



Pre & Post Workout Meals

So you are exercising now, burning calories, getting stronger, but are now asking the question what do I eat before and after my workouts? There are more scientific studies coming out that have demonstrated that pre & post workout feedings with protein and carbohydrates stimulate muscle synthesis. These studies have been classified as metabolic windows. Metabolic windows are said to stay active in the body for upwards of 60-90 minutes due to the bodies cells need for nutrients to start the rebuilding process. Studies have indicated though that the greatest nutrient uptake takes place immediately after workouts.

Insulin

Insulin is a hormone in the body that plays a role in our metabolism, by causing the cells in our body to take up glucose (simple sugar) and amino acid uptake (building blocks of protein). This results in stimulating and anabolic (building up) effect in the body. Insulin has a direct role in the body's ability to maximize the potential of the metabolic window of opportunity. Individuals can directly affect insulin output by regulating their carbohydrate intake before and after workouts. Dependent on what carbohydrate choices and individual makes, results in how fast the nutrients will be available to the muscle cells.

Knowing that insulin plays an important role in pre & post workout meals allows us the opportunity to eat within the proper ratios of carbohydrates to protein. Even though this article discusses mainly the recovery process, the same food can be eaten before the workout not only to increase energy, but also to stimulate the insulin process. The latest research indicates ratios of 1.5 to 4 parts carbohydrates to 1 part protein. Endurance athletes require a higher part carbohydrate then strength and power athletes. Dietary fat should be low to none.

Pre Workout Meal Ideas

Pre workout meals are designed to increase energy and stimulate insulin. Pre workout meals can be eaten within 2-4 hours of the workout, followed by simple (easily digested food choices) 30 minutes before the workout. Below you will find some examples.

2-4 hours before (based on time of day allotments)

AM Workout Sample:
1 cup cheerios
1 cup skim milk
.5 cup berries
1 tbsp. peanut butter

30m. before:
typical food bar with
* 2:1 ratio carb to
protein

PM Workout Sample:
3 oz chicken breast
.5 cup rice
.5 cup berries

30m. before:
typical food bar with
* 2:1 ratio carb to
protein

Pre Workout Meal Ideas

Post workout meals are designed to stimulate protein synthesis and slow down muscle from degrading. Food choices need to be simple and pre-digested. Pre-digested food ensures rapid absorption to the cells to capitalize of the metabolic window. Ready to drink formulas are the best with food bars next in line for optimal choices.

Post Workout Sample:

Ready to Drink (RTD) Workout Shake or food bar

* 2:1 ratio carb to protein

Post Workout Sample:

2 cups skim milk
.5 cup chocolate syrup

Post Workout Sample:

2 cups skim milk
1 banana

Conclusion

In order to maximize your workouts, pre & post workout feedings are crucial to your success. Preparing and planning is a necessary step for the success of the meals. The results you will receive will make the effort worthwhile.