

NUTRITIONAL ADVICE

(For competition and endurance training - by Luke Byrne)

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Fatigue is caused by a number of different factors, but one of the major causes in endurance events is a reduced energy level. As carbohydrates are our body's prime energy source, it is important that we maximise our stores prior to the event and try to maintain those stores throughout the day.

CARBO LOADING

Carbohydrate or 'Carbo' loading is a technique used to store extra glycogen in the muscles before competition or heavy training. This assists endurance athletes by utilizing the additional stored glycogen to allow them to continue at their maximum aerobic pace for longer periods of time. This method is beneficial in events over 90-120 minutes, where glycogen depletion is a concern.

WHY CARBO LOAD?

When the body's glycogen stores become depleted, the athlete will experience extreme fatigue known as 'hitting the wall'. Athletes can reduce this effect by increasing their normal glycogen stores by 50-100 with carbohydrate loading.

SUGGESTED LOADING PROGRAMME

Six to Four days before the event: A low carbohydrate diet (40-50) is followed while exercising to deplete the body's glycogen stores.

Three to One day before the event: A high carb diet (70-80) is followed while decreasing exercise to super-saturate the body's glycogen stores. At least 3-4 litres of water should be consumed on carbo loading days as 2.7g of water is stored with every gram of glycogen.

Immediately after exercise on Day Three, consume 200g of complex carbs (pasta, banana etc) then an additional 50-100g every hour (up to 10 10g per kg of body weight).

Continue on days two and one.

On the day of the event you may want to switch to low fibre foods and sports carb drinks to lower residue in the gastro-intestinal tract. This helps to prevent a full or heavy feeling during training.

COMPETITION DAY

As there will be no time to eat during the day, you will have to rely on regular consumption of glucose and electrolyte drinks to maintain fluid levels and carbohydrate stores.

- Drink 250ml of glucose polymer carb (ie; Gatorade etc..) one hour before training.
- Drink 500 ml again 30 minutes before training
- Drink 250ml every hour thereafter

After the training /competition, ensure that you eat a high glycemic (simple sugars, e.g. jelly beans, shakes etc..) index meal within 30 minutes of finishing. This will assist recovery and prevent a lethargic feeling the following day.

EXAMPLES OF FOODS CONTAINING COMPLEX CARBS

- Bread and Cereals
- Rice, Pasta, Noodles and other grain
- Fruit
- Starchy Vegetables (potato, corn)
- Legumes (Lentils, Beans,)