



April 2017

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Wellness

Stay active for more energy, less stress and greater happiness today.

Ready, set, pop quiz: Margaret wants to lose weight. Evelyn wants to get healthier. And Alice wants to increase her daily energy. Which woman do you think will stick to her exercise routine? Surprisingly, the answer is Alice. When the goals are weight loss and better health, people spend less time exercising, not more, according to research.

Alice will most likely exercise more because her goal—more energy—is immediate, and it will improve her daily life. Other daily motivations to increase your activity include improving your mood, managing stress better, and spending fun time with friends and family.

Thinking about what's in it for you today gives you a reason to enjoy the exercise—and to stick with it. Because who wants to jump off the couch to exercise if it feels like a punishment or homework? Not us! The best ways to stay active: Find things you love to do that raise your heart rate, and then find a buddy to do them with you. It's the best and most enjoyable twofer out there for better health. Now go on...and get moving!

By: Cleveland Clinic Wellness Editors



Fuel Your Body for Exercise

Don't think that, just because you're not an elite athlete, you don't need to fuel your body for exercise. Eating the right mix of carbohydrates, protein, vitamins, minerals and, yes, even some fat helps you exercise longer, more comfortably and even at a more challenging level than you would if you weren't paying attention to your diet. Proper nutrition pays off in other ways too: it helps your body adapt to exercise, improves body composition (which is one of the reasons you exercise in the first place, right?) and reduces the risk of stomach upset during exercise.

By: Dana Sullivan



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Start With Your Tank on Full



The results of more than four decades' worth of research are unequivocal: eating breakfast is the healthy way to start the day. After going eight hours — or more — without food, your body needs to refuel, ideally within an hour or two of awakening. "If you skip breakfast, your brain and muscles don't get the energy they need to sustain activity for the whole day," says Tara Gidus, MS, RD, a spokeswoman for the American Dietetic Association.

Skipping breakfast not only makes it hard to rev up for what's ahead, it also increases the risk of overeating later in the day. According to the National Weight Control Registry (NWCR), eating breakfast is one way to help maintain a healthy weight. Nearly 80 percent of the people involved with the NWCR, who have lost at least 30 pounds and kept the weight off for one year, regularly eat breakfast. *By: Dana Sullivan*

FUEL YOUR BODY FOR EXERCISE

When it comes to fueling up for exercise, low-fat foods rule. "You'll feel more energized if you avoid simple sugars and anything greasy," says Gidus.

Gidus has some go-to power foods, which she recommends not only for their nutritional content, but also because they taste good and are easy on the stomach. The last thing you want during a tennis match or a kickboxing class is an upset stomach. If you like to exercise during your lunch hour but find you don't have time to eat and work out, consider keeping some of these grab-and-go foods on hand. That way you can eat something nutritious before you head to the gym.



- **Juicy fruits, such as grapes, strawberries, blackberries, oranges, blueberries and raspberries.** All of these are full of nutrients, are easy to digest and their natural sugars give you a quick boost.



- **Trail mix with dried fruit.** Nuts are a great source of protein (and essential nutrients) and will give you sustained energy. Dried fruits offer quick sugar for an immediate pick-me-up. Dried fruits are also easier to travel with than fresh fruits, but go easy—eating more than a handful can cause stomach upset and diarrhea.

- **Nut butter and fruit spread.** Most grocery stores carry single-serving packets of peanut butter that don't need to be refrigerated and are easy to keep in your gym bag. You can slather nut butter (make sure there are no added sugars or hydrogenated oils) on an apple, crackers, or a slice of whole-grain bread. If you don't like peanut butter, try almond or soy butter. Try a fruit spread instead of a sugar-packed jelly or jam.



- **Cereal.** Choose varieties that are easy to eat dry and contain whole grains. The complex carbohydrates give you more staying power than the simple sugars. Skip the sugar-coated stuff and anything with sugar early in the ingredient list. Look for at least six grams of fiber per serving.



- **Crackers.** 100% whole-grain varieties have complex carbohydrates and won't make you feel full and heavy. Combine with a stick of low-fat cheese for a more sustained boost.



- **Low-fat string cheese.** Single servings of mozzarella or cheddar are filling and easy on the stomach.



- **Granola bars or fruit bars.** They're more palatable than most energy bars. Coat a granola bar with a nut butter for a sustained boost if you're taking, say, a 90-minute hike or going on an extended bike ride. *By: Dana Sullivan*



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Go Bananas!

Bananas are an excellent choice for on-the-go eating — they even come with their own biodegradable packaging! And with their combination of glucose, fructose and sucrose (for easily accessible energy) and soluble fiber (which helps your body absorb that energy steadily), it's no surprise that bananas are the snack of choice at such events as 5K walks and triathlons. Some other reasons to go bananas:

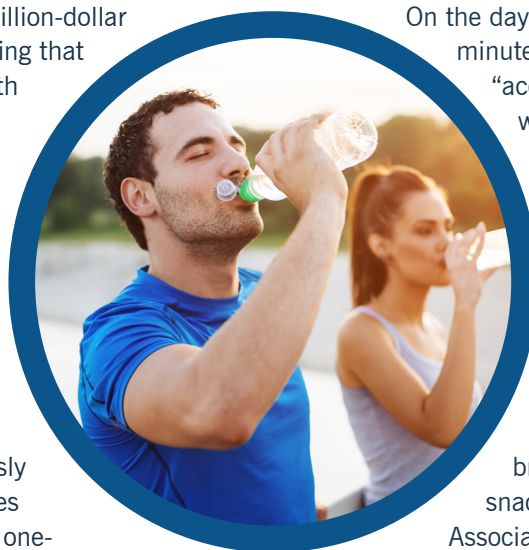
- Bananas are fat-free fuel.
- One banana contains about 30 grams of carbohydrates to fuel your muscles and central nervous system.
- The potassium in bananas helps your body maintain fluid balance needed in blood and tissue.
- A banana contains 20 percent of the daily recommended allowance of vitamin B6, which, among other things, helps your central nervous system function normally. *By: Dana Sullivan*

Hydrate for Health

Advertising for sports drinks — a multibillion-dollar business — is so pervasive and convincing that you might think you're risking your health if you don't consume one on every jog or bike ride. But actually, for moderate exercise, all you really need is water — which, ideally, you're drinking throughout the day, including while you exercise. The American Council on Exercise recommends drinking 17 to 20 ounces of water two hours before exercise and then another seven to 10 ounces of "fluid" (water or a sports drink, depending on how vigorously you're exercising) every 10 to 20 minutes during exercise. During a high-intensity, one-hour workout, you can lose more than a quart of water, so be sure to replace it!

During intense workouts that last 60 minutes or more, you might want to switch to a drink that replaces calories, sodium and potassium — either a flavored water or a sports beverage. (The reason to replace sodium and potassium — those infamous electrolytes — during intense exercise is to offset the salt you lose in sweat and maintain fluid balance, according to the American College of Sports Medicine.) Just be sure to keep an eye on how many calories you're consuming. Some sports drinks contain as many as a soda!

By: Dana Sullivan



After a Tough Workout, Refuel

On the days that you exercise for more than 90 minutes, your body is in what's called an "accelerated metabolic state." If you don't want to feel like you drove into a brick wall the next day, try to eat within about 30 minutes of finishing your workout, advises Lisa Dorfman, MS, RD, the director of sports nutrition and performance at the University of Miami Sports Medicine Program in Florida. A mix of carbohydrates and protein will do the trick. "The carbs replace muscle glycogen, and the protein helps prevent muscle breakdown," she explains. A good recovery snack option, from the American Dietetic Association: graham crackers with peanut butter, low-fat chocolate milk and a banana. *By: Dana Sullivan*





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Healthy Recipe

SAVORY SWEET POTATO-QUINOA MUFFINS

Think of these deliciously cozy muffins as a triple treat: They manage to soothe the soul, satisfy cravings both sweet and savory, and offer impressive health benefits (fiber, beta-carotene and vitamins galore), all at once. You may want to double the recipe—we guarantee they won't last long.

Yield: 12 Muffins

Ingredients:

¾ cup quinoa flour
½ cup almond meal/flour
1½ teaspoons baking soda
½ teaspoon kosher salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2 large eggs
1½ cups sweet potato puree
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
¾ cup water
1½ cups quinoa, cooked
½ cup walnuts, chopped
¼ cup flat leaf parsley, chopped
2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves
2 scallions, chopped

Instructions:

Heat the oven to 350°F. Line a 12-cup muffin pan with paper liners.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the quinoa flour, almond meal, baking soda, salt, and pepper (the dry ingredients).

In a large bowl, beat the eggs. Whisk in the sweet potato puree, olive oil and water. Add the dry ingredients from the first bowl, above, and whisk together. Stir in the cooked quinoa, walnuts, parsley, thyme, and scallions.

Divide the batter evenly among the cups. Bake 30 to 35 minutes, until just a few moist crumbs remain on a toothpick inserted into the middle of one muffin. Serve warm.

Nutrition Info Per Serving:

(12 servings) 140 calories, 6.5 g total fat, 1 g saturated fat, 5 g protein, 16 g carbohydrate, 2.3 g dietary fiber, 1.8 g sugar, 32 mg cholesterol, 280 mg sodium

Developed by Sara Quessenberry for Cleveland Clinic Wellness

Walking Meetings: Why They Boost Creativity and Reduce Stress

The next time you find yourself with writer's block, unsure about the next step of a project, or stumped by a problem — step away. Research has shown that taking a break or engaging in a repetitive activity, such as walking, helps with creative breakthroughs, problem solving and stress. This may seem counterintuitive; after all, most of us were taught to just stick with it and push our way through a problem or project. You will eventually come up with the solution with this approach, but it will take longer and require more energy. Next time you're in this situation, take a walking meeting instead.

Many progressive companies and work groups are now instituting walking meetings. These meetings are effective because walking (especially in fresh air) improves circulation, provides physical exercise, enhances thinking, re-oxygenates the brain, energizes and allows for greater problem solving at a faster rate. That all translates into higher productivity. The change of environment can trigger thinking outside the box, and the dynamic of interaction on a walk makes for camaraderie and stronger teamwork among group members. And being outdoors improves our mood, sense of well-being and connectedness to nature. Whether you work alone or with a group of people, step up to greater possibilities — take a walk!

By: Jane Ehrman, M.Ed

