Should I eat before or after my workout?

Whether you workout in the early morning, or after work, deciding when to get nutrition is key to having a great workout. On one hand, eating before a workout can seem to slow you down or make you feel sick to your stomach, but waiting to eat until after the workout can make you feel lethargic and have less energy.

Most health and nutrition experts agree that basing eating habits around workouts should have one goal: to make sure you are functioning at your peak. You should never eat an enormous meal before a workout, but exercising on an empty stomach can be dangerous. Working out without sufficient energy levels can lead to increased risk of injury. When you don’t have enough fuel, muscle tissue is broken down to provide the necessary energy. Therefore, it is important to make sure you have eaten a sufficient amount of food to top off your energy levels before your workout. To ensure adequate digestion time, the ideal time frame for a snack is 30 - 60 minutes before your workout. Undigested food can sit in your stomach and can lead to sluggishness and cramps.

The next question is, what should you eat as a pre-workout snack? The American College of Sports Medicine recommends a snack that is a mixture of foods that are high in carbs, moderate in protein, and low in fat. Fat and fiber should be avoided because they are digested the slowest, and can sit in your stomach and cause discomfort.

To exercise at your peak performance and get the most out of exercise, eating before a workout is recommended. If you are a morning exerciser, definitely have a small snack before you exercise. If you are an after work exerciser, assess your eating habits from the day and decide whether you think a snack would be advantageous or not. If you do decide a snack is necessary, try to focus on foods that are easily digested, and keep your pre-workout meal to 200-300 calories. Some pre-workout meals to try are:

1. 1 cup of oatmeal with ½ cup of fresh berries
2. Greek yogurt with honey
3. Two ounces of turkey with ½ cup of fresh fruit

Happy pre-workout snacking!

Ryan Werme, BS
Fitness Specialist

Making Time For Exercise

Finding time for exercise is a common struggle adults have, especially when their job does not adhere to a fixed schedule. The struggle is compounded by busy days and the feeling of not having enough time. As much as many of us would be happy with some extra time, the reality is that, with any important appointment, we need to make time for exercise. Exercise is so beneficial to our overall health that it is considered to be a form of medicine; with different recommended doses, intensities, durations and criteria for various health conditions.

It simply boils down to ones’ desire and using time wisely. Here are some ideas on how to integrate exercise into your busy life:

• Driving your car to and from work? While keeping your eyes on the road, squeeze your shoulder blades down and together to strengthen the mid-back muscles or tuck your chin back like a pigeon to exercise the postural muscles of your neck.
• Need a break from the office desk chair? Stand up and sit down for some chair squat exercises! Remember to keep your bottom back to prevent your knees from going over your toes too much.
• Sitting in the waiting room for your appointment? Sit tall and perform a seated marching exercise.
• Watching TV at the end of the day? This is a great time to lay on the floor or couch to perform a bridging exercise to help strengthen your back, buttocks and hamstrings. Simply lie on your back with knees bent and push through your heels and lift your buttocks up towards the ceiling.

Just as we make time to watch TV, spend time with friends, or go to an appointment, we must make time for exercise. Exercising doesn’t have to take place only at a gym; you can be creative in every situation of your life. Are you ready for the responsibility to live a healthy new year? Then create opportunities in every situation to incorporate exercise for a healthier you!

Theresa Kossey, BS
Fitness Specialist
What Exercise Researchers are Saying Lately...

As the year 2016 arrives, many of us will be identifying and hopefully executing New Year’s resolutions. A very common resolution among Americans is to exercise more frequently and achieve goals such as weight loss, improve muscle strength, flexibility and cardiovascular health. For those looking to improve their heart health, a recently published review shed some light on possible health benefits of the popular mind/body form of exercise called yoga.

The systematic review by Chu et al. (2014) was performed to see if yoga might reduce risk factors (high blood pressure, high blood sugar, excess body fat, and abnormal cholesterol levels) associated with cardiovascular disease (CVD) and metabolic syndrome, two major public health problems in the United States. The review also looked at how these reductions in risk compared to those found from aerobic exercise. After running a meta-analysis of 37 studies which included different types of yoga and a wide range of participants both young and old, the review showed no significant difference between aerobic exercise and yoga in reducing risk factors of CVD and metabolic syndrome. The review suggests that both yoga and moderate aerobic exercise (brisk walking) were both effective at reducing participants risk factors.

The underlying mechanisms of how yoga reduces CVD risk is still unclear but some studies have suggested that the stress reducing nature of yoga may positively impact nervous system activity to the point that health benefits such as lower blood pressure, improved weight loss, and reduced inflammation can occur. Yoga may also be beneficial to some people with lower pain tolerances or those with pre-existing heart conditions. Researchers view these findings significant for individuals looking for alternative exercise methods to reduce the risk of developing CVD and metabolic syndrome.

In conclusion, adding yoga into your exercise routine this year may not only improve your flexibility and reduce stress, it may improve your overall heart health as well!

-Brendan Kennedy, BS
Fitness specialist

Resources

Healthy Recipe: Slow Cooker Turkey Chili

Ingredients:
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 pound ground turkey
- 2 (10.75 oz) cans of low sodium tomato soup
- 2 (15 oz) cans kidney beans, drained
- 1 (15 oz) can black beans, drained
- 1/2 medium onion, chopped
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1/2 tablespoon garlic powder
- 1/2 tablespoon ground cumin
- 1 pinch ground black pepper
- 1 pinch ground allspice
- Salt to taste

Preparation:
1. Heat the oil in a skillet over medium heat. Once heated, brown the turkey in the skillet; drain turkey when browned.
2. Coat the inside of the slow cooker with cooking spray, and mix turkey, tomato soup, kidney beans, black beans, and onion. Season with chili powder, red pepper flakes, garlic powder, cumin, black pepper, allspice, and salt.
3. Cover, and cook 8 hours on low or 4 hours on high.

Nutrition:
- Calories: 276 kcal
- Cholesterol: 42 mg
- Fiber: 11.3 g
- Sodium: 547 mg
- Carbohydrates: 32.8 g
- Fat: 7.6 g
- Protein: 21.2 g

http://allrecipes.com/recipe/82768/lauras-quick-slow-cooker-turkey-chili/
January: Weight Loss Awareness Month

Even though the outdoor temperature has turned colder, now is not the time to reduce your activity or hibernate like bears! Physical activity is important! People of all ages who are generally inactive can improve their health and well-being by becoming more active and exercising regularly. To manage your weight, physical activity and proper nutrition are two essential components to being successful. To begin the weight loss journey, a minimum of 150 minutes/week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity is highly recommended. Some benefits of weight loss and exercise are:

- Reduced risk for cardiovascular disease
- Reduced risk of Type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome
- Reduced risk of some cancers
- Strengthened bones and muscles
- Improved mental health and mood: can assist in thinking, learning, and judgment skills
- Improved chances of living a longer, more functional and productive life!

People who are physically active for about 7 hours a week have a 40 percent lower risk of dying than those who are active for less than 30 minutes a week! Doctors recommend eating a diet that minimizes starches, added sugars, and animal fat from meat and dairy foods. For weight loss focus on foods like fruits, veggies, egg whites, skinless chicken breast, fish, nonfat dairy foods, and 95% lean meat.

Here are more tips:
- Eat vegetables to help you feel full
- Drink plenty of water
- Get tempting foods out of your home
- Stay busy—don’t eat just because you’re bored
- Eat only from a plate, while seated at the table. Avoid eating in front of the TV.
- Don’t skip meals!
- If you burn 500 more calories than you eat every day for a week, you should lose about 1-2 pounds per week.
- Keep a food journal of everything you eat to help you stay on track.

Still struggling with your weight and diet? Seek professional help from a Registered Dietician through your family physician.

February: Heart Month

Uncontrolled high blood pressure is a leading cause of heart disease and stroke. In fact, more than 67 million Americans have high blood pressure. People with high blood pressure are 4 times more likely to die from a stroke and 3 times more likely to die from heart disease, compared to those with normal blood pressure. High blood pressure often shows no signs or symptoms, which is why having your blood pressure checked regularly is important. It’s easy to get your blood pressure checked: just ask a Transitions Studio staff member!

If you use the trainer tips in the following article combined with regular checkups for your heart, you are on your way to being healthy and successful!

-Kyla Cross, BS, Fitness Specialist

Trainer Tips of the Month

The first day of the year symbolizes a new start for many people! Here are some tips to help make the exercise resolution stick!

**Start slowly:** The key is to start exercising around 15-20 minutes per day and gradually build up to more time each day.

**Build social support:** One of the biggest problems is most people feel lonely or need a “partner” to motivate them. Find a friend, and make plans for runs, walks or trips to the gym. It keeps you accountable!

**Keep it simple:** There are hundreds of exercises, but start with familiar ones then build up to ones that you might like to try. Talk to a trainer at the Transitions Studio to help with a new program!

**No excuses:** Excuses such as “It’s too cold” or “I’ll get to it later...” might be holding you back!

**Exercise at the same time of the day:** Studies have shown that your body becomes accustomed to working out at the same time each day. Keep it consistent!

**Mix it up:** Don’t get bored by doing the same thing, try something new! A new walking path, biking instead of running. Finally, use a calendar to keep track of your progress!

It’s time to accomplish your New Year resolutions!

-Kyla Cross, BS, Fitness Specialist

Featured Programs: Yoga Classes at PM&R

Our classes were developed to introduce the fundamentals and discipline of basic yoga postures to individuals **with and without** musculoskeletal limitations. Using Hatha Yoga as its foundation, class participants will be exposed to poses and movements expressed in yoga. As with any form of yoga, the focus is to create a safe and effective exercise experience that promotes spinal mobility, strength, balance, flexibility, and relaxation.

**Other Benefits Of Yoga**

- Greater mind-body (kinesthetic) awareness
- Increased muscular strength and tone
- Improved flexibility, mobility and decreased stiffness
- Improved posture and alignment
- Improved balance
- Improved circulation

To learn more about our available yoga classes, visit [http://pmr.med.umich.edu/transitions](http://pmr.med.umich.edu/transitions), or stop in and pick up a brochure from the front desk at the Transitions Training Studio.
Our medically based exercise programs are specifically designed to meet our clients’ health and fitness goals. We offer a variety of services at our studios including Mat and Reformer Pilates classes and private lessons, BioCored lessons, Yoga Classes, Older Adult exercise and balance classes, Weight Management and Bariatric (pre/post surgery) exercise classes and Personal Training.

Member Testimonial: Barb Banet

“\textit{I am convinced that exercising on a regular basis is essential -- for the body, the mind and the mood. I am still able to do all the things I want to do, without pain and without taking medications. I have no doubt that my participation in FFOA for eight years is a major factor in that accomplishment}.”

Barb Banet is a member of our Functional Fitness for Older Adults (FFOA) class. She started exercising on a regular basis with Curves as a means of improvement for her decreased bone density and onset of arthritis. After some time at Curves, she heard about Transitions Training Studio from a friend who thought she would benefit more from the structure and guidance the FFOA class had to offer.

Her friend was correct! Barb appreciates the adjustability of the machines to individualized settings along with the advice and suggested exercises and modifications participants receive from the staff. She feels safer in her exercise routine knowing there is a staff member that is watching for correct form and providing encouragement.

She also enjoys the social aspect of the class in getting to know her fellow peers, sharing ideas and concerns with them. Not only is Barb a positive reinforcement to her peers, she has become the honorary events planner who does an excellent job with welcoming new members and organizing birthday celebrations. The support from each other motivates the participants to come more regularly.

Along with the flexibility of the class times, Barb says the price is very reasonable. After hearing about it from a friend, Barb is still a dedicated member 8 years later.

\textit{Thank you for all you do, Barb! Keep up the great work.}

Exercise of the Month: Short Arc Quad

The Short Arc Quad is a great exercise to develop the Vastus Medialis Oblique (VMO) muscle right above the kneecap. The VMO is in charge of the last 15 degrees of extension and is very important for correct patellar tracking.

In order to perform this exercise, you will need either a foam roller or a rolled-up bath towel.

1. Lie in a supine position with the foam roll or towel behind both knees.
2. Extend the right knee to full extension.
3. Hold position for 3 seconds, and then slowly return to the starting position.
4. Repeat 10-15 times on each side twice.

For an extra challenge, try attaching some resistance, like an ankle weight.