
3. Along with carbohydrate, fluid, and electrolytes, protein is an important part of recovery, particularly if you participate in high intensity training sessions that damage muscle tissue (resistance training, interval sessions, etc.)

Contact SCAN

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