

Healthy at Home • an NAQ Nutrition program • www.naql.org • healthyathome@naql.org

Whilst based on personal preference, you might find it beneficial to have something to eat and drink prior to exercising in order to both fuel and hydrate your body for the session ahead. By doing so, you are able to maximise your performance and get the most out of the session, in terms of both the intensity and the quality of the activity.

The advice below is generalised for the recreational exerciser and specific nutrition requirements will differ depending on the level of intensity and duration of physical activity.

Generally, the majority of people can stomach a main meal around 2 to 4 hours before exercising and/or a small snack around 1 to 2 hours before exercising. This meal or snack should contain a source of carbohydrate for fuel, that's low in fibre, easy to digest (i.e. not too high in fat) and sits comfortably in your stomach. There is no one size fits all approach to this - see what works best for you and your goals. Think about pre-training nutrition as fuel to fill up your energy tank.

Here are a few carbohydrate-rich snack ideas that you might like to choose from:

- A piece of fruit – e.g. a banana, a few fresh dates; or
- A small bowl of cereal with yoghurt or milk; or
- A slice of raisin toast with a thin spread; or
- A crumpet with a thin spread of honey; or
- A fruit smoothie

If you can't tolerate food first thing in the morning, prior to exercise, that's okay! Consider having some quality carbohydrates the night before to ensure your muscles are topped up with glycogen. Glycogen is how carbohydrates (broken down into glucose) are stored in the body – in the liver and in muscles.

Hydration is also extremely important – be sure to sip on fluids prior to exercise to ensure you are well hydrated for the session ahead. Water should be the drink of choice for most people.

If you are competing, make sure your pre-exercise nutrition and hydration strategies are trialled and tested prior to race day to ensure they work for you. Trialling the types and also the timing of foods and fluids during training and practice sessions will help you maximise your performance on race day. For personalised and tailored sports nutrition advice, [find an Accredited Sports Dietitian](#) near you.