Performance Point

Recovery Nutrition

Canadian Sport Centre / Centre canadien multisport Pacific/Pacifique

by Susan Boegman, Nutritionist, Canadian Sport Centre Pacific — October 2006

Fueling after both training and competition is an essential part of an athlete's nutritional program. Whether fueling between events or eating after a final competition, how well one eats will impact future performance and is therefore critical to athletic success.

Fluids – the most critical nutrient for recovery
More than 50% of athletes do not drink enough to properly re-hydrate. As hydration is critical to athlete recovery, review the Performance Point "Hydration" (*May 2006*) for recovery fluid intake amounts.

Carbohydrates – the next essential nutrient
Low glycogen levels decrease sprint speed at the end of stop and go sports. They also decrease time to exhaustion for endurance sports. High liver and muscle glycogen content is therefore essential for a podium finish! Greatest glycogen recovery will occur with small amounts of carbohydrate taken at 30 minute intervals for approximately five to six hours after activity. This is often not realistic, so aim to have a recovery "meal" immediately after activity, repeating in one to two hours and then follow up with your nutritional training program.

Aim for high glycemic index (GI) carbohydrate foods/fluids to enhance glycogen repletion when time between activities is short or you are training more than once per day. As it is impractical and unhealthy to focus solely on high GI foods, aim for 50-100 grams (approximately 1.0 gram/kilogram) of high GI carbohydrates in each of the two meals after exercise and then aim to eat high quality, low GI carbohydrates for the rest of the day. Choosing low GI carbohydrates will also provide for greater satiety and greater usage of fat in subsequent activity. Please visit http://www.gilisting.com/ for more information on the GI index.

Don't Forget About Protein!
Protein is essential for enhanced recovery. High quality protein such as poultry, seafood, or soy, taken every two hours will produce a more continuous muscle recovery and may enhance muscle glycogen storage. Aim for approximately 10–20 grams in each of the two recovery meals. Once again, follow up with your nutritional training program.

Recovery Food Ideas (approximately 50 grams carbohydrate and 10–20 grams protein)

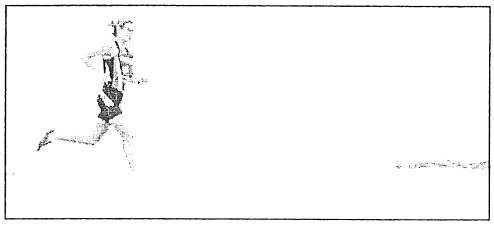
- 3 cups (750 ml) sport beverage + 5 tablespoons skim milk powder
- 500 ml carton of chocolate milk
- 1 ¼ cups Vector cereal + 1 cup (250 ml) low fat milk – can be blended
- 1 sport bar (ie. *ORGANIC FOOD BAR, ELEV8ME, CLIF BAR, Power Bar Triple Threat*, etc.) + 1-2 cups (250-500 ml) sport drink
- 1 package instant breakfast mix + 1 cup (250 ml) low fat milk and 1 cup berries or ½ banana

Note: Ultimate responsibility lies with the user and this should be considered by anyone choosing to use sport foods.

Committing to recovery nutrition will maximize your ability to replenish glycogen and repair and build muscle tissue. Through careful planning you can maintain a high quality training regime and gain the competitive edge you need to reach the podium.

"Creating your best recovery nutrition program is the first and most important step in performance enhancement."

Melanie McQuaid, Canadian Sport Centre Pacific National Triathlon and Cycling Training Centres



Triathlete / Cyclist Melanie McQuaid. Photo credit: John Segesta of Wahoo Media.

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