

PRE-RUN NUTRITION: A Jump Start - By Amy Gorin - Source - [Runner's World, March 2010](#)

For many people, it's hard enough to get up early to exercise before the day begins—let alone squeeze in breakfast, too. Thing is, that old adage "breakfast is the most important meal of the day" is especially true for runners. Not only will a morning meal help you recover from a workout, it can also help you lose and keep off weight. In fact, a study published in the American Journal of Epidemiology in 2003 concluded that people who skip breakfast are four and a half times more likely to be obese than those who regularly eat their cereal or eggs.

But that's not a free pass to hit the doughnut cart. "You want to eat between 400 and 500 calories with a mix of carbs and protein," says sports dietitian Tara Gidus, R.D. "The carbs replenish glycogen in your muscles, while protein helps to build and repair those muscles." It's also key to eat within 30 minutes of finishing your run. "Otherwise your body starts to break down muscle for energy," says Gidus. These tasty breakfasts offer a wealth of nutrients, contain the ideal amount of calories, carbs, and protein, and are quick and easy to make—so you can refuel well and still get out the door on time.

HIGH-PROTEIN PANCAKES

HOW TO: Warm up two frozen wholegrain pancakes. Top them with five ounces of fat-free vanilla Greek yogurt, 2/3 cup blueberries, and a tablespoon each of crushed almonds and hazelnuts.

HOW COME: The pancakes provide carbs to restock energy stores. Plus, research shows whole grains help reduce the risk for chronic disease, "which is why it's important to make at least half your grains whole," says Jenna Bell-Wilson, Ph.D., R.D., coauthor of *Energy to Burn* and owner of [Swimbikeruneat.com](#). Greek yogurt contains twice the protein of regular yogurt. Antioxidant-rich blueberries help fight disease and inflammation, and the nuts are high in vitamin E, which may help reduce abdominal cramping and pain before and after running.

SAVORY PITA

HOW TO: Toast a whole-wheat pita. Spread two tablespoons olive tapenade inside. Fill with three diced dried apricots and a few slices of tomato, red onion, and red bell pepper. Add three pieces turkey bacon and 1/4 cup low-fat feta cheese.

HOW COME: Breakfast is an ideal time to eat antioxidant-rich fruits and vegetables, including tomato and onion. "When you exercise intensely, you create a lot of free radicals, which can attack your cells," says Gidus. "Antioxidants can reduce some of those free radicals." Red bell pepper packs 60 percent more vitamin C (an immune-boosting antioxidant) than green peppers. Tapenade is rich in healthy fat, while turkey bacon contains protein—both help keep you fuller longer.

BREAKFAST SUNDAE

HOW TO: Slice a banana over eight ounces fat-free vanilla yogurt. Mix with two tablespoons peanut butter and 1/4 cup high-protein, high-fiber cereal with at least five grams of protein and fiber per serving, such as Kashi Go Lean Crisp. Sprinkle with two teaspoons cinnamon.

HOW COME: A study in the journal *Appetite* concluded adults who eat high-fiber cereal daily feel less fatigue than those who eat cereal low in fiber. Bananas are full of potassium, which decreases muscle cramping. Yogurt contains calcium and lactoferrin, a protein that helps maintain bone strength.

Peanut butter provides heart-healthy monounsaturated fats, and research shows that daily cinnamon consumption can help fight diabetes.

SOUTHWESTERN WRAP

HOW TO: Fill a whole-wheat tortilla with 1/4 cup warmed black beans and 1/4 cup quick-cooking brown rice. Add a scrambled egg, 1/2 cup spinach, quarter of an avocado, 1/4 cup low-fat cheddar, two tablespoons salsa, and cilantro.

HOW COME: A single egg contains six grams of protein, and black beans are also rich with the nutrient, "which helps promote muscle building right after a workout," says Bell-Wilson. The beans also supply fiber, and the brown rice has plenty of manganese, a mineral that helps convert the rice's carbohydrates into energy. The spinach has more than 90 percent of your daily need for vitamin K, which contributes to bone strength.

ISLAND SMOOTHIE

HOW TO: In a blender, combine one cup low-fat peach kefir, 1/4 cup low-fat milk, 1/2 cup canned crushed pineapple, two tablespoons dried coconut, 1/2 packet plain instant oatmeal, and 3/4 cup frozen raspberries. Blend until smooth.

HOW COME: Several studies have linked kefir, a yogurt-like drink, with reduced reaction to allergens. And a 2008 Australian study reported that long-distance runners who take a strain of the probiotic lactobacillus (often found in kefir) every day suffer less-severe bouts of respiratory illness. Oats can help cut your risk of heart disease and type 2 diabetes, while raspberries are rich in the antioxidant quercetin. A small, recent study published in the International Journal of Sport Nutrition and Exercise Metabolism, concluded that daily quercetin supplements may help increase exercise endurance.

SWEET SANDWICH

HOW TO: Spread two tablespoons cashew butter on half of a toasted Thomas' 12 Grain English Muffin (it has added protein). Add two tablespoons mango chutney, one tablespoon golden raisins, and 1/4 cup low-fat whipped cottage cheese. Top with the second half of the muffin.

HOW COME: The cashew butter in this gourmet PB&J supplies monounsaturated fat to keep you satisfied and full until lunch. The high-protein muffin contains about six grams of protein, whereas the brand's original version contains just four. The raisins pack energizing carbs, and cottage cheese is chock-full of protein, as well as sodium to help rebalance your electrolyte levels after a sweaty run.

Light Before You Go Out - Prerun meals that fuel you up—not weigh you down.

CINNAMON JAM TOAST

Toast a slice of whole-wheat cinnamon-raisin bread; top with one tablespoon each mascarpone cheese (which will hold off hunger) and blackberry jam (which provides quick-digesting carbs).

PUMPKIN RICOTTA WAFFLE

Mix and heat 1/4 cup pumpkin with two tablespoons ricotta (it's a lower-fat cheese, which is ideal prerun). Spread on a whole-grain waffle. Top with pumpkin pie spice and brown sugar.

CHOCOLATE OATMEAL

Cook 1/4 cup one-minute oatmeal; mix with 1/4 cup strawberries, which contain compounds that help reduce inflammation. Top with one tablespoon of antioxidant-rich dark chocolate chips.

"BAKED" APPLE

Core an apple. Drizzle with honey, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Microwave for four minutes. Fill with 1 1/2 tablespoons of Bear Naked Peak Protein granola, which has more protein than most.