

5 NUTRITION MISTAKES RUNNERS MAKE



**MARATHON
NUTRITIONIST**

by Kristy Baumann RD, LD

1 NOT EATING ENOUGH

It's easy to think "if I eat less food, I will weigh less, which will make me run faster." Right?

Actually, quite the opposite is true. Restricting calories can be detrimental to your training, energy level, and long term health. You may even unknowingly be under eating. Restricting calories is directly correlated to increased risk of injury. Failure to eat enough calories and the proper nutrients can result in weakened bones and increased risk of stress fractures.

Not eating enough calories or the right type of foods can also impact performance. For example, it's important to eat a carbohydrate-protein rich snack, with 20 to 40 grams of protein, plus 2 to 3 times that amount of carbohydrates following a long run or hard workout, to replenish those depleted carbohydrate stores and rebuild muscle.

2 FAILING TO PRACTICE YOUR FUELING

Practicing your fueling strategy before race day can be just as important as your running plan. Just like you train your lungs & muscles to run a marathon, you need to train your stomach to digest food while you run. Whatever do you plan to eat the night before your race, race day morning, and during the race, you need to practice. It should become second nature so there are no surprises on race day.

When you train your body with these foods, it allows you to learn how your body reacts, what works well and if anything causes an upset stomach, cramping or other stomach problems. Find out what beverages, food & energy gels will be available on the course by visiting the race website. Practice using these same items during your training. You'll likely need to carry additional fuel because most half and full marathons don't provide enough to meet the 30 to 90 grams of carbs per hour recommendation.

3 EATING WHATEVER YOU WANT

"I just ran 5 miles so I deserve to eat a donut." Have you ever told yourself this before? Food should not be used to justify or reward a behavior. Food is fuel for your body. It provides nutrients to give you energy to run and help you recover faster. However, this does not mean you cannot have dessert. Food is also important for your mental wellbeing.

Following intuitive eating practices, like letting go of food rules, understanding hunger & fullness signs and knowing when you need to eat even if you don't feel hungry, can help you build a positive relationship with food and your body image. It's about finding that balance of eating mindfully and eating the foods you enjoy. Intuitive eating can help you reach the best weight for you and optimize your running potential.

4 NOT EATING ENOUGH PROTEIN

Whether you are plant-based runner or a meat-lover, protein is important to rebuild muscle tissue, support a healthy immune system and prevent injury. Many runners fail to eat enough protein after their run, at breakfast and at lunch.

Aim to get 20 to 40 grams of protein (plus carbs) within 30 minutes after a hard-effort workout or long run. Continue to refuel with a balanced meal within 1 to 3 hours afterwards.

Many protein foods also contain iron, a key nutrient found in red blood cells that transports oxygen to the muscles. Runners have an increased need for iron due to foot strike - every time your foot hits the ground your body breaks down red blood cells.

5 POOR HYDRATION

Staying hydrated is more than just drinking enough water. Your body needs a balance of electrolytes and fluids for optimal hydration and performance. Drinking too much water can dilute sodium levels leading to hyponatremia. Not enough water and electrolytes leads to dehydration and symptoms like nausea, headache, stomach problems, muscle cramps, all which negatively impacting performance.

Everyone's hydration needs are different. Monitoring your urine color to be a light yellow (like lemonade) and completing a sweat test are some of the best ways to determine your fluid and electrolyte needs.

Choose a high sodium, high carb sports drink for your long runs. Many runners will need 300 to 800+ mg of sodium per hour and 10 to 24+ ounces fluids per hour to prevent dehydration.



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Hi! I'm Kristy

I'm a 11x marathon runner, mom, carb-lover & Registered Dietitian. I specialize in helping runners learn how to fuel properly to support their training and have a healthy relationship with food.

MY STORY

For the longest time, I thought I was fueling properly for race day -- even after becoming a dietitian. Except, I would struggle to keep my pace, always get muscle cramps, and experience stomach problems on race day. I thought carbohydrate loading was eating a large pasta dinner the night before the race and staying hydrated was just about drinking water.

But, I was missing one of the most powerful tools as a runner - a proper fueling strategy. Since making changes, it has transformed my running.

Now I help other runners learn how to properly fuel so they no longer 'hit the wall', experience cramping, or GI issues on race day.

LET'S CONNECT

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www.marathonnutritionist.com (coming soon!)

