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Nancy Clark's  
**SPORTS  
NUTRITION**  
Guidebook

FIFTH EDITION

**Nancy Clark, MS, RD, CSSD**

Sports Nutrition Services, LLC

Newton, MA



Human Kinetics

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*With appreciation for their love, patience with recipe testing, and understanding of the time demands of a busy sports dietitian, wife, and mother, I dedicate this book to my husband, John, and my children, John Michael and Mary. They feed my heart, nourish my soul, and offer deep purpose and meaning to my life.*

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# PREFACE

**“I’m trying to figure out how to eat healthier, stay lean, and be the best athlete I can be.”**

**“I’m training hard but not getting the results I want. I’m wondering what supplements I should be taking.”**

**“I’ve been on so many crazy diets, I don’t know how to eat normally anymore. I’m good at exercising—but my eating is horrible.”**

**These are just** a few of the concerns I repeatedly hear from both casual exercisers and competitive athletes. More than ever, they feel confused about what and when to eat; how to fuel before, during, and after exercise; how to choose the best sports foods; and how to assemble healthy meals and snacks to help them lose fat and build muscle. Sound familiar?

There is no doubt that eating the right foods at the right times significantly improves performance and weight—as well as future health and well-being. I’ve helped many competitive athletes build bigger muscles, run faster marathons, and compete with higher energy. I’ve also helped many fitness exercisers train better, lose weight, and achieve dramatic results. Yet, too many active people fail to eat well, fail to get the most out of their workouts, and fail to feel good about their bodies and their eating patterns. Many believe that eating well equates to depriving themselves of flavorful and fun foods. This is not the case.

*Nancy Clark’s Sports Nutrition Guidebook, Fifth Edition*, clarifies the confusion about how much carbohydrate, protein, and fat you should consume and teaches you how to enjoy a variety of tasty, nutrient-rich foods that can give you the winning edge. You’ll learn the latest information about the topics that matter most to active people:

- How to assemble meals with minimal effort and clean-up
- How to schedule preexercise eating so you don't run out of gas during workouts (or the workday, for that matter!)
- How to lose undesired body fat and have energy to exercise
- How to tame the cookie monster
- How to choose the right balance of carbohydrate, to fuel your muscles, and protein, to build your muscles, including sample menus and suggestions
- How to choose foods with the right amount of health-protective fat (not too much, not too little)
- How to consume enough protein at meals, even if you are a vegetarian
- How to eat cleaner and greener

If your goal is to move to the next level of performance and health, the up-to-date information in this book can help you get there. You'll find answers to your questions about the Paleo Diet, gluten-free foods, energy drinks, commercial sports foods, high-fructose corn syrup, muscle cramps, organic foods, hyponatremia, amenorrhea, and recovery foods as well as tips on how to apply this information to your sports diet and training program.

As you navigate your way through today's confusing jungle of nutrition advice, I invite you to enjoy this fifth edition as a resource that offers a sane and sustainable approach to finding success with food and weight.

Whatever you do, don't show up for exercise but neglect to show up for winning meals and sports snacks! You will never outrun a poor sports diet.

With best wishes for good health and high energy,

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With appreciation to my running buddies, Jean Smith and Catherine Farrell, for sharing life's marathons with me.

With gratitude to my clients, who teach me about sports nutrition up close and personal. By entrusting me with their experiences, I am better able to help others with similar nutrition concerns. Throughout this book, I have shared their stories but have changed their names and occupations to protect their privacy.

I'm appreciative of the numerous recipe contributors who shared their food ideas—and offer a strong vote of confidence to the faithful recipe testers: my family and my neighbors, Joan and Rex Hawley.

And last but not least, a big thank you to the staff at Human Kinetics for their support of this book, from the first edition to the fifth. This includes Rainer Martens, Martin Barnard, Jason Muzinic, Claire Marty, Tyler Wolpert, Susan Outlaw, Alexis Koontz, Christina Johnson, Nancy Rasmus, and Kim McFarland.



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**PART I**

**Everyday Eating  
for Active People**



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## CHAPTER 1

# Building a High-Energy Eating Plan

**I'm good at exercising, but bad at eating. Nutrition is my missing link. I'm confused by conflicting nutrition information, and I don't even know where to begin to shape up my diet. I need some food help!**

*—Lenny*

**If you are** like Lenny (and the majority of my clients), you know that food is important for fueling the body and investing in overall health, but you don't quite manage to eat right. Student athletes, sports parents, casual exercisers, fitness fanatics, and competitive athletes alike repeatedly express their frustrations about trying to eat high-quality diets. Long work hours, attempts to lose weight, and time spent exercising can all contribute to food becoming a source of stress rather than one of life's pleasures. Given today's good food–bad food culture, eating well has become more confusing than ever.

In this chapter, you'll learn how to eat right and fuel your body appropriately all day long, even if you have a busy lifestyle. Whether you work out at the health club, compete with a varsity team, aspire to be an Olympian, or simply actively play with your kids, you can nourish yourself with a nutrient-dense diet that supports good health and high energy, even if you are grabbing food to eat on the run.

In the upcoming chapters, I offer information on how to manage meals—breakfasts, lunches, dinners, and snacks—but in this chapter, I cover the day-to-day basics of how to build a winning, well-balanced sports diet. You'll learn how to eat more of the best foods, eat less of the rest, and create a food plan that results in high energy, good health, top performance, and weight management.

## Create a Winning Food Plan

A fundamental key to eating well is to prevent yourself from getting too hungry. When people get too hungry, they tend to care less about the nutritional quality of the food they eat and more about grabbing whatever food is in sight. By evenly distributing your calories throughout the day, you can prevent hunger, curb your physiological desire to eat excessively, and tame your psychological desire to treat yourself with goodies. This is contrary to the standard pattern of skimping by day only to overindulge at night.

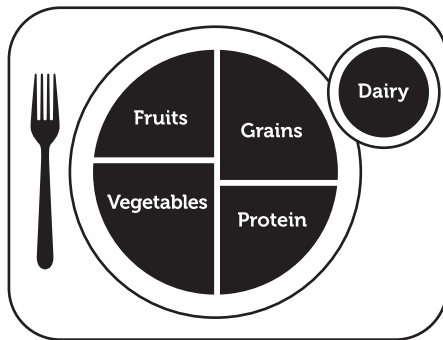
As you start to create your winning food plan, keep in mind these three concepts:

1. Eat at least three, preferably four, and ideally five, different kinds of nutrient-dense food at meals. The government's food plate ([www.ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov)) suggests five kinds of foods per meal: protein, grain, fruit, vegetable, and dairy (figure 1.1). The more types of foods you eat, the more vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients you consume.

Many of my clients eat a limited diet: oatmeal, oatmeal, oatmeal; apples, apples, apples; energy bars, energy bars, energy bars. Repetitive eating keeps life simple, minimizes decisions, and simplifies shopping, but it can result in an inadequate diet and chronic fatigue. Instead of repeatedly eating the same 10 to 15 foods each week, target 35 different types of foods per week. You can do this by eating not just bran flakes with milk and a banana for breakfast, but many different cereals topped with a variety of fruits and nuts; not just a plain turkey sandwich for lunch, but different types of breads with additional fillings, such as turkey on rye bread with low-fat cheese, avocado, and a side of baby carrots. Start counting!

2. Think moderation. Enjoy a foundation of healthy foods, but don't deprive yourself of enjoyable foods. Rather than categorize a food as being good or bad for your health, think about moderation, and aim for a diet that offers 85 to 90 percent nutrient-dense foods and if desired 10 to 15 percent foods with fewer nutritional merits. This way, even cookies and chocolate can fit into a nourishing diet; you just need to balance them with healthier choices during the rest of the day.

3. As often as possible, eat "clean." That means, make the effort to primarily choose minimally processed whole foods, including more foods without labels. For instance, choose a whole orange rather than orange juice, bananas rather than commercial energy bars, baked potatoes rather than instant mashed potatoes. Natural or lightly processed foods usually have more nutritional value and less sodium, trans fat, and other health-eroding ingredients. Our genetic makeup is ever changing and not static, so eating wholesome foods can sway our genes in a positive direction—away from chronic disease and toward lifelong health.



U.S. Department of Agriculture.

**FIGURE 1.1** Does your plate look similar to MyPlate? If not, make the effort to include *at least* three—if not all five—of the food groups in each meal so that you will get a healthy balance of vitamins, minerals, proteins, and carbohydrates.

## Don't Just Eat, Eat Right

The fundamental key to building a healthy sports diet is to consume a variety of nutrient-dense foods from the five basic food groups (fruits, vegetables, grains, lean protein, and low-fat dairy and calcium-rich foods). To guide your food choices, the U.S. government offers updated nutrition recommendations every five years. The overarching concepts of the 2010 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* are to consume nutrient-dense foods and maintain a healthy body weight. Although I will be addressing these guidelines in more detail throughout this book, here is a summary of the foods you should emphasize in your daily diet:

- Eat more vegetables and fruits.
- Enjoy a variety of colorful vegetables, especially dark green, red, and orange vegetables.
- Replace refined grains with whole grains until at least half of all the grains you eat are whole grains.
- Increase your intake of fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products, such as milk, yogurt, cheese, and calcium-fortified soy beverages.
- Choose a variety of protein foods, which include seafood, lean meat, poultry, eggs, beans, legumes, soy products, and unsalted nuts and seeds.
- Increase the amount and variety of seafood you consume by choosing seafood in place of some meat and poultry.
- Replace protein foods that are higher in solid fat (such as greasy burgers and spareribs) with choices that are lower in solid fat and

calories (such as chicken and eggs) or are sources of oils (such as fish and nuts).

- Use oils (such as olive and canola oil) to replace solid fat (such as stick margarine) where possible.
- Choose foods that provide more potassium, dietary fiber, calcium, and vitamin D, which are nutrients of concern in American diets. These foods include vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and milk and milk products or alternatives.

The MyPlate guidelines for an 1,800-calorie daily food plan (a minimal amount for most athletes, even if they want to lose body fat) include the following:

- **Fruit:** 1 1/2 cups of fruit or juice per day. This is easy—a refreshing smoothie with a banana, berries, and orange juice will do the job.
- **Vegetables:** 2 1/2 cups (about 400 g) per day with a variety of colors. A bowlful of salad with tomato, peppers, carrots, and baby spinach fulfills the vegetable requirement, no sweat.
- **Grains:** 6 ounces (180 g) of grain foods, of which at least half are whole grain. (Look for the word *whole* before the grain name on the ingredient list.) One ounce = one slice of bread or 1/2 cup of pasta or rice. Eating whole-grain Wheaties at breakfast and a sandwich on whole-wheat bread at lunchtime can balance white rice or pasta served at dinner.
- **Dairy:** 3 cups (about 700 ml or g) of low-fat or fat-free milk or yogurt. Two ounces (60 g) of American cheese or 1.5 ounces (45 g) hard cheese is the calcium equivalent of 1 cup (240 ml) of milk. Calcium-fortified soy milk and lactose-free milk are fine alternatives.
- **Meat and alternatives:** Five 1-ounce equivalents. 1 ounce (30 g) of meat equates to 1 egg, 1 tablespoon of peanut butter, or 0.5 ounce (small handful) of nuts. A small portion of a protein-rich food at each meal will more than satisfy that requirement.

The following information can help you not just eat, but also eat right—even if you are eating on the run and rarely cook meals at home.

## Whole Grains and Starches

If you eat well, there is a “whole” in your diet—whole grains! Wholesome breads, cereals, and other grain foods are the foundation of a high-performance sports diet, as well as any diet, for that matter. Grains that are unrefined or only lightly processed are excellent sources of carbohydrate,



fiber, and B vitamins. They fuel your muscles, protect against needless muscular fatigue, and reduce problems with constipation if they're fiber rich. And despite popular belief, the carbohydrate in grains is not fattening; excess calories are fattening. Excess calories often come from the various forms of fat (butter, mayonnaise, gravy) that accompany rolls, sandwich bread, rice, and other types of carbohydrate. If weight is an issue, I recommend that you limit the fat but enjoy fiber-rich breads, cereals, and other whole grains. These foods help curb hunger and assist with weight management. Wholesome forms of carbohydrate should be the foundation of both a weight-reduction program and a sports diet. (See chapters 6 and 16 for more information on carbohydrate and weight.)

Grains account for about 25 percent of the calories consumed in the United States, but unfortunately for our health, most of the grains we eat are refined—white bread, white rice, products made with white flour. The refining process strips grains of their bran and germ, thereby removing fiber, antioxidants, minerals, and other health-protective compounds. People who habitually eat diets based on refined grains tend to have a higher incidence of chronic diseases, such as adult-onset diabetes and heart disease. People who habitually eat whole grains enjoy a 20 to 40 percent lower risk of heart disease and stroke (Flight and Clifton 2006).

### **How Much Is Enough?**

To get adequate carbohydrate to fully fuel your muscles, you need to consume carbohydrate as the foundation of each meal. You can do this by eating at least 200 calories of grain foods per meal—such as one bowl of cereal, two slices of bread, or one cup of rice. This is not much for hungry exercisers who require 600 to 900 calories per meal. Most active people commonly need to eat (and should eat) double or even triple the standard servings listed on the labels of cereal and pasta boxes.

### **Top Choices**

If refined white grains (white flour, bread, rice, pasta) dominate your grain choices, here are some tips to boost your intake of whole grains, which offer more health value yet are tasty and readily available. Note that the word *wheat* on a label may not mean whole wheat, and a dark color might be just from food coloring, so be sure to look for the word *whole*. And whatever you do, don't try to stay away from grains, thinking they are fattening. That is not the case.

- **Whole-grain cereals.** Wheaties, Cheerios, Total, Kashi, and Shredded Wheat are examples of cereals with the words *whole grain* on the cereal box or in the list of ingredients.

- **Oatmeal.** When cooked into a tasty hot cereal or eaten raw as in muesli, oatmeal makes a wonderful breakfast that helps lower cholesterol and protect against heart disease. Some people even keep microwavable packets of instant oatmeal in their desk drawers for cozy afternoon snacks. Oatmeal (instant and regular) is a whole-grain food with slow-to-digest carbohydrate that offers sustained energy and is perfect for a preexercise snack.

- **Whole-grain and dark breads.** When it comes to choosing bread products, remember that whole-grain breads tend to have more nutritional value than do white breads. At the supermarket, select the hearty brands that have whole wheat, rye, or oatmeal listed as the first ingredient. Keep wholesome breads in the freezer so that you have a fresh supply on hand for toast, sandwiches, or snacks. When at the sandwich shop, request the turkey with tomato on dark rye.

- **Whole-grain and graham crackers.** These low-fat munchies are a perfect high-carbohydrate snack for your sports diet. Be sure to choose

### Put a “Whole” in Your Diet

Whole grains offer hundreds of phytochemicals that play key roles in reducing the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. For a food to be called a whole grain, one of the following should be listed first in the ingredient list on the food label:

Amaranth	Triticale
Brown rice	Whole-grain barley
Buckwheat	Whole-grain corn
Bulgur (cracked wheat)	Whole oats or oatmeal
Millet	Whole rye
Popcorn	Whole wheat
Quinoa	Wild rice
Sorghum	

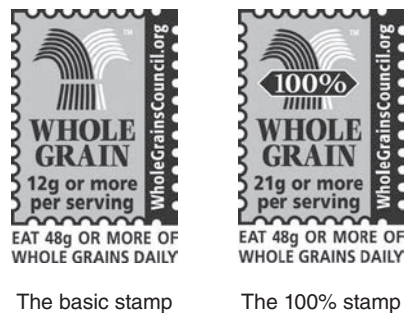
You won't see the words *whole grain* on the Nutrition Facts label, so instead look for the word *whole* at or near the top of the ingredient list. Also look for the “whole grain” stamp on the food label (figure 1.2), and ideally choose foods with at least 8 grams (a half serving) of whole grain

wholesome brands of crackers with low fat content, not the ones that leave you with greasy fingers. Look for Ak-Mak, Dr. Kracker, Finn Crisp, Kavli, RyKrisp, Triscuit Thin Crisps, Wasa, and Whole Foods 365 Baked Woven Wheats (among others). Enjoy graham crackers topped with peanut butter for a yummy snack.

- **Popcorn.** Whether popped in air or in a little canola oil, popcorn is a fun way to boost your whole-grain intake. The trick is to avoid smothering it in butter or salt. How about sprinkling it with Mexican or Italian seasonings or a seasoned popcorn spray?

### **Against the Grain?**

You may stay away from wheat because you have celiac disease, are gluten intolerant, or simply choose to limit your intake of wheat for personal reasons. With careful planning, you can still consume an adequate sports diet. Please refer to chapter 6 for more information about how to plan a wheat-free, gluten-free sports diet.



**FIGURE 1.2** Whole grain stamp.

Whole Grain Stamps are a trademark of Oldways Preservation Trust and the Whole Grains Council, [www.wholegrainscouncil.org](http://www.wholegrainscouncil.org). Used with permission.

per serving. Foods that are 100 percent whole grain have 16 grams of whole grain per serving. Your daily goal is at least 48 grams of whole grain—three servings.

*Note:* The term *high fiber* does not equate to *whole grain*; high-fiber foods may contain just the bran layer of the grain, not the germ and endosperm that comprise the whole grain.

**FACT OR FICTION**

**Quinoa is a superior whole grain.**

**The facts:** Quinoa (which is actually a seed, although we eat it as a grain) is touted as being a superior grain because it offers more protein than other grains. But, as you can see in table 1.1, quinoa is not a protein powerhouse. Be sure to balance the meal by combining quinoa with tofu, beans, or yogurt to reach the target of 20 to 30 grams of protein per meal. Quinoa is also expensive: \$6 per pound (\$13/kg), as compared to brown rice at \$1.50 per pound (\$3.30/kg). But it is quick cooking (less than 15 minutes), versatile, and a wholesome addition to any meal.

**TABLE 1.1 Protein Comparisons Among Grains**

Grain or starch	1 cup cooked	Calories	Protein (g)
Pasta, white	2 oz (60 g) dry	200	7
Pasta, whole wheat	2 oz (60 g) dry	200	8
Rice, white	1/3 cup (65 g) raw	225	4
Rice, brown	1/3 cup (65 g) raw	225	5
Couscous	1/3 cup (65 g) raw	215	7
Quinoa	1/3 cup (65 g) raw	200	8

**Vegetables**

Like fruits, vegetables contribute important carbohydrate to the foundation of your sports diet. Vegetables are what I call nature's vitamin pills because they are excellent sources of vitamin C, beta-carotene (the plant form of vitamin A), potassium, magnesium, and many other vitamins, minerals, and health-protective substances. In general, vegetables offer slightly more nutritional value than fruits. Hence, if you don't eat much fruit, you can compensate by eating more veggies. You'll get similar vitamins and minerals, if not more.

**How Much Is Enough?**

The recommended intake is at least 2 1/2 cups of vegetables (about 400 g) per day (preferably more). Many busy people rarely eat that much in a week. If you are a vegetable minimalist, the trick is to eat large portions when you do eat vegetables—a big pile rather than a standard serving—and that can equate to 2 1/2 cups in one sitting. Then, to really invest in your health, try to do that twice a day, such as eating a big colorful salad

with lunch and a bunch of broccoli with dinner. The food industry is working hard to make eating vegetables as easy as opening a bag of leafy greens, baby carrots, peeled and cubed butternut squash—or frozen bags of broccoli that you can simply toss into the microwave oven.

### **Top Choices**

Any vegetable is good for you. Of course, vegetables fresh from the garden are best, but they are often impossible to obtain. Frozen vegetables are a good second choice; freezing destroys little nutritional value. Canned vegetables are also a good choice; rinsing them with plain water can reduce their higher sodium levels. Because canned vegetables are processed quickly, they retain many of their nutrients. Overcooking is a prime nutrient destroyer, so cook fresh or frozen vegetables only until they are tender-crisp, preferably in a microwave oven, steamer, or wok. Heat canned vegetables just until warm; there's no need to boil them.

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### **FACT OR FICTION**

#### **White foods are nutritionally worthless.**

**The facts:** Some white foods are fantastic sources of nutrients—including bananas, cauliflower, onions, and parsnips. Egg whites are protein rich, as are white beans and white yogurt. White bread and other foods made from refined white flour are less nutrient dense, but they can also be balanced into an overall healthy sports diet, particularly if they are enriched with B vitamins and iron.

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Dark, colorful vegetables usually have more nutritional value than paler ones. If you are struggling to improve your diet, boost your intake of colorful broccoli, spinach, peppers, tomatoes, carrots, and winter squash. They are more nutrient dense than pale lettuces, cucumbers, zucchini, onions, and celery. (In no way are these pale vegetables bad for you; the colorful ones are just more nutrient dense, giving you more vitamins and minerals per calorie.) Here's the scoop on a few of the top vegetable choices.

- **Broccoli, spinach, and peppers (green, red, or yellow).** These low-fat, potassium-rich vegetables are loaded with vitamin C and the health-protective carotenes that are the precursors of vitamin A. One medium stalk (1 cup) of steamed broccoli offers a full day's worth of vitamin C, as does half a large pepper. I enjoy munching on a pepper instead of an apple for a snack; it offers more vitamins and potassium and fewer calories. What a nutrition bargain!

- **Tomatoes and tomato sauce.** In salads or on pasta or pizza, tomato products are another easy way to boost your veggie intake. They are good sources of potassium, fiber, and vitamin C (one medium-size tomato provides half the vitamin C you need each day); carotenes; and lycopene, a phytochemical that might protect against certain cancers. Tomato juice and vegetable juice are additional suggestions for fast-laners who lack the time to cook or an interest in cooking. They can enjoyably drink their veggies! Commercial tomato products tend to be high in sodium, however, so people with high blood pressure should limit their intake or choose the low-sodium brands. Some “salty sweaters,” however, welcome tomato or V8 juice after a hard workout; the sodium helps replace the sodium lost in sweat (see chapter 8).

- **Cruciferous vegetables (members of the cabbage family).** Cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, collards, kale, kohlrabi, turnip, and mustard greens may protect against cancer. Do your health a favor by regularly enjoying these choices. You can't go wrong eating piles of these.

If you are eating too few vegetables, be sure the ones you eat are among the best. The information in table 1.2 can guide your choices, as can the information in the salad section in chapter 4.

## Fruits

Fruits add to the strong foundation of carbohydrate needed for your sports diet. Fruits are also rich in fiber, potassium, and many vitamins, especially vitamin C. The nutrients in fruits improve healing; aid in recovery after exercise; and reduce the risk of cancer, high blood pressure, and constipation.

### **How Much Is Enough?**

The U.S. *Dietary Guidelines* recommend at least 1 1/2 cups of fruit or juice per day—this translates into only one or two standard pieces of fruit. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) encourages consuming even more to help prevent many of the diseases of aging. If you are a fruit minimalist, I recommend that you schedule it into your breakfast routine. An 8-ounce (240 ml) glass of orange juice and a medium banana on your cereal will cover your baseline fruit requirement for the entire day. Or whip up a smoothie with pineapple juice, frozen berries, banana, and yogurt; then pour it into a travel mug. Strive to consume even more fruit at other eating occasions throughout the day by having dried fruit instead of an energy bar for a preexercise snack, snacking on apple slices with peanut butter, or tossing some raisins into your salad.

**TABLE 1.2 Comparing Vegetables**

Vegetable	Amount	Calories	Vitamin A (IU*)	Vitamin C (mg)	Potassium (mg)
Asparagus	8 spears cooked	25	1,200	9	270
Beets	1/2 cup boiled	35	30	3	260
Broccoli	1 cup cooked	55	2,415	100	455
Brussels sprouts	8 medium cooked	60	1,300	105	535
Cabbage, green	1 cup cooked	35	120	55	300
Carrot	1 medium raw	30	12,030	5	230
Cauliflower	1 cup cooked	30	15	55	175
Celery	One 7-inch (18 cm) stalk	5	180	2	105
Corn	1/2 cup frozen	60	130	5	145
Cucumber	1/3 medium	15	105	3	145
Green beans	1 cup cooked	45	875	10	180
Kale	1 cup cooked	35	17,700	55	300
Lettuce, iceberg	7 leaves	15	525	3	150
Lettuce, Romaine	2 cups shredded	15	8,200	5	230
Mushrooms	1 cup raw pieces	20	0	0	315
Onion	1/2 cup chopped	30	2	5	115
Peas, green	1/2 cup cooked	65	640	10	215
Pepper, green	1 cup diced	30	550	120	260
Pepper, red	1 cup diced	45	4,665	190	315
Potato, baked	1 large with skin	290	30	25	1,645
Spinach	1 cup cooked	40	18,865	15	840
Squash, summer	1 cup cooked	35	380	10	345
Squash, winter	1 cup baked	75	10,700	20	500
Sweet potato	1 medium baked	100	21,900	25	540
Tomato	1 small raw	15	760	15	215
Recommended intake:	Men:		>3,000	>90	>4,700
	Women:		>2,310	>75	>4,700

\*International units.

Data from USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, 2011.

### **Top Choices**

If daily fruit is not readily available—or if it spoils before you get around to eating it, the following tips will help you better balance your intake. Make the following fruit choices a top priority in your good nutrition game plan.

- **Citrus fruits and juices.** Whether as whole fruit or fresh, frozen, or canned juice, citrus fruits such as oranges, grapefruits, clementines, and tangerines surpass many other fruits or juices in vitamin C and potassium content.

If the hassle of peeling an orange or a grapefruit is a deterrent for you, just drink its juice. Any fruit is better than no fruit! Yes, the whole fruit has slightly more nutritional value, but given the option of a quick glass of juice or nothing, juice does the job. Just 8 ounces (240 ml) of orange juice provides more than the daily reference intake of 75 milligrams of vitamin C; all the potassium you may have lost in an hour-long workout; and folic acid, a B vitamin needed for building protein and red blood cells. Choose the OJ with added calcium to give your bone health a boost.

- **Bananas.** This low-fat, high-potassium fruit is perfect for busy people, and it even comes prewrapped. Bananas are excellent for replacing sweat losses of potassium, an electrolyte (mineral) that also protects against high blood pressure. To boost your banana intake, add sliced banana to cereal, pack a banana in your lunch bag for a satisfying dessert (buy a Banana Saver to prevent it from getting squished), and keep bananas on hand for a quick and easy energy-boosting snack. My all-time favorite combination is banana with peanut butter, stoned-wheat crackers, and a glass of low-fat milk—a well-balanced meal or snack that includes four kinds of foods (fruit, nuts, grain, dairy), with a nice foundation of carbohydrate (banana, crackers) plus protein (peanut butter, milk) for the accompaniment.

To prevent bananas from becoming overripe, store them in the refrigerator. The skin may turn black from the cold, but the fruit itself will be fine. Another trick is to keep (peeled) banana chunks in the freezer. They blend nicely with milk to make creamy smoothies. (See the recipe for fruit smoothie in chapter 25.)

Without a doubt, bananas are among the most popular sports snacks. I once saw a cyclist with two bananas safely taped to his helmet, ready to grab when he needed an energy boost.

- **Cantaloupe, kiwi, strawberries, and all other berries.** These nutrient-dense fruits are also good sources of vitamin C and potassium. Many of my clients keep berries and chunks of melon in the freezer, ready to be made into a smoothie for breakfast or a pre- or postworkout refresher.



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