

FUEL THE FORCE

Lose weight faster by nourishing your exercise with the right foods

BEFORE EXERCISE...

1 Oatly prepared

Eat 70 minutes before training

Best if you train in the mornings and can't function on an empty stomach

- 50g oats
- 50g quinoa flakes
- Small banana
- Half a punnet of blueberries
- 150g low-fat yoghurt
- Sprinkle of cinnamon

The pay-off "Quinoa flakes are a complete protein that fuels your muscles while keeping your blood sugar balanced," says nutritional therapist Emma Wells (smartrnutrition.co.uk).

Step 1 Place the oats, quinoa, banana and blueberries in a pan and cover with water.

Step 2 Simmer on a low heat for 5 minutes, adding more liquid if it becomes too thick.

Step 3 Place in a dish, top with the yoghurt and sprinkle over cinnamon to taste.

2 Seeds of success

Eat 60 minutes before training

Best if you go home before you exercise

- Mixed seeds. Include 1 handful of sunflower, pumpkin and sesame seeds and 2 handfuls of linseeds. Mix in a bowl and store.
- 250mg low-fat yoghurt
- 2 kiwi fruits (peeled)
- 1 mango
- 1 peach or nectarine
- 2 dried figs

The pay-off "Seeds are rich in omega-3s, essential for your immune system," says Wells. "Fruits are loaded with antioxidants, to mop up free-radicals."

Step 1 Grind up a handful of the mixed seeds.

Step 2 Add in the fruit and yoghurt and mix.

Step 3 Eat as is, or with a splash of milk.

3 Milking it

Eat 25 minutes before training

Best if you have an impromptu training session

- Small banana
- 1 cup of low-fat milk

The pay-off "Bananas are a fast-acting source of energy for your training session," says Christian Finn, creator of thefactsaboutfitness.com. A pint of milk gives you 700mg of calcium (there's the same amount in low-fat milk as there is in full fat) and studies have found that people who consumed more than 1200mg of calcium every day had a lower level of body fat than those who had less.

4 Fruits for your labour

Eat 40 minutes before training

Best if you train at lunch time

- Apple, pear and small low-fat yoghurt

The pay-off It might be the fruit of our sins, but with over 2000 varieties in the UK alone, the humble apple is a real energy catalyst. "The apple is high in sugar for energy to help you train harder and because it is in its natural form – fructose – it's released slowly into the blood stream, meaning you don't run the risk of a sugar slump. The yoghurt is rich in dairy protein which has been proven to help rebuild muscles after strenuous exercise," says Wells.

5 Magic beans

5 minutes before training

Best if you need some fast-acting energy

- Black coffee
- 500ml water

The pay-off "High blood glucose and insulin levels, both of which switch fat-burning machinery off, can be avoided by exercising on an empty stomach," says Matt Lovell, director of Perform and Function, which advises international rugby players and British Olympians. "If your energy levels drop then a strong roast coffee will be enough to give you a boost to mentally attack your workout for a full 45-60 minutes." ▶

