

Nutrition Advice for Emperor's Challenge Participants

Here is some advice from nutrition student and Emperor's Challenge participant Jennifer Becker for the weeks leading up to race day.

Foods That Will Increase Your Performance

Complex Carbohydrates: For muscle energy and endurance.

Cereal: especially Oat Squares, Oatmeal, Raisin Bran
Bread: whole grain is best; but anything with added wheat, oats, etc. is ok

Pasta: macaroni, spaghetti, any other; cooked al dente will retain more nutrients

Potatoes: not fried or chips!

Other: waffles, pancakes, bagels, pretzels, Power Bars, Nutra-grain bars, all good snacks

Fruits and Vegetables: For healing, recovery, and repair

Bananas, Broccoli, Watermelon, Oranges or orange juice, Blueberries, Apples, Carrots, Strawberries, Grapes, Salsa, spaghetti sauce, and pizza sauce (great way to get tomatoes, peppers, onions, etc.)

Protein: For structure, repair, recovery, prevention of injury

Low fat yogurt, Egg whites, 1% or fat free milk, Peanut butter, Skinless white turkey or chicken, Baked beans

Fat: for long-term energy, vitamin absorption, hormonal regulation

Tuna, Nuts, sunflower seeds, Lean cuts of beef and pork, Salmon, Olives and olive oil, Skinless white poultry

Other Fun Foods

Raisins, even chocolate covered Oatmeal or Peanut Butter cookies, Fig Newtons popcorn, Jello, Yogurt, pudding, Pizza made with lower fat cheese (preferably no pepperoni or sausage!)

Foods That Will Hurt Your Performance

All fried foods:

Chicken nuggets/any breaded and fried chicken, french fries, doughnuts, fried fish, onion rings

Foods high in saturated fats:

All fried foods, fatty cuts of meat and poultry, most cheeses (go for the cheese made with skim or 1% milk), butter, whole milk, coconut and coconut oil, palm oil, ice cream (choose frozen yogurt or the lower fat kind instead)

Carbonated, sugary drinks

The phosphorus in the carbonation depletes the bones of calcium: an especially important mineral for females. The amount of pop many athletes drink, keeps them from drinking enough water, which is truly what the muscles need to perform. While caffeine may give them a boost for a while, too much can cause jitteriness and decrease performance. Sports drinks are a much better choice. They have the sugar, but the muscles can use it. They replace fluid and are more easily absorbed than pop.

How to Eat Before, During and After The Half Marathon

Before:

- As the race approaches, don't add anything new to your diet. Eat foods that you know agree with you.
- Stock up on carbohydrates to fuel your muscles. This is the time to load up your energy reserves to their max.
- Try not to miss meals, but also try to avoid overeating!
- Don't begin hydrating hours before the race at least two days prior you should be drinking lots of fluids. Water is of course the best!
- Try to stay away from alcohol since it not only dehydrates you, but also interferes with proper storage of glycogen and undercuts your carbohydrate loading.
- forty eight hours before the race, don't consume high fiber food such as: beans, bran cereals, lettuce and broccoli to avoid an upset stomach or other discomfort during the race.
- Begin to cut back on hard to digest foods such as peanut butter and fried foods. Also limit dairy product intake. Many people have a slight lactose intolerance and not be aware of the condition, the strenuous effort (and constant sloshing) of a race can cause your body to rebel and result in gas and bloating.
- Your last supper before the half marathon should contain lots of carbohydrates to top off your glycogen stores. A common "day before" dinner is pasta; a pile of spaghetti covered in tomato sauce and veggies and a sprinkle of parmesan cheese and a whole wheat roll is a good choice. Try to stay away from heavy meats (such as steak), because they are more difficult to digest.
- Remember to continue drinking lots of fluids and get a good nights sleep.

Morning of:

- Have a light breakfast, a bagel or toast and some fruit juice is ideal. It's good to have some coffee (if you normally drink coffee in the morning), just don't over do it!
- Everyone is different, however, I would recommend eating at least two to three hours before the race.
- Avoid high sugar foods such as soda, which will give your blood sugar highs and lows.
- Before the race be sure to consume more water or a sports drink.

During:

- During the race itself, staying hydrated is most important. You should be consuming water every twenty minutes.
- It's a good idea to bring along snacks to keep your energy level up. Some good snacks include energy

bars and gels, bananas, and orange slices. Consuming some carbohydrates every thirty minutes to an hour is enough for most people.

- There are several water stations along the course, which are ideal for stopping to have a quick snack
- Make sure that anything that you eat or drink agrees with you. Don't try new sports gels or sports bars during the race. (Experiment these during your training!)

- Be sure to drink plenty of fluids throughout.

After:

- After the race, drink plenty of water. It is very easy to get dehydrated after a long walk or run, especially if it is on a hot day.

- Get some food into yourself as soon as possible. Try to have a bagel, cup of soup, or a sports bar within fifteen minutes after the race. It is at this time when your muscles will absorb the glycogen almost immediately. Your muscles are hungry - feed them!

- For the next twenty-four hours; snack frequently on high carbohydrate foods in order to restore your depleted reserves.

- Take in adequate protein. This will help to heal damaged muscles.

- Consume potassium rich foods such as bananas, oranges, and potatoes. Also eat some salty foods such as pretzels or soda crackers to replace electrolyte losses.

- Allow recovery time, and continue to drink lots of fluids.

- Celebrate!!!! You just completed the Half Marathon up Roman Mountain!