



TIP OF THE WEEK # 10

🚲 Cycling Nutrition

Cycling, especially racing or touring is demanding. Your bike is powered by the food you eat. Even a potter around the lanes will feel easier if your 'tanks are topped up'...

You need to:

- Provide fuel for your muscles.
- Repair muscle and tissue damage.
- Replace lost electrolytes and other nutrients.

This means you should be aiming to get enough nutrients in your diet to sustain you while cycling and to recover afterwards. Cycling will feel easier so your fitness should increase faster... Your recovery time will be cut so you can ride again sooner...

Cycling burns more than 300 calories per hour so you can shovel food in without worrying too much about gaining weight.

If you do not eat enough, your performance will suffer and your immune system can be weakened!

WHAT to EAT?

CARBS

A high carbohydrate diet is recommended for anyone involved in an endurance sport such as cycling.

*This means that at least **60-70% of your food should be carbs**. Foods such as potatoes, rice, porridge, pasta, bread and fruit are all high in carbohydrates. Carbohydrates are easily converted by your body into glycogen. Glycogen is the primary energy source for your muscles. Glycogen depletion is the main cause of tiredness.*

Fast and Slow Carbohydrates

Carbs come in different types; fast (simple) and slow (complex). Simple carbs like sugar are available as glycogen quicker than complex carbs like rice but are used up more quickly.

Aim for a mix of simple and complex carbohydrates with more emphasis on the complex.

FAT

Fats, such as milk, yogurt, butter, cheese & olive oil make an important contribution to your nutrition. They aid glycogen production and storage.

Around 15-20% of your food should be fats. Avoid too much saturated and hydrogenated fats - Better to use vegetable oils like vegetable oil, sunflower oil or olive oil. Nuts, such as Almonds, Brazil nuts and Walnuts are high in beneficial oils. Avocado is high in monounsaturated fat and potassium. Olive oil is high in vitamin E. Extra virgin oils are more expensive but are the best in nutritional terms.

PROTEIN

Proteins are the building blocks of tissue repair and also aid glycogen production and storage.

Beans, eggs, milk, cheese, nuts and vegetables are all easily-digested sources of protein. Incorporate small amounts of these into your meals. Meat does provide protein, but is not so easily digested.

OTHER NUTRIENTS

Vitamins, minerals, enzymes, bio-flavonoids and other micro-nutrients also have their parts to play in your nutrition. Eat a variety of fresh fruit and veg to keep your immune system healthy, maintain body functions and aid tissue repair. Cooking destroys some nutrients so if your meal comes with salad - eat it!

FLUIDS

Drink before you feel thirsty when cycling!

A cyclist loses fluid both through sweating and breathing (you can see the steam on a cold day!) A water bottle fixed to the bike is a must so you can keep sipping - in very hot conditions you might need a litre per hour. On a 5+ hour ride on a very hot day, a pinch of salt in your bottle can help maintain Sodium levels. Even in winter you lose fluid through your breath, so you still need to keep drinking on longer rides.

WHEN to EAT?

BEFORE

Load up with slow-burn carbs and fluids

A high carbohydrate breakfast will help to set you up for a day of cycling. Load up with porridge, cereal, muesli, toast, honey, jam, bananas, fruit juice etc. You can start your carbo-loading several days before a very long ride or a race.

DURING

Your stores of glycogen are limited and on longer rides (more than an hour or two) you will have to top them up. Individuals vary, you may need to nibble every hour or two to sustain your cycling effort and top up carbs at regular intervals. **Carry food with you if necessary.**

AFTER

It is important to replenish your glycogen levels as soon as you can when you stop - especially when cycling long distance or on a multi-day ride. **The body is most effective at replacing glycogen stores immediately after exercise.** A high calorie drink is often the easiest way to get these post-exercise carbs down. A fruit juice, a can of pop or a sports drink as soon as you stop, followed by a large carbo loaded meal as soon as you can!

Source : <http://www.bottombracket.co.uk>