

Softball

A softball player should focus primarily on consuming an adequate amount of energy throughout the day to fuel her training sessions and practice. In addition, focusing these efforts on the right balance of nutrients is important to maintain a healthy body.

Carbohydrate needs are not as high as some other athletes. Using a range of 4 - 6 g/kg of carbohydrate will supply a softball player with enough carbohydrates to fuel her muscles during workouts and practice without providing too much. She should rely on whole wheat/grain products and high fiber fruits and vegetables to meet her daily carbohydrate needs.

Protein is necessary to help maintain, build, and repair damaged muscle. Using a range of 1.5-1.8 g/kg of protein will provide her muscles with enough fuel for building and repairing muscle. The best sources of protein are lean meats, fish, poultry, and eggs.

Fat plays an important role in hormone production, body temperature regulation, protection of body organs, and in the absorption of fat soluble vitamins. The American Heart Association recommends getting no more than 30% of total calories from fat and this same guideline applies to athletes as well. Olive oil, canola, oil, nuts, and seeds are all excellent sources of healthy fats that athletes can include on a daily basis.

Pre-Game Meal

Should be consumed 3-4 hours before competition. This meal should include carbohydrate-rich foods balanced by a lean source of protein and minimal fat.

- * Grilled chicken sandwich with side salad, pretzels, and sports drink.
- * Subway sandwich with deli meat, baked chips, and lemonade.
- * Oatmeal, 2 pieces of toast with peanut butter, and orange juice.
- * Pasta with sliced grilled chicken, steamed broccoli, topped with marinara sauce, and water.

As game time approaches, smaller carbohydrate-rich snacks are appropriate if the athlete feels the need. Bagels, pretzels, animal crackers, trail mix, granola bars, fresh fruit, nutria-grain bars, energy bars, sports drinks, and saltine or graham crackers are good examples of carbohydrate-rich snacks that the athlete can easily pack and bring with her to have on hand.



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*Healthy eating tips
to maximize your
performance*



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Diet for athletic Performance

The training period offers you an excellent opportunity to establish sound eating practices that will benefit you on the playing field as well throughout life.

Make Snacks Count

Choose snacks that contain more than just calories. When you eat out with friends, choose something nutritionally sound, like a cheeseburger with a slice of tomato and lettuce leaf. How many food groups are present in this sandwich? What might you eat along with this sandwich to make an even better snack?

Look for Extra Food Energy

Teenage athletes burn up more calories than non-athletic teens. You can fill this requirement by eating more food from all food groups. Carbohydrates are the most efficient fuel for your body during strenuous exercise. Get most of your extra energy from foods like starchy vegetables and whole grain or enriched bread cereal, rice, or pasta instead of from fatty foods. For example, on an athlete's plate, a baked potato should get the nod over fries.

Eat Regularly

Breakfast is especially important because you need food to start the day. Your body begins the day in a low-energy, fasted condition. Teens who eat breakfast score higher on physical fitness tests. Breakfast can be made up of any combination of nutritious foods that you enjoy eating. Spaghetti and meatballs, together with an orange juice and a glass of milk, is a nutritionally sound meal for any time of the day-even breakfast!

Check Your Diet Frequently

Spot-check your daily diet at least once a week. Are you eating at least the minimum number of servings from each food group each day? How can you use the food guide pyramid as a tool to make improvements?

How can you tell if your diet is stacking up? Nutritionists have developed a food-guide system in the shape of a pyramid that can help you rate or evaluate your diet. This guide divides food into five groups on the basis of the nutrients each group provides. By eating the recommended amounts of food from each group daily, you can greatly increase your ability to get all the nutrients your body needs--and that will improve your ability on the playing field.

Athletes come in different sizes and shapes, and follow different types of training programs. While they may all follow these nutritional rules, their meals may look quite different. Athletes who train strenuously for many hours each day will need to eat large amounts of carbohydrates and calories. Big tall athletes will need to eat more than petite athletes such as gymnasts. Many athletes need to organize their meals to fit around their training or competition schedules. Keep yourself in shape with a body fat level that suits your sport--eat the right amount of calories for your body size and training program. Keep your muscles fueled for training and competition by eating plenty of carbohydrate foods. Make room for these foods by reducing the amount of fat. Enjoy a variety of nutritious foods to provide yourself with all the protein, vitamins, and minerals that your body needs. Your need for some of these nutrients will increase because of your heavy exercise program. Look after fluid needs. Drink before, during, and after exercise sessions to prevent yourself from becoming dehydrated.

For more information go to:
<http://usm.maine.edu/athletics/>