

# NUTRITION GUIDE

## FOOTBALL

There is no way past the right sports nutrition strategy if you are chasing your personal best: the intake of the right nutrients at the right time in optimal amounts is crucial.

We provide you with tips and respective guidance on what to eat and drink before, during and after exercise – based on scientific insights, close collaboration with football clubs such as VfL Wolfsburg, FC Heidenheim, Fortuna Düsseldorf, FC Augsburg, LASK Linz and more than 30 years of experience in sports nutrition.

Please keep in mind when it comes to food tolerances and requirements there is an enormous amount of variation between individuals. However, our example of a sports nutrition strategy and suitable meals, snacks and drinks before, during and after training or match, can provide you some rough guidance. You can also find out WHAT suits you best, WHEN and in WHAT quantity by applying the "trial & error" principal.

### SPORTS NUTRITION STRATEGY TRAINING SESSION (ex.)



### SPORTS NUTRITION STRATEGY MATCH (ex.)



## NUTRITION ON TRAINING/MATCH DAY

### 3-4 HOURS BEFORE TRAINING OR A MATCH



### WITHIN THE LAST HOUR BEFORE TRAINING OR A MATCH



### DURING INTENSE TRAINING (> 60 MIN) OR A MATCH (COMPETITION)



### IMMEDIATELY AFTER TRAINING OR A MATCH

Especially when there is little recovery time start with refueling the energy tanks (glycogen stores) as soon as possible:

- 1-1.2g carbohydrate/kg of bodyweight

Protein to support muscle and growth of muscles:

- 0.3-0.4g protein/kg bodyweight

Effective rehydration:

- Fluid and electrolytes based on individual requirement.



## 7 KEY NUTRITION TIPS FOR FOOTBALL PLAYERS

- 1. Get the basics right**  
A varied, healthy and targeted nutrition foundation is a requirement for health, as well as optimal performance and development. It is a puzzle piece that helps you realize your full performance potential. Choose your foods wisely so that you can supply your body with valuable nutrients in the best possible way. Avoid overly fatty meals such as burger, sausage and fast food and instead choose whole foods / minimally processed foods such as fresh, seasonal and regional vegetables and fruits (alternatively the frozen options), natural yogurt instead of yogurt with added sugars (such as fruit syrups), whole grain instead of white flour products, homemade salad dressings with virgin olive oil, lemon juice and fruit herbs instead of ready-made dressings. You can find additional tips for a healthy diet in our blog. Also make sure you prepare your food in a way that best possible preserves its nutrients.
- 2. Do's and Don'ts before a match or a training session**  
Keep in mind, that every player is unique and hence there is no one-size-fits-all nutrition strategy. Consume the last big meal 3-4 hours before exercise. In general, foods that are more difficult to digest (fibre, especially include foods rich in fat and high in fibre) consumed in the last four hours leading up to an intensive exercise increase the risk of gastrointestinal discomfort. It's therefore sensible to avoid whole grain, whole wheat, bran or high-fibre foods / chips with sausage and so. If required, consuming a carbohydrate-rich snack (such as a ripe banana, white bread rolls or energy bars) and some fluid within the last hour before exercise can support optimal preparation.
- 3. No nutrition experiments before an important match**  
Nutrition on a match-day can influence a successful performance or drop in performance. On the worst case even a total performance termination. Intake of meals, snacks and drinks on a game day should therefore be planned and tested beforehand - only by doing so will you get an idea of what and in which quantity at what time before and during the game will be best for you. Also, the "trial effect" of the last big pre-game meal should not be forgotten: eating and drinking what is familiar to you can be calming and give you a good feeling.
- 4. Provide the body with the right fuel**  
The focused fuel for muscle needs during intense physical exercise, such as football, is carbohydrate.
- 5. Hydrate properly**  
Always start exercise well hydrated. During a football match or training session, sweat losses vary greatly between players. Already a fluid loss of more than 2% of body weight (based on the pre-exercise weight) can impair football training skills and general performance (2). Hence drink in regular intervals during exercise. Make use of the half-time break and other opportunities (e.g. slower substitutions and other breaks in play) to take on fluids. Too much fluid, as well as too little, can negatively affect exercise performance. The optimal fluid intake during a match or a prolonged training session depends on the individual rate of sweat loss and is approx. 600-800ml per hour. Alongside water, isotonic sports drinks are also suitable, as they contain a drink formula (fluid and electrolytes). Creatively combine 1 bar refreshment and 1 sports drink for energy. Fluid regularly, select fluids, drink that personally suit you best, for which you tolerate well and refresh your taste.
- 6. Caffeine - the popular performance booster**  
Caffeine is considered by athletes to be a performance boost in fatigue and exhaustion can be felt less intensely or at all, and recovery can also be improved (3). However, the effects of caffeine affect individuals very differently. Whether caffeine is useful and tolerable and in what doses before and/or during exercise, should be tried out individually in training.
- 7. Recover better**  
After a match or an intense training session, the correct choice of nutrients influences the recovery process. Carbohydrates are needed to replace the body's glycogen stores (energy stores in the liver and muscles), high-quality protein to repair the damaged muscle tissue and to build new muscle protein and fluid and electrolytes (especially sodium) for efficient rehydration.

**Author**  
Christine Heide (Brand), International Sports Nutrition Lead at Active Nutrition International. She has a postgraduate diploma in Sports Nutrition from the International Olympic Committee and is a certified Sports Nutritionist from the International Society of Sports Nutrition.

**Disclaimer**  
The representation of the nutrition information and recommendations described in this article is done at your own risk and cannot replace a personal and individual consultation, especially individuals under the age of 18 years, with health restrictions (especially those with orthopedic or metabolic complaints / diseases, or food intolerances or allergies, during pregnancy or lactation) should first consult a doctor. Should any symptoms develop during the implementation of the nutrition recommendations a doctor should be consulted immediately. Active Nutrition International GmbH does not assume liability.

## REFERENCES

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