

Freihofer's Training Challenge

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Carbs, Carbs, Carbs-the good, the bad and the evil.

Tip 2: Carbohydrates are an important source of energy. The goal for your carbohydrate intake is to provide enough energy to sustain you through the duration of your activity. What you eat will affect your muscles energy response and performance. Carbohydrates prior to training will enhance the energy response. It takes the average person approximately two hours for their stomach to empty and to have partially digested a light meal or snack. That is why a light snack is recommended approximately two hours prior to a workout. If you workout within two hours blood flow is diverted to digestion and not to the performing muscles. This can result in cramps as well as contribute to cardiac strain. On a training day, about half of the food you eat should come from complex carbohydrates such as bread, legumes, brown rice, citrus fruits and peas. On off days, you should cut back on sugar, carbohydrates and fats. Prior to the work out you should avoid high fiber such as bran, prunes, and apples with skin, as these slow digestion.

Look to combine low glycemic carbohydrates with light protein and fat as it maintains a steady blood sugar level. The following are a few suggestions for pre-work snacks 2 hours prior to training:

Instant oatmeal & 5 walnut halves (instant because it is lower in fiber)

Greek yogurt with ¼ cup granola

1 cup applesauce & 5 roasted almonds

1 cup corn or rice breakfast cereal with low fat milk

Hummus with pita chips

½ cup low glycemic index berries-blackberries, blueberries, raspberries, strawberries with string cheese

Peeled green apple and 1 tablespoon peanut butter

If you are hungry or feel the need for added energy one hour prior to your workout, then cut back on the protein and fat which take longer to digest and you may then have a higher glycemic carb at that time. A little protein is important to avoid an insulin spike and then blood sugar crash. The following are good one hour before a work out:

Applesauce and yogurt

Rice cake

Grapes & cheese stick

Carbohydrates are basic to good nutrition and glucose is the only sugar your brain can use! People are not overweight because of bread! It is more the result of poor carbohydrate choices in combination with processed food and too many calories in the day. Bagels, donuts, ice cream and cookies are the *evil* carbs! A bagel is so carb dense it is considered the equivalent of 5 slices of bread. Remember, if you do not burn that energy carbohydrate it is converted to a triglyceride for storage as *fortified adipose tissue*-FAT.

Eat to activity and think of food as nutrients “to sustain you not entertain you.” On a non-training day the athlete should cut back on sugar, carbohydrates and fat. Fruits and vegetables are carbs - good carbs! They are rich in antioxidants and vitamins. The richer the color of the fruit or vegetable, the more nutrient dense it is. It is healthy to have one to two fruit serving a day. A serving is ½ of a fruit or ½ cup. Half your plate should be vegetables daily! Think unlimited vegetables!

If you are NOT trying to lose weight, 200 grams of carbohydrates daily is a recommended amount. However, unlike protein and fats, there is no minimum daily health requirement for carbohydrate in order to flourish physically.

If you ARE working to lose weight, the number of carbohydrates varies according to levels of activity. When people reduce their carbohydrate intake they do burn and convert fat. This process takes about 2 to 3 weeks to produce. The normal low carbohydrate range for weight loss is 20 to 70 grams daily. You determine how strict you need to be; the best way is to experiment and discover what amount works well for you as an individual. Look to obtain those healthy carbohydrates from natural sources such as (preferably organic) fresh non-starchy vegetables such as eggplant, cauliflower and low carbohydrate fruits such as berries. Avoid or limit refined processed carbohydrates such as candy bars, donuts and high fructose corn syrup. Additionally, you will continue to burn carbohydrates after a workout.

Refined processed carbohydrates are a major cause of hypertension, heart disease, insulin resistance, weight gain, obesity, diabetes type 2, and many other diet related diseases. Eliminate or strictly limit refined processed carbohydrates (apart from the occasion treat). Replace those foods with 'fat burning' foods and take advantage of the thermic effect of those foods for health, weight maintenance weight loss. Proven fat burning natural carbohydrates are cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage, brussel sprouts and they are delicious mixed with olive oil, garlic, salt and pepper and roasted in the oven!! In general, avoid loading up on sugar (sucrose). I recommend not using refined (white) sugar but yet more natural sources such as raw sugar, honey and agave.

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