



Recovery...Recovery....Recovery – A Hidden Key to Athletic Success

“What Parents Need to Know to Help Their Young Athletes”

If you work out seriously, whether it's running, weightlifting or any other intense sport, you have to make sure that you're giving your body the fuel and nutrients it needs to recover adequately from the effort.

After a workout, your body's stores of glycogen -- the carbohydrate that is stored in the muscles and liver -- are depleted. If you don't replenish them, your body won't recover properly and your performance will suffer during your next workout. This is particularly important for athletes who partake in intense training sessions or competitions. If you only workout a couple of times a week, you will likely restore your glycogen between sessions; however, athletes who train hard almost every day must really pay attention to what they eat immediately after they exercise.

That's where the concept of "recovery foods" comes in. The best way to replenish your glycogen stores is to consume carbohydrate-rich foods within the 30 minutes that follow your workout. Since your blood flow is increased and your muscle cells are more sensitive to insulin right after your workout, you'll get the best results if you consume recovery foods within this time frame.

Ideally, you should ingest approximately 3/4 of a gram of carbohydrates per pound of body weight -- about 135 grams of carbs for a 180-pound male -- within 30 minutes of your workout, and about the same amount or slightly more two hours later.

But it's not all about carbs. Studies have shown that including some protein -- 10 grams to 18 grams is ideal -- in your post-workout snack or meal helps to replenish the glycogen more quickly, and stimulates muscle growth and repair. Also, don't forget to rehydrate your body by drinking lots of fluids after your workout.

One word of caution: Because many of these foods, particularly those specifically designed as recovery foods, are meant to restore glycogen, they are often high in sugar. Therefore, if you aren't a serious endurance athlete undergoing intense training, you should probably steer clear of the high-sugar choices if you don't want to end up ruining

your efforts by packing on the pounds.

That being said, the following 10 recovery foods offer a good balance of both carbs and protein, and generally contain little fat. While each individual food may not offer the optimal amounts of protein and carbs outlined above (only a complete meal will give ideal amounts), these snacks are a good start. We chose a mix of commercial products designed as recovery foods and natural foods you can buy at any supermarket.

Number 10

PowerBar Energy Bites

These little crispy clusters come in three flavors -- Chocolate Crisp, Oatmeal Raisin Crisp and Peanut Butter Crisp -- are great for an energy boost before or during an intense workout, but they're also perfect as a post-workout recovery snack. A 50-gram bag of the Chocolate Crisp variety contains 200 calories, 32 grams of carbs, 8 grams of protein, and 5 grams of fat. Oh yeah, and they also contain a bunch of essential vitamins and minerals.

Number 9

Low-fat granola cereal

A good choice is GOLEAN by Kashi: A 1-cup serving has 140 calories, 30 grams of carbs, 13 grams of protein, and 1 gram of fat. And with 10 grams of dietary fiber -- which helps you to lose weight and may prevent cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and obesity -- you'll already have 40% of your recommended daily value. But beware of other granola brands that may be much higher in calories, sugar and fat. Your best bet is to read the labels closely. Also, be on the lookout for a new generation of recovery cereals, such as Nature's Path's Optimum ReBound, which should be available in the organic foods section of your local grocery store.

Number 8

GeniSoy Protein Bar

Despite its name, GeniSoy's bar isn't just a good source of protein. In fact, with 220 calories, 33 grams of carbs, 14 grams of protein, and 4 grams of fat per bar, it is a perfect recovery food. Plus, you get all the health benefits of soy, which reduces the risk of heart disease, promotes bone health, helps prevent prostate cancer, boosts the immune system, and more. However, this bar is high in sugar, so beware if you're not a serious

athlete (meaning running greater than an hour at a time – not recommended for baseball players)

Number 7

Cinnamon raisin bagel

The key here is size; while a small bagel can be a good post-workout snack, a super-sized one can ruin all your training efforts. Aim for a 70-gram whole-grain bagel (about 3 inches in diameter), which contains approximately 190 calories, 38 grams of carbs, 7 grams of protein, and 1.2 grams of fat. It is also a source of dietary fiber, vitamins and minerals. Add some peanut butter to up the protein intake and this works well.

Number 6

Meal-replacement drink

There are many types of meal-replacement drinks out there, but they are not all created equal; some are not as "healthy" as they seem. A good choice is Boost, which has 240 calories, 41 grams of carbs, 10 grams of protein, and 4 grams of fat per 8-ounce bottle. Boost is also an excellent source of 26 vitamins and minerals, but it does contain 27 grams of sugar per bottle, so don't go overboard.

Number 5

Fruit smoothie

Tasty and refreshing, a fruit smoothie is also a great recovery food. But beware of commercial mixes as they can contain a lot of sugar, and even fat. Your best bet is to make your own. Try this recipe: In a blender, combine 2 chilled bananas, 2/3 cup of strawberries or mango slices, 12 ounces of chilled grape juice or any fruit nectar, 8 ounces of fat-free yogurt, and 1 tablespoon of honey (optional). This makes six servings, each of which contains 152 calories, 47 grams of carbs, 6 grams of protein, and 2 grams of fat. It is also a good source of fiber, and vitamins and minerals such as vitamin C, calcium and iron. Again, add some protein powder and you have an even better mixture.

Number 4

Clif bar

Clif Bar is a "natural" energy bar (70% of the ingredients are organic) that is marketed both as a pre-workout energy-boosting snack, as well as an ideal recovery snack due to its 4-to-1 carbs to protein ratio. In fact, the Chocolate Brownie flavor boasts 240 calories, 45 grams of carbs, 10 grams of protein, and 4.5 grams of fat. It is also an excellent source of dietary fiber, soy, and many essential vitamins and minerals. This bar is an all-around excellent choice.

Number 3

Peanut butter and honey sandwich

Not all recovery foods have to be purchased in a foil wrapper or plastic bottle at a health food store or gym. A simple post-workout snack consists of peanut butter and honey on two slices of whole-wheat bread. Although this snack is higher in calories, carbs and fat than any other option on this list, it is also more filling than many other choices and contains "healthy" complex carbs. One peanut butter and honey sandwich has approximately 430 calories, 73 grams of carbs, 13 grams of protein, and 14 grams of fat. This is a great food for those athletes that are looking to also gain weight or keep from losing weight during a long season.

Number 2

Endurox R4

Specifically designed as a recovery drink, Endurox R4 is composed of the optimal 4-to-1 ratio of carbs to protein necessary to replenish glycogen stores, as well as antioxidants to decrease muscle damage and glutamine to reduce stress on the muscles. Two rounded scoops (74 grams) of the ready-to-mix powder (chocolate flavor) contain 270 calories, 52 grams of carbs, 13 grams of protein, and 1.5 grams of fat. However, with 44 grams of sugar, you should really steer clear of this unless you are a serious endurance athlete.

Number 1

1% chocolate milk

Yup, believe it or not, 1% chocolate milk is one of the best recovery foods out there. Two cups of this sweet stuff provide you with 320 calories, 52 grams of carbs, 16 grams of protein, and 5 grams of fat. Okay, so it does contain some saturated fat and is fairly high in sugar, but as an occasional glycogen-boosting drink after a hard workout, chocolate milk is a great choice.

Rest and Restoration

If you're training intensely more days a week than not, you probably need a little post-workout boost once in a while in order to be prepared to perform during your next session. Try some of these recovery snacks, but don't go overboard or you'll just end up packing on extra pounds.

****Remember to:**

- 1) Always plan ahead for what you are going to eat
- 2) Obtain adequate amounts of protein
- 3) Work on your flexibility and
- 4) Supplement your diet with a fish oil and multivitamin

Let me know if I can help. Email me at architechsports@gmail.com

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