

Prep School Performance Nutrition News

with
*Kathleen Searles, MS, RD,
LDN*

(978) 697-2834

www.lunchbox-nutritionist.com

Nutritionist. Speaker. Consultant.

The summer Olympics will be held in London from July 27, 2012 to August 12, 2012. And while the actual games only last about 2 weeks, athletes spend years training for and mastering their sport. Becoming an Olympic athlete not only takes a lot of hard work, time, and dedication, but also requires good nutrition to enhance their workouts and maximize performance. This month I am going to share with you some of the top nutrition tips Olympic athletes implement to enhance their energy and maximize their performance. While most of us are not training to be Olympic athletes, we can certainly learn from the nutrition and lifestyle principles these star athletes practice on a daily basis.

– ***Kathleen Searles, MS, RD, LD***

7 Nutrition Principles for Olympic Performance

1. Eat Breakfast. Every athlete knows that the base of a good training day starts with the right fuel to energize performance. A balanced breakfast will provide the energy needed to perform at maximum potential. Most athletes will start their day with complex carbohydrates mixed with protein and fat. The amount of calories

News and Events:

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The Athletes Mind: The Words They Feed Themselves

consumed at breakfast will vary from each individual sport and training schedule depending on total calorie expenditure. A popular breakfast for many athletes includes oatmeal, fruit, and nuts.

2. Cook at home. Many athletes report a “stay fit tip” is to eat more foods prepared in their own kitchen rather than dining out. Preparing food at home ensures one is fueling with fresh foods that have been minimally processed and not cooked with an excess of fat, sugar, or sodium. Dining in, rather than dining out, helps manage total calorie intake, which is important for athletes to maintain their competitive weight.

3. Eat whole foods. Another principle many professional athletes embrace is eating whole fresh foods. This includes fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains such as quinoa, steel cut oats, brown rice, and 100% whole wheat pasta and breads. As well as, quality sources of protein including lean beef, poultry, eggs, and fish.

4. Limit liquid calories. Sports drinks have been marketed as the athletes “secret weapon” for peak performance, however in reality this is not the case. While there is a place and a need for sport drinks during an event, hard core athletes know sports drinks were designed to be consumed during training or during the event - not to drink all day long. The same principle goes for other high sugar beverages including sodas and alcohol. Many athletes abstain from alcohol altogether during their training and competitive season and limit alcohol to special occasions.

5. View food as “fuel”. Athletes look at what they put into their bodies as essential fuel to perform. When it comes time to chow down, they are not only looking to eat but they want to eat with a purpose. This means an athlete’s plate will consist of foods that are packed with carbohydrates, protein, fats, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and phytochemicals to maximize performance. Athletes minimize the amount of “empty” calories they consume by limiting refined sugars, flours, and fats.

6. Limit fried foods. An athlete recognizes that fried foods are not only high in calories, but these fried foods actually slow them down. And there is a reason for this! It takes more energy for the gut to process and digest high fat meals than a meal rich in carbohydrates. Therefore athletes limit their intake of fried foods and instead compliment their meals and snacks with plant based sources of fats such as nuts, avocados, olive oil, canola oil, and fatty fish.

7. Fuel for recovery. Athletes know that HOW they



Not only can we learn from how an athlete fuels their body, but also how an athlete feeds their mind. Anyone who has accomplished a goal (big or small) will tell you that what you feed your mind is just as important as the daily action steps you take to get there. Here are some inspiring words of wisdom from several of the worlds greatest Olympic athletes.

“The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not winning but taking part; the essential thing in life is not conquering but fighting well.” - Pierre de Coubertin (founder of modern Olympic Games)

“I believe in God. He is the secret of my success. He gives people talent.” - Noureddine Morceli (Algerian athlete in the 1996 Summer Olympics)

“When anyone tells me I can't do anything, I'm just not listening anymore.” - Florence Griffith Joyner (American athlete, 1988 Summer Olympics)

“The first thing is to love your sport. Never do it to please someone else. It has to be yours.” - Peggy Fleming (American figure skater, 1968 Winter Olympics)

“It is the inspiration of the Olympic Games that drives people not only to compete but to improve, and to bring lasting spiritual and moral benefits to the athlete and inspiration to those lucky enough to witness the athletic dedication”. - Herb Elliott (Australian middle-distance Runner, world record)

recover and re-fuel their body AFTER each training session is just as important as what they eat before a workout. Consuming a 4:1 ratio of carbohydrates to protein will enhance muscle recovery and minimize breakdown. One of the most popular post-workout drinks is chocolate milk!

Ramadan 2012

This year Ramadan, the Islamic month of fasting, takes on particular significance for the sporting world. Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, and because the calendar is based on lunar cycles, it does not occur at the same time each year. During Ramadan observant Muslims abstain from food and drink during daylight hours. Ramadan 2012 occurs July 20-August 18, which includes the entirety of the London Olympics.

At the recent SCAN (Sports, Cardiovascular and Wellness Nutrition) meeting in Baltimore, Dr. Ron Maughan discussed some of the possible impacts of the intersection of Ramadan and the Olympics for the 30% of the summer Olympic athletes who are Muslim. These athletes are faced with adjusting their training and nutrition regimens to accommodate about 15 hours of daylight during which they cannot eat or drink. This means that they must use the night hours to meet their nutrition and hydration needs. They most likely will also have to adjust their training for the cooler hours of the day to protect their hydration. These athletes will not be able to follow their usual pre-, during, or post-competition routines for daytime endurance events, multiple heats or events in the same day, or events held very early or very late in the day. Imagine, for example the challenge of marathon competition in a warm climate without ongoing hydration. Sleep schedules are also likely to be disrupted.

There have been few studies to provide guidance for athletes, particularly elite athletes, in this situation. Possible coping strategies include taking extra measures to stay cool (mist fans, sprays, cold towels, cooling hands and feet, avoiding sun when possible), moving some training activities to night, maximizing hydration and nutrition during the hours of darkness, or even seeking exemption or deferment for fasting. (Fasting is not mandatory in all Islamic countries.)

It will be interesting to see if and how Ramadan affects performance at the Olympics. For those of us watching at home, it will be important to be sensitive to the nutrition and hydration needs of any Muslim students we may be working with at

holder in the 1.500 meter race (1958-67) and the mile race (1958-62)

"One shouldn't be afraid to lose; this is sport. One day you win; another day you lose. Of course, everyone wants to be the best. This is normal. This is what sport is about. This is why I love it." - Oksana Baiul, (Ukrainian figure skater, Olympic Gold Medalist, 1994)

"I wanted no part of politics. And I wasn't in Berlin to compete against any one athlete. The purpose of the Olympics, anyway, was to do your best. As I'd learned long ago from Charles Riley, the only victory that counts is the one over yourself." - Jesse Owens (American Athlete, 4 time Gold Medalist in Track and Field at the 1936 Olympic Games, 1913-1980)

Fun Food Facts:

Food Quantities Needed in the London Olympic Village 2012:

25,000 loaves of bread
232 tons of potatoes
More than 82 tons of seafood
31 tons of poultry items
More than 100 tons of meat
75,000 liters of milk
19 tons of eggs
21 tons of cheese
More than 330 tons of fruit and vegetables

10 Olympic Super Foods:

Oats
Berries
Nuts
Avocados
Broccoli
Oranges, red bell peppers and other foods high in vitamin C.
Wild Salmon
Chocolate Milk (excellent for recovery)
Spinach and Kale
Quinoa

summer athletic or special interest camps.

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