

post-workout recovery

a guide to nourishing your body

Exercising for 30 minutes a day can be part of a healthy lifestyle. What you choose to eat after that exercise can be just as important! Our muscles keep us moving and are also essential in making sure our sugar and fat levels stay healthy. This keeps our whole body functioning.¹ Keep this guide handy to be sure that your body gets the recovery it deserves!

you can exercise in a variety of ways, for example:

- Lifting weights at the gym
- Hiking through a beautiful park
- Helping a friend move furniture into a new house
- Generally exercise can be categorized as strength, endurance, or both.



Strength exercise uses quick bursts of energy to help build stronger muscles.



Endurance exercise uses constant movement for long periods of time to build longer, leaner muscles.

power of protein

Protein is a true multi-tasker. One of the most important things that protein does for you is build bones, muscle, skin, and blood.² This means that including protein in your post-workout meal may help to reduce feelings of soreness.

How much: Generally, you should aim to consume at least 20g of protein after a workout to help your muscles recover, up to 40g of protein. More than this amount may not be any more helpful for recovery.⁴

When: While the best timing for a post-workout meal varies from person to person, aim to refuel with a nutritious meal within 2-4 hours of your workout.

What: Choose high-quality protein sources, ones that contain essential amino acids that help to repair your body. The amino acid leucine in particular may play an important role in rebuilding muscle after a workout.⁵



Milk protein is an excellent choice to include post-workout.

- Great source of amino acids
- Contains the highest amount of leucine compared to other whole food protein sources
- Its proteins, whey and casein, contain higher amounts of leucine than other protein sources
- Studies have shown that drinking milk after strength-based workouts may help to increase muscle and decrease body fat.¹

some protein sources to keep in mind

Every body is different so speak with your dietitian or physician to see how much protein you should be getting!

protein source	serving size	grams of protein	grams of leucine
animal meat (beef, chicken, fish)	3 oz = palm sized	20-25g	1.5g
eggs	1 egg	5-7g	0.5g
nuts and seeds nut butter	1 oz = a handful 2 Tbsp = a thumbs up	6-10g	0.5g
beans and peas	½ cup cooked = 2 golf balls	6-10g	0.5g
hummus	2 Tbsp = 2 thumbs up	2-4g	< 0.5g
strained yogurt	6 oz = a fist	12-16g	1.0g
tofu (firm, soft, or silken)	4 oz = a deck of cards	10-12g	0.5g

carbohydrates

While carbohydrates do not directly rebuild muscle, they just as important for your workouts as protein is. We need carbs to fuel our bodies to use this protein properly. Endurance workouts rely heavily on having enough carbs. After exercising, you can help your body refuel by choosing complex carbs.⁵ These supply constant energy for a longer time.

Some good choices include: chickpeas, brown rice, oatmeal, bananas, sweet potatoes.

smart meals

Try these simple pairings for a post-workout meal and tweak them as you'd like!

- yogurt + banana slices + peanut butter
- hard boiled egg + avocado + lentils
- tofu + chickpeas + snap peas
- hummus + pita bread
- fish + brown rice + leafy greens
- string cheese + whole wheat pretzels
- cereal + milk
- almond butter + whole wheat toast
- sweet potato + black beans + salsa

¹ < <https://www.dairynutrition.ca/scientific-evidence/experts-summaries/effects-of-drinking-milk-following-exercise>>

² < <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/eathealthy/protein-foods>>

³ Dietary protein intake and human health Wu G Food Funct 7(3) 2016 Mar 1251-1265

⁴ Dana Angelo White, MS, RD, ATC and Chris Mohr, RD, PhD. Recovery for RDs: The Role of Self-Care in Health and Fitness.

⁵ Jäger, R., Kerkick, C.M., Campbell, B.I. et al. International Society of Sports Nutrition Position Stand: protein and exercise. J Int Soc Sports Nutr 2017, 14.