



Guide to Eating for Athlete Intensity

*TrueFood for TrueSport aims to teach athletes, parents, and coaches how to become informed decision makers regarding the ethics of **food choices**, while promoting the health and performance of the young athlete.*

*This resource provides sample meal plans developed for an athlete weighing 150 lbs., with the assumption that training will occur in the afternoon. Matching exercise intensity/volume with **proper fueling** improves performance and decreases the likelihood of fatigue and injury.*



It is important to include a healthy balance of protein, carbohydrates, fruits and vegetables, and fat with each meal, as these all help create the fuel athletes need to keep up with their levels of increased activity. However, it is not recommended to eat the same foods over multiple days, as consuming a variety of foods will provide the most vitamins, minerals, and nutrients required for optimal performance.



PROTEIN

Protein is important for building and repairing muscle. When selecting sources of protein, keep in mind that you can also get your portion of protein from plant-based proteins, including beans, quinoa, buckwheat, rye, barley, soy, lentils, and nuts. Other TrueFood protein choices include pasture-raised poultry and pork, grass-fed beef products, or ethically caught fish. As you will see in the meal plans, not every meal needs meat to provide enough protein for an athlete!

CARBOHYDRATES

As intensity increases, your body uses more carbohydrates for energy in the form of glucose and glycogen, so it is important to fuel prior to exercise, as well as replenish carbohydrate stores after exercise. Whole grains are the best choice of carbohydrates during low and moderate exercise. Fiber is critical for a healthy gut and a strong immune system. For hard training or competition, replacing whole grains with more refined grains allows for quicker digestion, providing energy at a faster rate.



FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Fruits and vegetables contain vitamins and antioxidants that have many functions in the body, including protecting cells from damage and helping an athlete recover. These foods have the best nutrition and flavor when they are eaten within the season they grow. During intense training sessions or competition, it is best to choose cooked vegetables (stewed, stir-fried, or soup) to avoid lengthy digestion time and speed up recovery.

FAT

Fat is important for providing energy during low to moderate intensity exercise and rest periods, and it helps your body absorb fat-soluble vitamins, reduces inflammation, and provides flavor. Choose healthy fats from plants (olive oil, nuts, seeds) and fish as training loads increase.



These seasonal meal plans include examples of meals and snacks for easy, moderate, and hard training days.

- **Easy Training:** 1 light technical/skill-based session/day, cardio, or recovery day
- **Moderate Training:** 1-2 moderate technical/skill-based sessions/day or moderate to hard training with more than 24 hours of recovery
- **Hard Training:** High volume and/or intensity: more than 2 sessions/day, training adaptation (heavy lifting, altitude training), or simulated races

FALL

EASY

Breakfast:

1 cup of cantaloupe served with 1 slice of whole grain toast, topped with 2 local eggs cooked in olive oil

Morning Snack:

Medium apple topped with 2 Tbsp peanut butter and 1 Tbsp honey, with 1 cup organic milk

Lunch:

Salad: 2 cups of leafy greens, ½ cup roasted squash, ¼ cup whole grains, ⅔ cup Anasazi beans topped with 2 Tbsp dried fruit, crumbled feta, and vinaigrette

Afternoon Snack:

10 whole grain pretzels with hummus and water

Dinner:

Grain bowl: 1 cup of roasted beets and carrots, ½ cup sautéed red cabbage, 1 cup quinoa, 1 Tbsp vinaigrette topped with 2 oz of grilled chicken

Evening Snack:

½ cup grapes, handful whole grain crackers, 1 oz cheese, 1 Tbsp walnuts

Nutrition Facts:

2,000 calories, 95 g protein, 285 g carbohydrate, 60 g fat, 50 g fiber

MODERATE

Breakfast:

1 cup of cantaloupe served with 1 slice of whole grain toast, topped with 2 local eggs cooked in olive oil

Morning Snack:

½ multi-grain English muffin topped with 1 Tbsp each of honey and peanut butter, a medium apple, with 1 cup organic milk

Lunch:

Salad: 2 cups of leafy greens, ½ cup roasted squash, ¼ cup emmer, ⅔ cup Anasazi beans topped with 2 Tbsp dried fruit, crumbled feta, and vinaigrette

Afternoon Snack:

Handful of trail mix with a handful of spelt pretzels and 1 cup of orange juice

Dinner:

Grain bowl with 1 cup roasted beets and carrots, ½ cup sautéed red cabbage, 1 cup quinoa, ½ cup lentils, 1 Tbsp vinaigrette topped with 2 oz of chicken, and a sliced pear

Evening Snack:

1 cup grapes, handful ancient grain crackers, and 1 oz cheese

Nutrition Facts: 2,600 calories, 110 g protein, 415 g carbohydrate, 65 g fat, 65 g fiber

HARD

Breakfast:

2 slices sourdough bread French toast topped with a thick smear of peanut butter, fruit compote, and slivered almonds

Morning Snack:

English muffin topped with 2 Tbsp each of peanut butter and honey, ½ cup apple sauce, with 1 cup organic milk

Lunch:

1 cup of couscous with ¼ cup garbanzo beans, 1 cup roasted squash, and ½ cup wilted greens in olive oil topped with 2 oz roasted pork and crumbled feta, with 1 slice pumpkin pie

Pre-workout Snack:

15 pretzels and water

During Workout:

20 oz sports drink

Post Workout:

1 cup yogurt with ¼ cup granola

Dinner:

Grain bowl with 1 cup roasted beets and carrots, ¼ cup sautéed red cabbage, 1 cup couscous, 1 Tbsp vinaigrette, and topped with 2 oz of chicken, and sliced pear with honey and cinnamon

Evening Snack:

1 cup grapes, 2 handfuls whole grain crackers, and 1 oz cheese

Nutrition Facts: 3,500 calories, 130 g protein, 500 g carbohydrate, 100 g fat, 45 g fiber

WINTER

EASY

Breakfast:

1 cup winter squash porridge topped with raisins, nuts, and a splash of organic milk

Morning Snack:

1 cup plain organic yogurt with ¼ cup granola

Lunch:

2 cups of salad (cabbage, watermelon radishes, kale, vinaigrette) with a whole wheat pita pocket filled with 2 oz tuna

Afternoon Snack:

1 medium apple, 2 Tbsp nuts

Dinner:

¾ cup whole grain pasta, ½ cup pinto beans, ½ cup sautéed Delicata squash with onion and garlic, tossed with ½ cup fresh spinach leaves, a drizzle of olive oil, and shaved parmesan

Evening Snack:

½ whole grain peanut butter and jelly sandwich with ½ cup organic milk

Nutrition Facts:

2,000 calories, 90 g protein, 280 g carbohydrate, 60 g fat, 45 g fiber

MODERATE

Breakfast:

1 ½ cups winter squash porridge topped with raisin, nuts, and ½ cup organic milk

Morning Snack:

1 cup plain organic yogurt with ½ cup granola

Lunch:

2 cups salad (cabbage, watermelon radishes, kale, vinaigrette) with a whole wheat pita pocket filled with 2 oz tuna, and 1 cup apple sauce

Afternoon Snack:

1 medium apple, handful nuts, and speltz pretzels

Dinner:

1 cup whole grain pasta, ½ cup pinto beans, ¾ cup sautéed Delicata squash with onions and garlic, tossed with ½ cup fresh spinach leaves, a drizzle of olive oil, and shaved parmesan

Evening Snack:

½ whole grain peanut butter and jelly sandwich with ¾ cup organic milk

Nutrition Facts:

2,500 calories, 100 g protein, 355 g carbohydrate, 75 g fat, 55 g fiber

HARD

Breakfast:

1 bowl winter squash porridge topped with butter, raisins, nuts, and 1 cup organic milk

Morning Snack:

1 bowl organic honey yogurt with 1 cup applesauce, 1 cup granola

Lunch:

Bowl of minestrone soup with crackers, 2 pita pockets filled with 1 oz tuna mixed with olive oil and balsamic vinegar

Pre-workout Snack:

1 cup applesauce and glass of water

During Workout:

20 oz sports drink

Post Workout:

16 oz organic chocolate milk

Dinner:

2 cups whole grain pasta, 1 cup sautéed Delicata squash with onion and garlic, tossed with ¼ cup fresh spinach leaves, a drizzle of olive oil, splash of tomato sauce, and shaved parmesan

Evening Snack:

Peanut butter and jelly sandwich with 1 cup organic milk

Nutrition Facts:

3,400 calories, 115 g protein, 525 g carbohydrate, 100 g fat, 50 g fiber

SPRING

EASY

Breakfast:

1 cup whole grain (no sugar added) cereal and 1 cup organic milk, topped with 1 cup strawberries and ¼ cup pecans

Morning Snack:

1 bundle carrot sticks, fresh raw asparagus, and ½ cup hummus

Lunch:

2 cups salad (spring greens, parsley, and vinaigrette) served with an open-faced turkey sandwich on whole grain sourdough bread with mustard

Afternoon Snack:

Handful dried cherries, almonds, and dark chocolate

Dinner:

Stir fry with 2 cups vegetables (mushrooms, kale, chard, and snow peas), 1 Tbsp soy sauce served over ¾ cup brown rice, topped with 2 oz chicken and cashews

Evening Snack:

1 homemade oatmeal raisin cookie and ½ cup frozen yogurt

Nutrition Facts:

2,000 calories, 90 g protein, 260 g carbohydrate, 65 g fat, 30 g fiber

MODERATE

Breakfast:

1 ½ cups whole grain (no sugar added) cereal and 1 ½ cups organic milk topped with 1 cup strawberries, and ¼ cup pecans

Morning Snack:

1 bundle of carrot sticks and fresh raw asparagus, ½ cup hummus, and 5 spelt crackers

Lunch:

1 ½ cups of salad (spring greens, parsley, and vinaigrette) served with turkey sandwich on whole grain sourdough bread with mustard

Afternoon Snack:

Handful of dried cherries, almonds, dark chocolate, and granola bar

Dinner:

Stir fry with 2 cups vegetables (mushrooms, kale, chard, and snow peas), 1 Tbsp soy sauce, 1 cup brown rice, topped with 2 oz chicken and cashews

Evening Snack:

1 homemade oatmeal raisin cookie and ¾ cup frozen yogurt

Nutrition Facts:

2,500 calories, 100 g protein, 385 g carbohydrate, 75 g fat, 40 g fiber

HARD

Breakfast:

Bowl of cereal and 1 ½ cups organic milk, topped with 1 cup strawberries and ¼ cup pecans

Morning Snack:

Sautéed asparagus in olive oil with 1 sunny side up local egg and a slice of toast

Lunch:

Turkey sandwich with cheese and mustard on white sourdough bread served with 1 cup spring pea minestrone soup

Pre-workout Snack:

Handful graham crackers with jam and glass of water

During Workout:

20 oz sports drink

Post Workout:

1 cup yogurt with a drizzle of honey and a granola bar

Dinner:

Rice bowl: 2 cups of white rice, 1 cup vegetables (mushrooms and snow peas), 2 Tbsp soy sauce, topped with 2 oz chicken and cashews

Evening Snack:

2 homemade oatmeal cookies and 1 cup frozen yogurt, topped with pecans

Nutrition Facts:

3,500 calories, 110 g protein, 560 g carbohydrate, 100 g fat, 40 g fiber

SUMMER

EASY

Breakfast:

Smoothie Bowl: ½ cup yogurt, ½ cup organic milk, and 1 cup peaches, topped with ½ cup granola

Morning Snack:

1 cup cherries, 1 Tbsp cashews, and 10 animal crackers

Lunch:

2 cups Panzanella Salad topped with a Protein Flip Burger and 1 cup watermelon

Afternoon Snack:

½ cup fresh berries with a splash organic yogurt

Dinner:

2 cups grilled vegetables (summer squash and eggplant) with ¾ cup roasted potatoes cooked with fresh garlic, whole chile peppers, and oregano in olive oil, and topped with 3 oz grilled pasture-raised pork chop

Evening Snack:

Slice of fruit pie with a dollop of plain organic yogurt

Nutrition Facts:

2,000 calories, 90 g protein, 265 g carbohydrate, 70 g fat, 40 g fiber

MODERATE

Breakfast:

Smoothie Bowl: ½ cup yogurt, ½ cup organic milk, 1 cup peaches, and a drizzle of honey, topped with ½ cup granola

Morning Snack:

1 cup cherries, 1 Tbsp cashews, and a handful of animal crackers

Lunch:

2 cups Panzanella Salad served with a Protein Flip Burger on a whole grain bun and 1 cup watermelon

Afternoon Snack:

½ cup fresh berries with a splash of organic yogurt

Dinner:

2 cups grilled vegetables (summer squash and eggplant) with 1 ½ cups roasted potatoes cooked with fresh garlic, whole chile peppers, and oregano in olive oil, topped with 3 oz grilled pasture-raised pork chop, and ½ cup berry sorbet

Evening Snack:

Slice of fruit pie with a dollop of vanilla yogurt

Nutrition Facts:

2,500 calories, 100 g protein, 385 g carbohydrate, 75 g fat, 50 g fiber

HARD

Breakfast:

Smoothie Bowl: 1 cup fruit yogurt, ½ cup milk, and 1 cup peaches served with 1 cup granola and nuts

Morning Snack:

1 cup cherries, 2 Tbsp cashews, and a handful of animal crackers

Lunch:

2 cups cilantro white rice topped with 3 oz grilled fish and 1 cup watermelon, and a Panzanella side salad

Pre-workout Snack:

1 cup fresh berries, honey, and glass of water

During Workout:

20 oz sports drink

Post Workout:

10 oz berry smoothie with milk and honey

Dinner:

2 cups roasted potatoes cooked with fresh garlic, whole chile peppers, and oregano in olive oil with ½ cup grilled vegetables (summer squash, corn, and eggplant) topped with 3 oz grilled pasture-raised pork chop, and 1 cup berry sorbet

Evening Snack:

Slice of fruit pie with ice cream

Nutrition Facts:

3,500 calories, 110 g protein, 555 g carbohydrate, 105 g fat, 45 g fiber