

XC Team - Drinking, Eating and Sleeping

Drinking

Runners are going to lose a lot of water during practice. Coming to practice well hydrated and replacing fluids afterwards are a must! Bring a water bottle to practice!

Before - It's best to drink 2 cups 90 min. before practice or a race warm up. Drinking should stop 20-30 min. before race time so that they do not get a cramp. Water or other non-caffeinated fluid is best before running. Of course, the runners should be drinking at breakfast, lunch and throughout the day.

During - On hot days, we will stop at drinking fountains on long runs and stop for drink breaks during workouts at the track where it will be helpful to have a water bottle so we don't waste time.

After - Athletes need to drink a lot after running in order to replace at least what they've lost- if they lose 3 1/2 lbs., that's 2 quarts. Water is fine after running. An electrolyte drink can help replace sodium after a hard workout, race or long run. They should drink right when they get home and throughout dinner in frequent, small amounts. Then, they should have a glass with them while doing homework.

Eating

Food is fuel. Having the energy to compete, refueling after and doing it at the right times will keep everyone healthy and comfortable.

Before - It's best to eat 3-4 hrs. before practice or a race warm up. This amount of time allows for digestion and helps to avoid a cramp. Runners with a quick metabolism may need a snack closer to exercising. A plain lunch (not a Big Mac or Taco Bell) will help prevent stomach issues while running. For a morning race, a small amount of food 2 hrs. before should be adequate. Although it varies for everyone, food in the form of a carbohydrate like toast or bagel or a protein like eggs or a protein bar (Balance) often works well. For an afternoon race, a small, simple meal like a PB&J or turkey sandwich is a safe choice. Athletes might need to experiment a bit to see what works best for them in terms of digestion and pre-race nerves.

Immediately after - The 30 minute window- Within 30 min. after practice or a race, consuming a carbohydrate snack will help the body replenish glycogen stores and start the recovery process while a protein snack may help the muscles to rebuild. A combination snack is probably best.

Later – Within 2 hours after practice or a race, runners should eat a carbohydrate-rich meal. They should be eating a lot of calories to replace what they burn while running. A well-balanced diet is perfect. Sufficient protein, fat, iron and calcium (especially in girls) are important.

Post-practice/race snack ideas:

- granola, energy or breakfast bars
- bagel with peanut butter
- crackers with cheese
- fresh fruit like apples, bananas, oranges, grapes with yogurt
- vegetables such as carrots and celery with cheese or peanut butter
- fruit smoothies (prepackaged)
- chocolate milk
- trail mix
- rice cakes

Sleeping

Runners should be sleeping 8 hours (or more), especially 2 nights before racing. Lack of sleep in runners affects immunity to sickness, damaged cell repair and time to exhaustion. Thus sleep significantly affects race performance and concentration on school work.