



GATORADE SPORTS SCIENCE INSTITUTE

PROTEIN: BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE ATHLETE'S BODY

WHAT FOODS ARE CONSIDERED PROTEIN?

Meat, fish, eggs, soy, tofu, milk, cheese, yogurt

Foods such as peanut butter, nuts, pasta, rice, beans and bread all have some protein. But while these are important foods for your diet, they aren't considered great sources of protein.

If you're a vegetarian, you can get a good protein source by combining foods such as rice and beans. Look for information on "complimentary proteins."

WHY SHOULD ATHLETES EAT PROTEIN?

Protein is not just for body builders. Your muscles and many other structures in your body, such as hormones, are made of protein. These structures are always breaking down and building back up, a process that is accelerated by your training. To keep these structures healthy you need to eat quality sources of protein.

HOW MUCH PROTEIN SHOULD ATHLETES EAT?

You should eat both carbohydrate and protein at meals and snacks – so feed your body both nutrients throughout the day. For example, at lunch a chicken sandwich will give you protein from the chicken and carbs from the bun. You can eyeball a serving of protein as about the size of a deck of cards.

GOOD PROTEIN + CARBOHYDRATE SNACKS FOR ATHLETES: Greek yogurt, cheese & crackers, beef jerky & pretzels, fruit & whey protein smoothie, flavored milk, cottage cheese & fruit, hard boiled egg & toast

Eat some protein before you go to sleep, it may help with recovery.



FUEL YOUR BODY WITH CARBOHYDRATE AND PROTEIN REGULARLY THROUGHOUT THE DAY, ABOUT EVERY 3-4 HOURS



Include some protein at breakfast (can be a glass of milk with your bagel).



Eat ~20 g* protein shortly after your practice, workout or competition.

**Based on an average of 180 lbs. If you're smaller you may need a little less, if you're larger a little more. But around 20 g is the right amount for most athletes. The information in this document is grounded in sports nutrition science, translated for athletes.*