

Sports Drinks

High-intensity endurance exercise, such as cycling or running, depletes the body of electrolytes, fluid and fuel. Research shows sports drinks can delay feelings of fatigue by replenishing carbohydrate, fluid and electrolytes when consumed during activities exceeding 30 minutes in length. If exercising less than 30 minutes, water is a great choice for rehydration.

Sports drinks are also beneficial during stop-and-go activities such as basketball, tennis, soccer or hockey, to maintain concentration and energy levels.

When exercising for a few hours at a time, you should consume 30 to 60 grams of carbohydrate every hour to avoid running out of energy. Carbohydrate intake should begin early during exercise rather than later, when the body is already using stored carbohydrate. Waiting too long may negatively impact performance.

When picking a sports drink, consider the following:

- Choose a sports drink with 4 to 8 percent concentration of carbohydrate (approximately 14 grams of carbohydrate per 8 ounces of drink).
- Select a sports drink with a combination of carbohydrate sources (e.g. sucrose, glucose, dextrose). The combinations are easily and quickly absorbed from the gut for use as energy.
- Limit choices of sports drinks with their sole carbohydrate source as fructose or galactose. These are not absorbed as easily and may cause stomach discomfort.
- Try a sports drink with 110 to 200 mg of sodium per 8 ounces of drink. Sodium helps carbohydrate absorption, replenishes sodium lost in sweat and improves the taste of the sports drink.
- Use a sports drink that tastes good to you.

Sports Gels

Sports gels are designed to be a mix between an energy bar and a sports drink. When choosing a sports gel, consider everything you would for a sports drink and an energy bar. Look at the ingredient list:

- Note the sugar source — many sports gels contain honey. Honey contains fructose and glucose, slowing the rate of absorption of the carbohydrate.
- Some sports gels may contain brown rice syrup, which contains complex carbohydrates. These take longer to digest and absorb than simple sugars such as glucose and sucrose.
- Be aware of the gels that have caffeine if you are sensitive.

Other things to consider about sports gels:

- Sports gels typically contain between 100 to 120 calories and 25 grams of carbohydrate.
- Use one gel for every 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity. Adjust the amount based on your calorie needs and intensity of your workout.
- Always drink plenty of water with a sports gel.



PROS and CONS of Sports Drinks

- ↑ Sports drinks provide fluid and fuel for your workout.
- ↓ Multiple sports drink bottles are difficult to carry.



PROS and CONS of Sports Gels

- ↑ Sports gels are smaller than bars and drinks making them easy to carry.
- ↓ Sports gels do not provide you with fluid for your workout.



Sports Energy Bars

When shopping for an energy bar, read the nutrition facts label to select a bar for your unique needs:

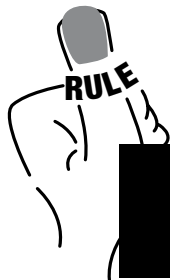
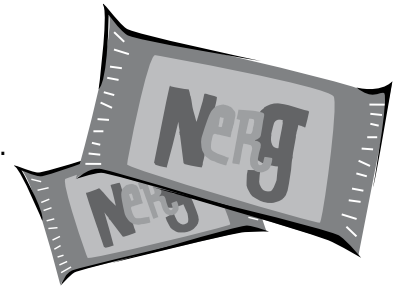
- Choose a bar based on your caloric requirements. The calories in energy bars range anywhere from 120 to 300 calories per bar. The longer and/or more intense your workout, the more calories you need.
- Consider the amount of carbohydrate in the bar. High carbohydrate bars are good for fueling before, during and after a workout. Choose a bar that provides 30 to 60 grams of carbohydrate per bar. For prolonged exercise, eat one bar an hour, with plenty of water.
- High-protein bars are good for people who may not eat enough protein in the day. Choose bars with a protein source of whey, casein, soy and/or egg.

Other things to consider about energy bars:

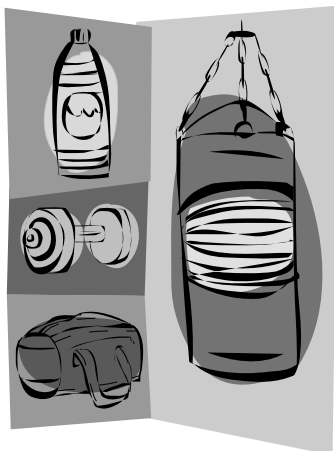
- Energy bars work best as a snack before or after physical activity. They are not designed to provide all the nutrients you need from other foods.
- Limit the use of energy bars as meal replacements. Relying on them may lead to a deficiency of fiber and other nutrients found in whole grains and fresh fruits and vegetables.
- On occasion if you must use an energy bar as a meal, pair it with whole foods such as a piece of fruit, cheese and crackers or a glass of milk.
- Choose an energy bar with whole ingredients such as oats, fruit and nuts.
- Use an energy bar that tastes good to you.

PROS and CONS of Energy Bars

- ↑ Energy bars can be a quick, tasty source of energy before, during or after your workout.
- ↑ Energy bars can be a rich source of nutrients such as vitamins and minerals.
- ↓ Energy bars are packed with certain vitamins and minerals. Relying heavily on energy bars in your diet may cause a mineral imbalance.
- ↓ Energy bars do not provide you with fluid for your workout.



When trying new sports drinks, bars, or gels, test them during a training session before using them at competition.



? Ask the Sports Dietitian

Q: Why is caffeine added to some sports bars and gels and how will it affect my performance?

A: Caffeine may enhance performance by increasing the body's use of fat as fuel and improving alertness. However, some people are sensitive and may want to avoid caffeine-containing products.

Q: Are there any other ingredients in sports bars and drinks that I should look out for?

A: Some products may contain sugar alcohols such as sorbitol and xylitol, an alternative to sugar, which may cause diarrhea in some people. Also be aware of products that contain saturated fat such as palm kernel oil.