

## What food do you need for exercise?

### Find out which foods could help your body perform at its best

We all know how important it is to combine regular exercise with a healthy, balanced diet. But do you know how the different food groups help your body during exercise?

“When exercising it is important to have a varied diet to ensure your body gets all it needs to function to maximum performance,” explains Hyson Khalid, a personal trainer and chef. “We also need food for energy and to help with growth and repair.”

So, how do different foods help our body perform at its best?

#### **Food group: Carbohydrates**

##### **Good for: Energy**

Complex carbohydrates help give our body energy. “These carbohydrates, such as brown rice, wholegrain bread and pasta, with no salts or sugars added, release energy slowly into the bloodstream and have a low glycogen index (GI),” says Hyson. “They should be served at every meal, however, be careful with tinned and processed products as they can be high in salt.”

#### **Food group: Dairy**

##### **Good for: Bones**

“Dairy products, such as milk, cheese and yoghurt, are good sources of calcium which we need for strong healthy bones, so aim to have two to four servings per day,” advises Hyson. To properly absorb calcium our bodies need vitamin D, however people over 50 could be at risk of vitamin D deficiency, so they may wish to boost their supply with a supplement.

#### **Food group: Protein**

##### **Good for: Muscles**

Our body needs protein to build muscle. “Protein serves as one of the main building blocks of the body; muscles, cartilage, skin and hair are all made up of (mostly) protein,” says Hyson. Sources of protein include poultry, eggs, beans, peas, lentils, pulses and nuts. Fish, such as tuna and salmon, are also good sources of protein and omega 3, which could help lower cholesterol and support a healthy immune system.

#### **Food group: Fruits and vegetables**

##### **Good for: Rehydration**

The World Health Organization recommends we eat five servings of fruits and vegetables a day it is thought to help lower the risk of heart disease, diabetes, stroke and obesity. Most fruits and vegetables contain water which could also help our body rehydrate after exercise. Get your five-a-day from fresh, frozen, canned, dried or juiced sources.

#### **Food group: Vitamins and minerals**

##### **Good for: Nutritional support**

Our body’s ability to absorb nutrients from food declines with age so if you’re exercising regularly, make sure your body gets the nutritional support it needs. Two essential minerals are iron, which could help healthy blood flow and zinc, which could help maintain a healthy metabolism and immune system. Exercising could also impact joints. If you’re suffering from tired and achy joints your body’s supply of the natural amino sugar, glucosamine, could be low. Glucosamine could help repair and heal damaged joints and support new cartilage production.



**Hyson Khalid**

A personal trainer and qualified chef