

Eating for Wellness

(Ron Jones, MS, ACSM Health/Fitness Instructor, Corporate Wellcoach)



"Your bloodstream is the river of life."

Jack LaLanne, Fitness Pioneer

Always remember the balance of **Wellness** (preventative health keeping you well) when determining a diet plan. Try to eat the healthiest foods you can to give you the most vitamins, minerals, and fiber per gram. Refer to the *Food Guide Pyramid* (details listed below) as a general guideline. Eat 5-6 smaller meals per day instead of just 2-3 *gut bustin'* meals per day. Remember that the "average" adult only needs 2,000-2,500 calories per day. Lastly, ignore the "hype" and fad diets. Eat sensible amounts of nutritious food and exercise regularly.

There is no quick fix to optimal health. Wellness is a "lifestyle."

6-11 Servings of Breads, Cereals, Rice, or Pasta: (emphasize complex carbohydrates) Whole grain breads, sourdough breads, pastas, noodles, low-fat crackers, rice and whole grains, or hot and cold cereals.

3-5 Servings of Vegetables: (over cooking & over processing destroys many vitamins) While all veggies are good, broccoli, cauliflower, brussel sprouts, cabbage, turnips, and rutabagas are in a special group called *cruciferous vegetables* which have been proven to protect against cancer! Veggies are also a good source of fiber.

2-4 Servings of Fruit: Watermelons are very nutrient rich in vitamins as well as apples, pears, kiwis, bananas, oranges, pears, plums, etc.--it's hard to go wrong eating any kind of fruit as you get both vitamins and fiber.

2-3 Servings of LOW-FAT Dairy Products: Yogurts, cheeses, milk, cottage cheese, etc. are all good sources of calcium but be careful to eat the low-fat versions. Remember the "real story" on milk fat %'s: whole milk≈54% fat, 2% low-fat milk≈39% fat, 1% low-fat milk≈15% fat, and non-fat milk≈0% fat. The reason the label doesn't correspond to the real fat % is that the manufacturer rates the fat by total volume that includes the water found in milk. If you remove the water and then calculate the fat to milk ratio the percentage of fat is much higher--this is called "deceptive advertising."

2-3 Servings of LEAN Meats or Meat Alternatives: White turkey and chicken breast, fish, extra-lean ground beef. If you don't want meat but still want the protein, iron, and B-vitamins try: egg whites, legumes (black, pinto, red, lima, garbanzo, or white beans, lentils, or split peas). Note that excess protein causes dehydration requiring higher fluid intake levels.

➤ **"5-A-Day" of Fruits & Veggies:** Do your best to eat "a minimum" of 5 servings of fruits and vegetables each day—this is the "basic recommendation." If possible, *eat more than 5-A-Day*. This is easy to do if you make a non-fat smoothie or process veggies in a juicer.

➤ **Iron Absorption:** Try eating food with vitamin C along with the food that contains iron as this will *enhance* the iron absorption into your body.

➤ **Caution!** Vegetarians are in danger for not receiving vitamin B-12. While the other B-complex vitamins can be obtained by combining different types of grains with legumes or beans, ***B-12 only comes from animal products.*** This is a case where supplements should be considered. Vitamin B-12 deficiencies and anemia can set your general health, workouts, and athletic competitions back for months, so be careful.

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- **Fats, Oils, & Sweets:** Use sparingly only. These are “empty” calories which means you’re not getting any vitamins or mineral value. The only thing you get out of excessive fats, oils, and sweets is stored fat.

**Note: Refer back to my “Basic Nutrition” handout for the importance of the appropriate amounts of fat and their importance for cell integrity and hormone production.*

Breakfast: This is your most important meal of the day as it gives you the nutrients you need to get the day started. After sleeping all night, your glucose levels are lower along with a reduced metabolic rate. Following a good breakfast, your body can derive energy from carbs, protein, and fat along with elevating daily metabolism that *burns more calories* and thus helps with weight maintenance and reduction. If you start the day with no fuel, you will feel sluggish and eventually suffer from low blood sugar levels. In children, studies have shown that skipping breakfast increases susceptibility for infection, fatigue, and inattention in school. ☹

**First Rule of War: “Don’t shoot yourself in the foot.” This means by not eating breakfast you set yourself up for defeat due to fatigue or even illness.*

Sample Cereals: Oatmeal (my personal favorite), Cream-O-Wheat, Grape-Nuts, Cheerios, Kashi, Nutri-Grain, Shredded Wheat, All Bran, Wheaties, Special K, and Corn Flakes, etc. There are many good high fiber cereals available, but use caution about eating the ones loaded with excess sugar (empty calories)--try “natural sweeteners” instead because then you get both taste and vitamins!

Natural Sweeteners: Bananas, raisins, dates, prunes (Try the *Sunsweet* brand lemon or orange flavored ones--they’re great!), strawberries, kiwi, melons, or blueberries. Despite rumors, honey is primarily sugar and doesn’t have a great deal of nutritional value; however, if calories aren’t a problem, honey is OK.

Breakfast Ideas

- **Ron’s Favorite:** 1½ cups (before cooking) old fashioned oatmeal with non-fat or soy milk, raisins, cranberries, handful of walnuts or pecans, and approx. 8 oz. of water.
- **Waffles or Pancakes:** Make them with non-fat milk and without egg yolks, sweetened with syrup, fruit, jam, or low-fat yogurt, and a glass of juice and non-fat milk. (breads, dairy, fruit)
- **French Toast:** Whip together with egg whites, non-fat milk, ½ tsp. vanilla, and serve with syrup, berries, fruit, or yogurt plus a glass of juice and non-fat milk. (breads, dairy, fruit)
- One or two pieces of fresh fruit cut up and added to a bowl of cereal or non-fat cottage cheese with an English muffin or toast (breads, dairy, fruit)
- One bowl dry breakfast cereal or hot oatmeal with eight ounces of non-fat or 1% low-fat milk and a six to eight ounce glass of orange juice, or a fresh orange, a piece or two of whole wheat toast (breads/cereals, dairy, fruits)
- Two steamed egg whites on a slice of whole wheat toast, one cup of low or non-fat yogurt mixed with fruit. You can add cereal or more toast for extra calories (breads/cereals, dairy, fruits)

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Lunch Ideas

- Turkey Sandwich on Whole Wheat Bread: 3 oz. of lean white meat, tomato slices, lettuce (dark green), mustard, slice of cheese, and fresh fruit (meats, breads, veg./fruit, dairy)
- Chef's Salad with Dark Green Lettuce: 1 oz. lean meat, sliced egg, cherry tomatoes, sliced cucumber, alfalfa sprouts, Balsamic Vinegar or low-fat type of dressing, glass of non-fat milk, slice of whole grain bread or oat bran muffin (meats, veg./fruit, dairy, grain)
- Chicken Noodle Soup: One bowl that includes ½ cup of cooked vegetables, 3 oz. of chicken breast, and 10 whole wheat crackers--add more soup, a bagel, or fruit for more carbs and calories (meat, breads, veg./fruits)

Dinner Ideas

- Broiled Fish: 3 or 4 oz. seasoned with lemon and herbs, baked potato, steamed carrots, green beans, 8 oz. glass of non-fat milk, fruit for dessert, whole wheat rolls with jam or honey (meat, veg./fruit, dairy)
- Steamed Vegetables: Use chopped cauliflower, garbanzo beans, green beans, and carrots topped with ½ cup shredded low-fat mozzarella cheese, and lemon pepper stuffed into pita bread, slice of whole wheat or sourdough bread, and fruit with yogurt for dessert (meat alternative, veg./fruit, dairy, breads)
- Broiled or Baked Chicken: Use 3 oz. of chicken and 1-2 cups brown rice, broccoli, sliced tomato, flour tortilla (no lard type!), cottage cheese, and fresh fruit (meat, rice/grains, veg./fruit, dairy)
- Pasta with Tomato Sauce or Marinara Topping: (3 oz. lean meat if desired) Mushrooms, bell peppers, onions, and *fresh garlic!*, tablespoon of Parmesan cheese, carrot sticks, sourdough bread, fresh fruit for dessert, and 8 oz. of non-fat milk (pasta, veg./fruit, dairy)

**You can use zucchini as a substitute for meat if you want to eat vegetarian. The zucchini can add texture that is similar to meat.*

- Vegetarian Burritos: In a large steam pot, steam cubed carrots and potatoes for 15 minutes. Add a diced onion and two diced jalapeno peppers which have had the seeds removed. Next add an assortment of vegetables such as squash, green or red peppers, broccoli, or whatever you like. Continue steaming until the vegetables are tender but not mushy. Fill large low-fat flour tortillas with the steamed vegetables, roll into burritos, and arrange them on a cookie sheet or large pan. Pour green tamale sauce over the top and sprinkle with low-fat cheese. Bake on 350 until the cheese and sauce bubbles or microwave for about 1 minute.

**Note: I've only listed non-fat milk in the samples because that's what I drink but 1% low-fat is also very healthy and much lower in fat than the 2% or whole milk.*

Healthy Snacks for Athletes: Many athletes consume a great number of calories every day for training and competing; therefore, the above sample meals might not be enough calories for your needs, so you'll need to eat more to obtain a "positive energy balance." If you want to snack more, *but don't need a lot of extra calories*, try eating more veggies and fruit that are lower in calories but high in vitamins and nutrients. *Note: Some of the following are "carbo load" type snacks due to high energy turnover requirements of competitive training.

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Snack Ideas

- **Bagels:** Whole wheat bagels are great because you can stuff them into a backpack, etc. and eat them easily and quickly. Also, most bagels are very low in fat unless, for example, you get the chocolate chip type or load them down with cream cheese, etc.
- **Breads:** For sandwiches, try eating whole grain bread that is a better source of fiber. Sourdough bread is a good low-fat snack if you can't find whole wheat breads. Try salsa or honey for added flavor instead of high-fat butter.
- **Cold Cereal:** This is a good quick snack right after workout. Just have a bowl of your favorite cereal with non-fat milk for a carbo and fiber boost in-between meals.
- **Cooked Rice:** Boil 1½ cups of water (depending on preference) then add 1½ cups of rice and cook until tender. Scoop out desired amount and add non-fat milk and add a little honey to sweeten. This is a great carbo load or replenishment after a hard workout. Remember, honey is just naturally pure carbohydrate. While honey doesn't have much nutritive value, if you need the carbs and extra calories to replenish glycogen storage and maintain a positive energy balance then some honey carbs are fine.
- **Veggie Tostados:** Spread a layer of lard-free vegetarian refried beans on a corn tortilla shell then sprinkle with low or non-fat cheese and add Tabasco or salsa. Heat for around 1 minute in microwave. Add shredded lettuce, tomatoes, onions, etc.
- **Veggie Sandwich:** On two slices of whole grain bread, place alfalfa sprouts, spicy mustard, tomatoes, zucchini slices, and some *crunchy* (not mushy!) avocado slices. The avocado will add nice "meat like" texture if used when firm before full ripening. The spicy mustard adds a lot of flavor without excessive calories. You can also add a slice of pepper cheese for added flavor; this has a few grams of fat but a little fat is OK if the rest of your diet is generally centered on healthy low-fat food.
- **Pretzels or Baked Chips:** Pretzels are baked carbs with some salt. A low-salt pretzel would be best but regular is acceptable if you are sweating a lot during hard exercise. Baked chips are simply the starchy carbohydrate potato source without the greasy fat from being fried.
- **Candy Bars:** If you just can't resist a candy bar, then try a *3 Musketeers* that is much lower in fat than other leading bars. A 2.1 oz. *3 Musketeers* has only 8 grams of fat (28% fat) compared to a 2.2 oz. *Snickers* that has 14 grams of fat (45% fat)--the *Snickers* has an extra 54 calories (6 gm.) just from fat! Because the *3 Musketeers* has less fat, it also has less calories per bar.

**Note: Fat has 9 calories per gram compared to carbohydrate (sugar) that is only 4 calories per gram; thus, the candy with the least amount of fat is the best choice for limiting calories.*

Good Food Substitutes

- **Butter:** Try natural powders such as *Butter Buds* or *Molly McButter* that can be used alone or mixed with a *small amount* of olive oil. If you can't eliminate butter from your diet, try to reduce gradually the amount you use in order to limit excess fat and calories.
- **Salt:** Lemon, spices, *Mrs. Dash*, and assorted natural seasonings
- **Sour Cream:** *Molly McButter* Natural Sour Cream and Butter Flavor Sprinkles, Non-fat *Philadelphia Cream Cheese*, or non-fat sour creams.

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Non-Fat Sour Cream Recipe

- 1 cup non-fat cottage cheese
- 2 tablespoons non-fat yogurt or skim milk
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice or vinegar
- Blend all ingredients at medium-high speed (You can also add onions, garlic, chives, or other seasonings to this base to make a great low-fat dip for veggies or baked chips)

- **Salad Dressing:** Try *Nakano* seasoned rice vinegar, wine vinegar, olive oil and vinegar, or liquefy the low-fat sour cream recipe for use as a salad dressing. Another good low-fat dressing is Balsamic Vinegar that is very flavorful.
- **Desserts:** Strawberry shortcake is a great low-fat alternative if you want to eat a healthy nutrient dense dessert. Use fresh strawberries on angel food cake that is made with egg whites and sugar only so it has **no fat!** Also, eat any fresh fruit in season, sorbet, frozen yogurts, or try *Entemans* bakery products which offer no fat and no cholesterol cookies and pastries.

Other Nutrition Tips

- **Cut Excess Fat:** Try to limit your overall fat intake to no more than 30% while also limiting your saturated fat intake to 7-10% of your total fat calories. Cut all the visible fat away from your meat and remove the chicken skin after cooking. Bake using just egg whites (yolk contains all of the cholesterol). Use only non-fat or low-fat dairy products. Read food labels so you can avoid foods that contain highly saturated palm or coconut oils (non-dairy creamers, baked goods, and candies use these types of unhealthy oils).
- **Eat Foods Rich in EPA:** Eat cold water fish twice a week to decrease blood platelet aggregation and help prevent atherosclerosis.
- **Eat More Fiber:** Oatmeal and other brans, veggies, fruits, and legumes or beans help to lower blood cholesterol levels and promotes proper transit time of food as it travels through your digestive tract. Fiber is good for your colon and digestive tract.
- **Drink Plenty of Water:** Some sources recommend 6-8 glasses per day, but the basic rule is to check the color of your urine--if it's dark yellow, drink more water until it is somewhat clear or lightly stained.

**Note: High fiber diets require more water consumption along with diets excessive in protein intake. Also, eating fresh fruits/veggies adds water to your body for better hydration.*

Special Mineral & Vitamin Considerations

- **Calcium:** This is the most abundant mineral in your body and is essential for bone metabolism, muscle contraction, and nerve impulses. The RDA is 1200 mg/day. Up to the age of 24 you are adding bone density and after this age your body reabsorbs the calcium out of your bones. For this reason, *it is imperative that you add the maximum amount of bone density while you're young to prevent osteoporosis that can begin as early as age 20.* The best sources of dietary calcium are: non or low-fat milk, yogurt, Swiss cheese, tofu made with calcium sulfate, sardines with bones, and fortified orange juice. **You should note that sodas decrease the absorption of calcium and that only 20-40% of dietary calcium is actually absorbed.**

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**Note: Because of the special circumstances regarding calcium absorption, calcium supplements have been recommended by many nutritionist and medical experts as a “safe supplement” in order to meet the RDA levels.*

- **Iron for Athletes:** Besides athletes in general needing iron and protein for developing muscle, female athletes are at increased risk for “iron deficiency anemia” from menstrual blood loss and increased vegetarianism. These problems combined with low calcium intakes cause increased risk of stress fractures, decreased bone density, and other injuries—remember the lesson of Wellness—**Don’t do anything to jeopardize your balanced approach to health!** Also, did you know that distance runners kill thousands of red blood cells by crushing them on the bottoms of their feet?--it’s called “*footstrike hemolysis*” which is yet another good reason for proper iron intakes in your diet.

**Note! Special precautions exist for taking iron supplements. Males are NOT supposed to take excessive iron as it can lead to heart damage.*

- **Multi-Vitamins:** In theory, if you eat the optimum diet everyday you’ll get most of the vitamins and minerals you need to maintain an average healthy body. However, it is difficult for most of us to eat right even when we are trying hard to do so. It is always better to get vitamins and minerals from food, but if you are interested in vitamins to supplement your diet try a multi-vitamin that gives you 100% of the RDA levels. Unless you’re very knowledgeable about nutritive supplements, stay away from the mega-dose vitamins because they can be dangerous. Remember the precautions for iron supplements (*especially with males).

**Note: RDA recommendations are for an “average healthy individual” (± 2 SD). Depending on particular needs, supplementation requirements might need to be adjusted on an individual basis due to disease, competitive athletics, and environment.*

- **Fiber:** Diets high in fiber are healthy for your colon and digestive tract and should be a priority in a healthy diet plan. Eat whole wheat bread rather than refined white bread. Also, eat both soluble fiber (fruits and vegetables) and non-soluble fiber (wheat bran, etc.) as both are needed to promote healthy intestinal function.

**Note: Drinking extra water is necessary with high-fiber diets.*

Food Facts

<p style="text-align: center;">Caloric Values Per Gram</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Fat</u>=9 calories per gram • <u>Alcohol</u>=7 calories per gram • <u>Protein</u>=4 calories per gram • <u>Carbohydrate</u>=4 calories per gram 	<p style="text-align: center;">Determining Total Fat Calories (TFC) “McDonald’s Super Size Fries”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fat=29 grams (610 total calories) • 29x9 calories/gram=261 fat calories • 261÷610=43% of calories is FAT!
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<p><i>*I tried to find items “lower” in fat than the average fast food. Being “lower” in fat still does not mean the item is truly “low-fat” by definition. Below are actual food label definitions that can be helpful:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Low-Fat:</u> ≤ 3 grams of less fat per serving • <u>Reduced-Fat:</u> 25% less of a nutrient or of calories than the regular product • <u>Fat-Free:</u> < 0.5 fat grams per serving • <u>Low-Calorie:</u> ≤ 40 calories per serving • <u>Light:</u> 1/3 fewer calories or $\frac{1}{2}$ the usual fat 	<p><i>Adults need a minimum daily intake of 15-25 grams of fat (2,000 calories per day=60 grams of fat using the $\leq 30\%$ recommendation below). Remember, fat is a necessary nutrient that is important for your body’s metabolism. (Symbols: \leq=less than or equal to; $<$=less than)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">% of Fat from Total Daily Calories (TDC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Total Fat:</u> $\leq 30\%$ TDC • <u>Saturated Fat:</u> 7-10% TDC • <u>Polyunsaturated Fat:</u> $\leq 10\%$ TDC • <u>Monounsaturated Fat:</u> $\leq 15\%$ TDC
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Recommended Daily Fat Grams

Total Daily Calories	Total Daily Fat (grams)	Daily Saturated Fat (grams)
1,200	40	9-12
1,500	50	11-15
1,800	60	13-18
2,000	67	14-20
2,200	73	15-22
2,500	83	18-25
3,000	100	21-30

America's Top Ten Fat Sources

1. Margarine
2. Whole Milk
3. Shortening
4. Mayonnaise & Salad Dressing
5. American Cheese
6. Ground Beef
7. Reduced-Fat Milk
8. Eggs
9. Butter
10. Vanilla Ice Cream

Summary

The above meal samples are meant only as a starting point. Feel free to add or customize the preceding basic meal outlines with your favorite low-fat favorites. Remember, don't try too many changes at once or you'll be overwhelmed. Take it one meal at a time and try to be conscious about what effect the food you're eating will have when absorbed by your body--is it nutrient dense and healthy or loaded with fat, preservatives, and other toxins?

A good overall nutrition plan has a foundation of Wellness along with Balance, Variety, and Moderation.

These nutritional tips will enable you to perform at higher levels whether you are moderately exercising or a serious competitive athlete. More importantly, these tips will also enable you to live with a higher degree of health and well-being for the rest of your lives. Don't ever forget these guidelines as they can change your life if followed properly and consistently. For more on nutrition, refer to the "Weblinks" section of my website.

Give your body a chance to show you what it can do with Wellness--Get the Edge!

****Special thanks to "Performance Nutrition" by Norm Hoffman along with his years as my teacher, coach, mentor, and best friend. Most importantly, I thank him for his lifetime dedication to health education and his relentless desire of optimum health for all through Wellness...his Spirit still Rides!***

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Clark, Nancy. (1997). *Sports nutrition guidebook: eating to fuel your active lifestyle*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

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Websites: USDA Food Database-www.nal.usda.gov/fnic; & www.nutrition.gov

* Ron Jones (9.7.07)