

A man with dark hair, wearing a grey sleeveless shirt and dark blue pants, is sitting on a log in a forest. He is eating a banana with his right hand and holding a clear plastic water bottle with his left hand. The background is filled with lush green foliage.

Eat Like A Marathoner

by Lauren Antonucci, MS, RD, and Rachel Wallack

As you increase your mileage for a fall race like the ING New York City Marathon, pay close attention to nutrition. Extra hours on the roads necessitate a change in your diet. But increasing your calorie intake—to account for all of the energy you're expending in training—doesn't have to be complicated or confusing.

The Starting Line

Before you do anything else, think about your current diet. Consider what you eat and when, whether or not you skip meals, and how your eating habits have changed since you've started training. Small changes could make your daily food choices healthier and more balanced, and that could improve your running and recovery.

Have you tried whole-grain pasta and bread? Do you incorporate fruits and vegetables into your day? These are easy habits to adopt, especially if you've been feeling lethargic or experiencing more muscle pain since your training has increased. Often, modifying your diet can help solve such problems.

When you're running more miles and more frequently, your body needs additional fuel throughout the day to provide the energy necessary to meet your goals. Carbohydrates should be your biggest concern. As you increase your mileage and intensity in training, you'll need to add more carbohydrates to your diet. In fact, most of your calories should come from carbs at this level of training.

Chef Ryan Brown helps world-class athletes make informed decisions about their food. "Carbs are important, but it's also the type of carbs, fat, and protein you're eating that will affect your performance," he says. "Whole grains, plant-based—instead of animal-based—fat, and lean protein are the healthiest ways to get what your body needs." Work them into your daily meals whenever possible, replacing less healthy choices. Brown rice, for example, provides more essential nutrients than white rice.



NYRR member Lauren Antonucci is a marathoner, triathlete, and nutritionist.

Avocados and nuts—good sources of healthy fat—can replace fatty and processed meat. And fish is a great source of lean protein. "Everyone is different," says Brown, "so get in tune with your body and how it's affected by the food you eat." It's crucial to understand what works for you as you push yourself to new levels of athletic performance.

The Real Deal

As you prepare for your next race, think about your food choices throughout the day. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Are you eating enough to fuel your running?
- Do you eat by choice, before you feel famished?
- Are you spreading your meals throughout the day?
- Do you refuel after workouts with a balance of carbohydrates, fat, and protein?

If you answered yes to all of the questions above, you're off to a good start. But no matter what you eat or what you think about your current diet, extra training requires extra fluids and

Multi-Grain Pasta with Beans, Greens, and Grana Padano

A recipe by Ryan Brown, chef-owner of Choice Cooking



This simple pasta dish offers a great mix of carbs, protein, and (most important) flavor! Try it for dinner before a long run.

Ingredients (makes 8 servings):

- 1 bunch cooking greens, such as broccoli rabe, kale, or chard, washed and trimmed
- 1 tbsp salt
- 1 lb multi-grain pasta like spaghetti or linguine
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 lb high-quality organic chicken sausage, sliced into 1" pieces
- 4 cloves chopped garlic
- 1 16-oz can white beans like cannellini or navy beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 cup chicken stock
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup grated Grana Padano cheese
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp red pepper flakes (optional)

1. Bring a large pot (about 4 quarts) of water to a boil.
2. Add 1 tbsp of salt to the water. Add greens and cook 1 minute, until bright green and wilted. Using tongs or a slotted spoon, remove the greens (reserving the cooking liquid) and rinse under very cold water in a colander. Coarsely chop.
3. Add pasta to the cooking liquid and cook according to directions on package.
4. While pasta is cooking, heat olive oil in large sauté pan. Add sausage, and cook until browned. Add garlic, and cook approximately 30 seconds, stirring constantly, until garlic turns slightly golden. Add beans, greens, and chicken stock. Bring to a boil. Remove from heat and season to taste with red pepper flakes and salt. Cover to keep warm.
5. When pasta is al dente, drain, reserving $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooking liquid.
6. In large serving bowl, combine pasta, sausage/greens mixture, and reserved cooking liquid. Add half of the Grana Padano, and pass the remainder at the table.

Ryan Brown, an executive consulting chef for Extreme Workout, has developed recipes for Weight Watchers and currently owns Choice Cooking, a personal-chef service delivering organic meals to clients in the greater New York area.

calories. If you're missing something in your diet—salt, carbohydrates, or even protein—your body will crave it more than ever. So now's the time to pay more attention to what you eat.

"When I started working with elite athletes, I noticed two things," says Brown. "First, serious runners were extremely concerned about what they ate. Second, they needed to consume a lot of calories to keep performing at a high level." Whether you're a veteran marathoner or you're just embarking

days of training. If you feel particularly lethargic one day, you may have missed some necessary carbohydrates. Review the log every few days to make sure you're eating nutritious foods and making time for regular meals. Consider this one of your mandatory training rituals, and proper nutrition will become a habit.

Having a log of what you've been eating pre- and post-workout can help you determine what works—and doesn't work—for you, as well as

Listen to your body as you train. Find out what works, and stick with it.

on this adventure, listen to your body and you'll understand—when you're hungry or thirsty (which probably happens more frequently now that you're in the middle of training), your body is telling you that it's low on fuel or fluids. Treat your body well, because you're expecting a lot from it in your training. By the time it asks for something—such as water or salt—it's already depleted, so get in tune with what and how much your body craves as you train.

Log Your Food Along with Your Miles

Poor food choices and bad eating habits are reinforced by, you guessed it, poor food choices and bad eating habits. Choose a spot in your training log to record what you eat. On the days when you do long runs, are you getting a balance of carbohydrates, protein, and fats? Are you starting the day with breakfast? Do you eat regularly? Or do you skip meals? Make a note of what you've eaten on your best and toughest

protect you from avoidable injury. If you try something new and you feel fantastic after a run, make a note of it—you'll probably want to eat that again. It takes some tinkering to get it right—but training for a marathon requires the physical strength and energy that come from healthy foods.

Recovery Time

A lot is riding on your timing—when you eat is as important as what you eat. A crucial part of your fueling process occurs after your run. Sometimes you don't feel like eating or drinking. Do it anyway—your body may be thrown off by hot, humid weather, and refueling will speed up your recovery, making you feel better in time. Wait too long to give your body the nutrients it needs, and you'll feel sluggish.

Within 30 to 60 minutes after a long run (10 miles or more), you should be replacing carbohydrates, protein, and fat, along with fluids, in order to properly recover. A good rule of thumb:

Smart Food Choices

Get a leg up on training with these high-energy foods:

Carbohydrates should be your main source of fuel for training, racing, and overall energy.

Best Bets: Whole-grain bread and pasta, fruit, beans, and grains such as brown rice and quinoa

Protein helps to speed recovery and repair tired muscles. It can also strengthen your immune system.

Best Bets: Fish, tofu, skinless chicken or turkey, eggs, and yogurt

Fat is crucial for vitamin absorption, hormone production, and long-term energy. Healthy fats also have anti-inflammatories, which help to repair damaged cells.

Best Bets: Avocado, olive oil, nuts, and fatty fish, such as salmon

Fruits and Vegetables can keep you healthy, providing antioxidants like vitamins A, C, and E. Your body uses these to fight infection.

Best Bets: Anything dark in color: fruits like blueberries, raspberries, and plums, and vegetables such as spinach, kale, beets, and brussels sprouts.



Quick Fueling Tips

One of the best things about a long run (10 miles or more) is refueling within 30-60 minutes after you finish. Follow these simple formulas to determine how much post-workout carbohydrate and protein you need.

Marathoner's Carb Count: Divide your body weight in half. That number equals the number of grams of carbohydrates that you should eat after a workout. So, if you weigh 140 lbs, aim for 70 grams of carbs.

The Power of Protein: The number of grams of protein that you need is equal to 1/4 of your ideal amount of carbohydrates. A 140-lb runner should eat 17-18 grams of protein after a long run.

A Day in the Life

If you're eating right, your training log might look like this:

Morning

Woke up 30 minutes before my run to eat breakfast. Ate a bagel with honey (I've heard it's good for antioxidants), and drank a glass of water before I went out for 8 miles at race pace. Felt great through 6.5 or so, then fatigue set in—will bring an energy gel next time.

Afterward, I made a fruit smoothie with yogurt, berries and bananas, and added 2 tbsp real cocoa for the antioxidant polyphenols I've read about—tasted great, and I didn't feel hungry all morning.

Afternoon

Busy day at the office. Grabbed a chicken, tomato, and avocado wrap, (no dressing), plus salted whole wheat pretzels to ward off dehydration. Unsweetened iced tea and an apple made a great afternoon snack.

Evening

Made pasta with greens, beans and Grana Padano; cooked enough to have leftovers for lunch tomorrow—I'll be doing two runs, so I'll need the extra protein and carbs. Frozen yogurt with walnuts for dessert—I deserve a treat! Running clothes laid out for tomorrow morning; time for some shuteye.

Divide your body weight in half—that number equals the number of grams of carbohydrates that you should eat after a workout. For example, if you weigh 140 pounds, try to eat 70 grams of carbs within 60 minutes after your run. Calculating how much protein you need is equally easy: One quarter of your ideal amount of carbs equals the number of grams of protein you should aim for. For the same 140-pound person, that translates to 17.5 grams of protein—about the same amount found in a single serving of Greek yogurt—within 60 minutes. Rather than complicate things, keep it simple. If you're in a pinch (or you forget the calculation), 10 to 20 grams of protein is a good standard rule after a run.

Fruits and vegetables are the final vital piece of the puzzle. Dark-colored fruits and vegetables are rich in disease-fighting antioxidants.

The Finish Line

Moving fast to replenish what you've lost, particularly when you're training at a high level for a marathon, will work to your benefit. "If you think about food as fuel for your body," says Brown, "you can improve your performance. I really got it when I became a runner myself."

If you don't eat enough breakfast—or skip it altogether—you'll be starting off depleted, and that won't help you during your day or your run. Playing catch-up with your nutrition will

When you're running more miles and more frequently, your body needs additional fuel throughout the day to provide the energy necessary to meet your goals.

While you're training, get in the habit of stocking your kitchen with foods to help you refuel. Or, make sure your cool-down takes you past a local store where you can pick up what you need before you start to feel tired and hungry.

For proper recovery, you'll also need salt and water to rehydrate. If your post-run meal does not include something with sodium, such as turkey or pickles, add a sports drink with sodium or top off your lunch with some table salt. Anti-inflammatory foods like avocado, fish, walnuts, and flax seeds are also important within 12 hours (maximum 24) of a long run to help your muscles recover. Try to work in the ones that you like the most.

only make it harder for you to meet your goals.

Increasing your miles necessitates improving your nutrition know-how. Don't force something that doesn't work for you because you read that it worked for some other runner. Find out what works for your body, and stick with it.

Pure and simple, listen to what your body is telling you as you train. Keep in mind that you need to eat more to make up for the extra calories you're burning, and get your nutrition under control before it's a problem. Eat right, and you'll be prepared for your next marathon. ■