



FOODS & FLUIDS FOR
**STRENGTH
TRAINING**





FOODS & FLUIDS FOR STRENGTH TRAINING

During a strength-training program, two primary adaptations occur. The first is changes in the neuromuscular system, allowing the brain to recruit more muscle fibers. The second is hypertrophy of the muscle, which means the muscle fibers increase in size. As a result, a well-designed, appropriate strength-training program results in increased strength and size of the muscle. Appropriate nutrition can support the adaptations to strength training, especially the increases in muscle size, which will be the focus of this piece.

The carbohydrate needs of an athlete during strength training have not been well researched. However, carbohydrate stored in the muscle (called glycogen) is the primary fuel source for high-intensity muscle contractions. A single strength-training session can actually decrease the amount of muscle glycogen about 24-40%!¹⁰ Therefore, the recommendation for daily carbohydrate intake for an athlete participating in a strength-training program is 4-7 g/kg body weight.¹⁰ Athletes should fall on the higher end of this range if they are involved in additional sport training sessions outside of strength training. The recommendation for protein intake for athletes is 1.2-2.0 g/kg/d.¹³ Athletes focused on strength training to gain muscle mass will fall on the upper end of this range. In addition to total daily amount, the pattern of ingestion is important to promote muscle growth. Consuming ~20 g high quality protein about every 3 hours has been found to more effectively increase muscle protein synthesis (MPS) as compared to larger amounts ingested less frequently.¹⁶ Larger amounts of protein are oxidized and not used for further muscle growth.¹⁰

Consuming high-quality protein prior to sleep may also promote increased muscle protein synthesis. This benefit may be enhanced when performing exercise training in the evening. Research continues on the best type and amount of pre-sleep protein, but between 20-40 g looks to be a good target.¹⁴

Suggested Daily Macronutrient Intake

(per kilogram of body weight)

Carbohydrate:¹⁰ 4-7 g/kg/day

Protein:¹³ 1.2-2.0 g/kg/day

PRE-WORKOUT FOODS & FLUIDS

Eating carbohydrate before a workout tops off the body's carbohydrate stores (glycogen). Since stored carbohydrate is the primary fuel source for high-intensity muscle contraction, it is likely important for strength athletes to start training sessions with enough carbohydrate stored in their body. Specific to strength training, consuming carbohydrate before starting may increase the total amount of work the athlete is able to complete during longer duration, high-volume training sessions.¹⁰ However, recommendations on the specific amount or timing of carbohydrate intake prior to strength training have not been determined.¹⁰ Athletes should try various options and find a solution that provides them with energy without causing fullness or stomach upset.

GATORADE PRIME: DESIGNED TO PROVIDE CARBOHYDRATE ENERGY SHORTLY BEFORE EXERCISE

	Serving Size	Carbohydrate	Sodium
Gatorade Prime Sports Fuel Drink	1 pouch (4 oz)	25 g	110 mg
Gatorade Prime Energy Chews	6 chews	24 g	90 mg
Gatorade Fuel Bar	1 bar	45 g	180 mg

Similar to all athletes, strength athletes should begin a training session in a hydrated state. In one study, athletes dehydrated 3% prior to beginning a strength-training session performed less repetitions than those beginning in a hydrated state.³ Athletes should drink ~5-7 mL/kg of fluids with sodium approximately 4 hours prior to a workout or competition and another 3-5 mL/kg about 2 hours prior if the urine is dark or not produced.^{9,11} This practice will help an athlete to begin training sessions in a hydrated state.

PRE-WORKOUT KEY MESSAGES

- Carbohydrate stored in the muscle (called glycogen) is the primary fuel source for high-intensity muscle contractions.
- Carbohydrate consumed before a strength-training session may help improve the athletes' performance; however, the ideal amounts or timing have not been identified.
- Adequate fluids should be consumed about 4 hours before a training session.



DURING-WORKOUT FOODS & FLUIDS

More research is needed on the specific fueling needs of athletes during strength training. With the research that is available right now, there does not appear to be a need for carbohydrate and amino acid or protein intake during exercise.¹⁰ However, as for all athletes, it is prudent for strength athletes to maintain hydration status during a training session.

DEHYDRATION

Dehydration of a 2% or more decrease in body weight during a training session (approximately a 4 lb loss in a 185 lb athlete) may negatively affect an athlete's performance,^{11,13} especially if exercising in hot and humid conditions such as a gym or weight room without air conditioning.

Answering “yes” to any of these questions may indicate inadequate hydration:

- Am I thirsty?
- Is my urine a dark yellow color?
- Is my body weight noticeably lower than yesterday?

HYDRATE THE RIGHT WAY

To determine an individual's sweat rate, measure body weight before and after a training session and keep track of all fluid consumed. A rough estimate of sweat rate can be obtained by using the following equation: sweat rate (L/h) = (weight loss + fluid intake (L))/exercise time (hours).

SODIUM

Athletes sweat and sweat contains sodium. Consuming fluid with sodium, such as in a sports drink, is important because sodium helps maintain the physiological desire to drink and helps retain the fluid consumed.⁵ To determine if you are a “salty sweater,” wear dark-colored clothing and look for white residue after your training session. Sweat that stings your eyes may be another sign that you're a “salty sweater.”

TIPS FOR HYDRATION

- Athletes should determine their individual sweat rate and consume fluids with sodium to minimize body weight changes during training sessions, especially when training in a hot, humid weight room
- More research is needed, but there does not appear to be a need for strength athletes to consume carbohydrate, protein or amino acids during training

SODIUM CONTENT OF GATORADE G2 PERFORM BEVERAGE

	Sodium (mg/8 oz)	Calories (per 8 oz)	Carbohydrate (g/8 oz)
Gatorade G2	110	20	5
Propel Electrolyte Water	107	0	0

DURING-WORKOUT KEY MESSAGES

- Athletes should determine their individual sweat rate and consume fluids with sodium to minimize body weight changes during training sessions, especially when training in a hot, humid weight room.
- More research is needed, but there does not appear to be a need for strength athletes to consume carbohydrate, protein or amino acids during training.





POST-WORKOUT FOODS & FLUIDS

PROTEIN FOR MUSCLE BUILDING

Nutrient intake during recovery is key to maximizing the anabolic response to an individual strength workout. Muscle tissue is continually in flux between muscle protein breakdown and muscle protein synthesis. This process allows for muscle growth when synthesis is greater than breakdown. Consuming the right types of protein following strength training helps to send a signal to the muscle to enhance rates of muscle protein synthesis as well as provides the amino acid building blocks to form the new muscle structure.

TIMING OF PROTEIN INTAKE

Protein eaten as soon as possible after strength training may offer some advantages to muscle building.⁹ Protein consumed after exercise, whether from food or from shakes and drinks, may minimize protein breakdown and stimulate muscle protein synthesis to aid in muscle building.⁸ However, the muscle remains responsive to protein intake past the immediate post-workout period, and a regular intake pattern about every 3 hours has been shown to be beneficial.¹⁶

AMOUNT OF PROTEIN

Two dose-response studies, one using egg protein⁷ and the other whey,¹⁵ have shown that 20 g of protein consumed following resistance exercise achieved maximal rates of MPS, with no further benefit achieved at 40 g.^{7,15} However, both of these studies utilized a leg-only exercise protocol. In a study using a whole-body resistance exercise protocol, 40 g of whey protein resulted in significantly greater MPS than 20 g, with no difference found when the subjects were segmented for lean body mass.⁴ Based on current research, it appears most athletes should aim for 20 g of protein for recovery following training.^{4,7,15} To calculate individual protein needs, the suggestion is 0.25-0.30 g/kg body weight.¹³

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PROTEIN TYPE

Following exercise, athletes should consume a rapidly digested, high-quality, complete protein source rich in the amino acid leucine.⁸ A complete protein contains all of the essential amino acids, or those the body doesn't make on its own. Dairy proteins, particularly whey, meet all these criteria and are considered most beneficial to promote post-exercise MPS.⁸ Soy is a complete plant protein; however, is not as rapidly digested and contains lower levels of leucine.^{2,12}

CARBOHYDRATE

Co-ingesting of carbohydrate with protein does not enhance the response of muscle protein synthesis.⁸ However, athletes involved in higher repetition, longer duration strength-training sessions or those combining strength training with additional sessions of sport training should consume carbohydrate to replenish glycogen (carbohydrate stored in the muscle and liver). When co-ingesting carbohydrate with protein following strength training, athletes should aim for 0.8 g/kg/h.¹⁰

HYDRATION

Following exercise, athletes should drink 20-24 oz per pound of body weight lost of fluid with sodium to replace the amounts lost during training and competition.^{11,13}

SODIUM CONTENT OF GATORADE G2 PERFORM BEVERAGE

	Calories	Carbohydrate (g)	Protein (g)	Protein Type
Gatorade Recover Protein Shake	270	45	20	Milk protein
Gatorade Recover Whey Protein Bar	340-370	42-43	20	Milk protein
Gatorade Protein Powders	120	6	20	Milk protein

POST-WORKOUT KEY MESSAGES

- Athletes should consume ~20 g, or 0.25-0.3 g/kg, of high-quality protein as soon as possible following training or competition to help rebuild muscle tissue and promote the synthesis of new muscle proteins.
- The protein type should be a high-quality, complete protein. Consider milk or whey protein due to the high leucine content.
- Restore carbohydrate with protein to replace used glycogen (carbohydrate stored in the muscle and liver) when completing higher repetition/longer duration bouts or when involved in additional sport training sessions.
- Rehydrate with 20-24 oz of fluid with sodium for every ounce of body weight lost during exercise.



AN EXAMPLE: PUTTING THE SCIENCE-BASED RECOMMENDATIONS INTO PRACTICE

ATHLETE PROFILE

Name: Jeff

Age: 17

Weight: 155 lbs (70.5kg)

Type of athlete: Boys high school football player

Goal: To gain muscle mass during the off-season

Jeff is a safety on his high school football team. Football season is over, and his goal for the spring weight-training sessions is to gain lean mass to help him improve on the field for his senior year. Jeff also competes in the 800-meter event for the track team in the spring, so he will be involved in workouts beyond just those in the weight room. Jeff is looking for nutrition advice to help him gain the muscle mass he desires for football while still having the energy to compete in track.

Overall calorie intake is important to gain lean muscle mass and support the energy demands of both his strength-training program and track practices/competitions. To determine his overall energy needs, Jeff will work with a sports dietitian who will assess his daily energy expenditure and recommend calorie goals.

Specific to gaining lean mass while ensuring adequate energy stored as muscle glycogen, Jeff will need

to pay particular attention to his carbohydrate and protein intake. Since he is training for and competing in the 800-meter race, his carbohydrate needs should be at the upper end of the recommended range. Based on his energy needs, the sports dietitian has suggested starting at 6 g/kg/day and will adjust based on Jeff's feelings of energy and tolerance for the volume of food. At 6 g/kg/day, Jeff should consume ~423 g carbohydrate per day (1,692 calories from carbohydrate). For protein, he should also aim for the upper end of the recommended range, a good place to start may be about 1.7 g/kg/day. At that level, Jeff should consume ~120 g of protein over the course of the day (480 calories from protein), spread out in increments of ~20 g per meal or snack. In the first weeks of the plan, Jeff will work with his sports dietitian to tweak the amounts of these two important macronutrients to make sure he is getting what he needs to support his goals without upsetting his stomach. Jeff's plan will also include adequate fat and the right amount of micronutrients from fruits and vegetables to support overall health and performance.

In addition to eating the right amounts of carbohydrate and protein throughout the day, recovery nutrition is especially important for Jeff to meet his goal of increased lean mass. Therefore, Jeff is instructed to eat one of his ~20 g servings of protein as soon as possible after each workout to stimulate the generation of new muscle proteins, the key to gains in lean mass. This serving of ~20 g should be a complete, high-quality protein source, preferably from milk or whey sources. His sports dietitian has recommended the Gatorade Recover Protein Shake or the Gatorade Recover Whey Protein Bar as convenient ways to get the right type and amount of protein after his training sessions. The shake or bar will also provide adequate carbohydrate to replace muscle glycogen, the important storage form of energy for muscle contraction. A couple of hours later, Jeff should then have another meal or snack with ~20 g of a complete, high-quality protein source. This may again be milk-based or whey, or may be a meal of meat, eggs or a combination of complementary proteins such as rice and beans.

Lastly, it is important for Jeff to make sure he is hydrated during his strength-training workouts, especially since the weight room is hot and humid. Jeff already does a good job drinking water throughout the day, but the sports dietitian has taught him how to monitor his urine color before workouts

to make sure it is a light lemonade color before beginning. To develop a hydration plan specific to the strength workouts in the environment of the weight room, the sports dietitian determined his sweat rate by measuring body weight before and after a typical strength workout. By doing this, it was determined that Jeff should drink a 20 oz bottle of Gatorade G2 or Propel Electrolyte Water for every hour in the weight room to replace the fluid and electrolytes he loses in his sweat.

By following this plan, Jeff should have energy for effective strength and track workouts, and will have the nutrition to support his training in obtaining the goal of increased muscle mass. Good luck to Jeff in his senior football season!

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CALCULATIONS/YOUR WORKSHEET

1. BODY WEIGHT

For many calculations, you need to know your body weight in kilograms. To do this calculation:

$$\text{Body weight in pounds} \text{ ______ } / 2.2 = \text{ ______ } \text{ kg}$$

2. DAILY MACRONUTRIENT NEEDS

Carbohydrate:

$$\text{ ______ } \text{ body weight (kg)} * 5 \text{ g/kg} = \text{ ______ } \text{ grams per day}$$

TO

$$\text{ ______ } \text{ body weight (kg)} * 7 \text{ g/kg} = \text{ ______ } \text{ grams per day}$$

Protein:

$$\text{ ______ } \text{ body weight (kg)} * 1.2 \text{ g/kg} = \text{ ______ } \text{ grams per day}$$

TO

$$\text{ ______ } \text{ body weight (kg)} * 2.0 \text{ g/kg} = \text{ ______ } \text{ grams per day}$$

Amounts within these ranges should be determined based on the requirements of the individual sport and athlete

3. BEFORE-EXERCISE CARBOHYDRATE NEEDS

A. Enter the time before exercise you like to eat (1-4 hours): (h)

B. Enter your desired amount of carbohydrate (1-4 g/kg body weight): (g)

C. **Pre-exercise carbohydrate intake** = body weight (kg) * carbohydrate amount from line 2 (g/kg) = g carbohydrate

4. BEFORE-EXERCISE FLUID NEEDS

A. **4 hours** prior to exercise:

$$\text{ ______ } \text{ body weight (kg)} * 5 \text{ mL/kg} = \text{ ______ } \text{ mL}$$

TO

$$\text{ ______ } \text{ body weight (kg)} * 7 \text{ mL/kg} = \text{ ______ } \text{ mL}$$

B. **2 hours** prior to exercise (if needed):

$$\text{ ______ } \text{ body weight (kg)} * 3 \text{ mL/kg} = \text{ ______ } \text{ mL}$$

TO

$$\text{ ______ } \text{ body weight (kg)} * 5 \text{ mL/kg} = \text{ ______ } \text{ mL}$$

To convert mL to oz: mL * 0.03 = fluid oz

5. DURING-EXERCISE CARBOHYDRATE NEEDS

The recommendation is 30-60 g/hour, no calculation needed. Amount should be determined based on the requirements of the individual sport and athlete.

6. DURING-EXERCISE FLUID NEEDS

A. Pre-exercise weight = lbs

B. Fluid consumed during exercise = L

(fluid oz / 33.8 = L)

C. Post-exercise weight = lbs

D. **Weight change** = Pre-exercise weight lbs - Post-exercise weight lbs =

E. Exercise time = hours

F. **Sweat rate** = (Weight change + Fluid intake L) / hours = L/h

7. POST-EXERCISE CARBOHYDRATE NEEDS (WHEN <8 HOURS RECOVERY)

body weight (kg) * 1 g/kg = g carbohydrate

TO

body weight (kg) * 1.2 g/kg = g carbohydrate

8. POST-EXERCISE FLUID NEEDS

Weight lost = Pre-exercise weight lbs - Post-exercise weight lbs =

Fluid needs:

body weight lost * 20 oz = oz

TO

body weight lost * 24 oz = oz

9. POST-EXERCISE PROTEIN NEEDS

About 20 g of protein is the right amount for most athletes. To determine your specific needs:

body weight (kg) * 0.25 g = g protein

TO

body weight (kg) * 0.3 g = g protein