



GOLF NUTRITION GUIDE



FUEL THE
— HUNGER —

Golf Nutrition Background

Every athlete is different in how their body reacts to different types of foods, training and stress. Knowing the types of foods to eat that help your body to reach a peak performance state will give you the competitive edge. This can set you apart from the average competitor by powerfully impacting your physical abilities and your mental performance.

- How many times have you been deep into a round and felt your mind begin to fog?
- Have you ever stood over the ball and thought of something else besides the shot at hand?

Research has determined that the mind can lose mental focus and sharpness based on quantity, timing and the quality of the food you are eating during your round, and quite possibly the day before. A lot of golfers scarf down hot dogs and light beers while playing and see their score rise in the second 9 holes. When and what you eat are incredibly important to maintaining mental and physical sharpness during a round of golf. So if you seriously want to play your best golf, you need to eat the right things at the right time.

A typical round of golf, which includes walking and carrying clubs (no cart), can burn 2,000 to as much as 3,500 calories per day. Consuming at least this many calories before and during your play is what can make or break your score.

Your body will primarily use carbohydrates and fats to fuel your performance. Simple carbohydrates are easily absorbed to increase blood sugar levels causing insulin levels to dramatically increase. The insulin stimulates your muscles and liver to absorb blood sugar and leads to an energy crash. The time it takes to crash will depend on the person and the food consumed but usually takes 15 minutes to 2 hours.

Low GI carbohydrates help fuel your performance for a longer period of time with less of an insulin response. An insulin spike from a high GI food like sugar, white bread or honey is fine when your liver needs its glycogen level built up, such as after a workout. If the liver is already full of glycogen, extra glucose is transported to and stored in fat cells.

The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition (May 2008) published a study from the University of Sydney indicating that a single serving of refined carbohydrates given to a lean, healthy young adult is enough to triple the inflammatory response due to a surge in blood glucose. This finding reinforces the fact that high glycemic and refined carbohydrates have virtually no nutritional value.

Complex carbohydrates that are not refined are preferred, as they contain more fiber than simple carbs, digest slowly, and have minimal effects on your blood sugar levels.

Rules of Good Golf Nutrition

1) Eat more often.

Studies have proven that eating every 2 ½ to 3 hours is ideal. Eat in small portions 5 to 6 times a day before, during and after your round. This will increase your metabolism which will increase your

energy level. For a person not trying to lose weight, these meals should consist of 60-65% carbohydrates, 15-20% protein and 15-30% fat calories.

2) Know your foods.

Reading a food label will help you to avoid certain ingredients. Stick with foods that are high in complex, unrefined carbohydrates and fiber but also low in fat and sugar.

3) Eat less bad fats.

Fats that are not burned as fuel are stored directly in your fat cells. Eating a high fat diet before a round of golf can slow down your metabolism leaving you feeling sluggish and lacking energy. For some people, exercise after a fatty meal can cause nausea. Avoid trans and saturated fats found in animal products like bacon and high fat dairy.

4) Eat super fats.

Essential fats like omega-3 fatty acids are necessary nutrients for brain function, heart, skin, immune system, nervous system and energy levels. EPA and DHA are the omega-3 fatty acids derived from fish oils found in cold-water, oily fish including salmon, herring, mackerel, anchovies and sardines. Other sources include grass-fed beef, eggs, almonds, coconut, macadamia nuts, chia and flax seeds, olives and avocados.

5) Eat nutrient-dense foods.

Eat highly nutritious, nutrient-dense foods while eliminating sugar, processed food and junk foods. This will naturally reduce your overall calorie intake while increasing the nutrient value ingested by the body. Include a daily high-quality multi-vitamin/mineral/nutrient/antioxidant formulation for optimal benefits. There are more than 2,000 research studies that suggest this approach alone extends life, delays disease, optimizes weight, improves mental clarity and enhances performance.

6) Maintain healthy blood sugar levels.

Avoid the dreaded back nine energy crash by managing your diet to minimize sugars, starches and processed grains which quickly elevate blood sugar levels. Maintaining a consistent blood sugar level will help to avoid the glucose/insulin rollercoaster.

7) Stay hydrated.

Dehydration is the #1 cause of decreased performance in sports.

- Water makes up 60% of the human body. It transports nutrients to cells, eliminates waste products and helps to regulate body temperature.
- If you wait until you feel thirsty, you are too late. You need to drink fluids before you get to that point.
- Drinking lots of water is essential before, during and after your round. On warm, sunny days when you lose fluid and salts through sweat, water can be replaced by a sports drink like Gatorade to replenish electrolytes and to add some carbohydrates to top up energy.
- Dehydration can lead to fatigue, reduced skill performance, impaired ability to focus and concentrate for longer periods. At higher levels, dehydration can also contribute to heat stress.
- As golf is largely a game of skill and requires a high level of concentration to be sustained over several hours of more, it is very important golfers drink sufficient fluid to maintain good hydration

levels. Fluid requirements vary largely depending on the players' size, gender, time in play and environmental conditions.

Some general rules:

- two hours before a round, drink 16-20 oz of water
- 30 minutes before a round, drink 8-16 oz of water
- during the round, drink 3-8 oz of water every 15-20 minutes
- Drink it chilled for better absorption

8) Avoid snack carts and clubhouse restaurants.

In general, most foods served are extremely unhealthy and are pro-inflammatory "filler" foods like baked goods, cookies, crackers, donuts, French fries, hot dogs, ice cream, pizza, potato chips, sandwiches and other processed foods that contain white flour and/or sugars.

Supplements

I am a firm believer in using whole food to fuel your performance. That being said, some supplements have been proven to help if used properly.

1. A homemade protein shake or smoothie – in this way you manage the protein, carbohydrate and healthy fats yourself. Some pre-made brands are high in additives and sugar. Use a quality whey isolate protein, fresh fruit and low fat milk.
2. Caffeine – use energy shots if they are naturally caffeinated or just drink coffee. Caffeine is proven to increase endurance, strength and mental focus as it is a stimulant. Avoid the majority of energy drinks loaded with sugar and a cocktail of other stimulants.
3. Multivitamin – a daily vitamin pack will really help for those who struggle to eat healthy every day. Key nutrients like vitamin B complexes, vitamin D3 and omega-3 fatty acids can help with energy levels and recovery.

Many people tend to believe exercise and taking several sports supplements can make up for dietary deficiencies. Eating high quality foods is the only way to avoid long-term nutrient deficiency which contributes to a subpar performance level.

Foods

Foods should come from all four food groups with special emphasis on the following:

Carbohydrates – whole grain breads and pastas, quinoa, oats, potatoes

Meat and alternatives – lean meats, seafood (cold water fish), nuts, legumes

Fruits and Vegetables – lots of both as they are low calorie and loaded with nutrients (vitamins and minerals) and antioxidants

Milk and alternatives – low fat variety of milk, cheese, cottage cheese, yogurt

Avoid junk foods as they contain bad fats (trans and saturated fats), are high in salt and low in fibre.

Nutrition is often based around lean proteins for muscle repair and recovery and quality carbohydrate foods to match fuel needs. In addition, fruit, vegetables, nuts, seeds and wholegrains provide important vitamins and minerals, along with healthy fats.

Low glycemic index (GI) carbohydrates choices such as brown rice, multigrain bread, porridge or baked beans can be better fuelling options to sustain training requirements and prevent fatigue over long days of golfing.

Individual nutrition requirements will be determined by training load, specific athlete needs, training goals, body composition goals, health and adjustment for growth in younger athletes.

Food Timing

Eating Before Golf

The tee-off time for your round will determine the timing of your meal. It is important to replace a missed meal with nutrients during and after the round. Golfers need to develop a nutrition plan that can be easily adapted to suit different starting times.

A nutritious meal eaten before your round will help to maintain steady blood sugar and energy levels to prevent fatigue. The meal or snack needs to include carbohydrate-rich foods to fill up muscle stores. Protein is also needed to help prevent muscle loss during your round while helping reduce post-exercise soreness. Avoid foods in your meal or snack that are hard to digest such as high-fiber or fatty foods.

Food you may include are: protein (eggs, meat, fish), healthy fats (salmon, avocado, nuts), low-glycemic complex carbohydrates such as fruits, vegetables and beans, and small quantities of whole-grain starches such as potatoes, quinoa, rice or whole-grain breads.

Fueling During Play

During your golf game or practice, you need to replenish the fluids and energy you have used. Take advantage of breaks to re-hydrate and eat a snack. Eating foods that are mid to fast release of simple carbohydrates replenishes your blood sugar to help you maintain concentration and the accuracy of your shots.

Holes 1 – 6:

The main goal is to stabilize energy levels. The best way to do this is to eat low-carbohydrate foods like fruits such as apples, oranges or berries along with a handful of nuts. The sugar in the fruit will give you a short burst of energy while the fiber in the fruit and the good fats in the nuts digest slowly to keep your energy level stable.

Holes 7 – 12:

The next six holes may include a longer break if you stop after the front 9. To maintain energy levels, consume foods or snacks with a balance of carbohydrate, protein and fat in a normal ratio. Making your own protein bar is better for you as you can control the ingredients but you can buy commercial made bars with a low sugar content. Another good choice is a whole-grain sandwich with chicken, tuna or even peanut butter as a protein source. As mentioned in the supplement section, you can also use a simple whey protein smoothie or shake with added fruit as a good option.

Holes 13 – 18:

By this point of the round your energy levels start to drop. The main goal in the few holes is to get a burst of energy to finish strong and keep concentration levels high to hit good shots. Higher carbohydrate snacks are needed like dried fruit (which have added sugar when made) or a sports drink like Gatorade. Sports drink help to replace lost electrolytes as well. These snacks will give you the needed instant energy for your muscles and brain.

Taking in some caffeine can also help as it stimulates the central nervous system and may increase alertness and concentration. Black coffee or green tea is ideal.

Recovering From Golf

The post-round meal will be very similar to the pre-round meal or snack. The goal is to start to recover from exercise using a low-glycemic complex carbohydrate, a quality protein with healthy fats. As always, drink lots of water.

Recovery nutrition is needed to restore fluid levels, electrolytes and muscle glycogen as well as repair and stimulates muscle growth. For your body to recover quickly, it is recommended to have a snack or a meal within 30 minutes of completing your round of golf or practice. Eating again within 1 – 2 hours will