

# Nutrition Bites

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For further information see [www.paulamee.com](http://www.paulamee.com) or [www.indi.ie](http://www.indi.ie)

## Food Groups

The easiest way to put together a 10-mile eating plan is to think of the main five food groups and the number of recommended servings you need from each group every day. As you train you can adjust your current eating habits. It is about quantity and quality of the foods you eat. By eating a wide variety of foods, you will gain all the nutrients that you need without getting bored either! The list of essential nutrients is the same whether you are an elite athlete or an occasional exerciser. This week we focus on the most important food groups, to fuel us over the finishing line.

### Ready, Steady, Go.....

Check out if you're getting enough food from each group. Read 'what is a serving' below.

### Fruit & Vegetables - provide critical vitamins, minerals, fibre & antioxidants.

Your goal – at least 5 servings a day.

A serving is any medium sized fruit or 2 small fruits (e.g. satsumas, kiwi, plums) or 3 heaped tablespoons of vegetables

Eat a rainbow of colour! We will tackle this issue in week five but for now - each day, aim to have:

- At least one dark green vegetable (e.g. broccoli, cabbage, rocket, spinach) for iron and folic acid.
- At least one red fruit or vegetable (e.g. tomatoes, watermelon, peppers) for lycopene.
- At least one type of berry or citrus fruit (e.g. raspberries, blueberries, oranges) for immune-boosting flavonoids and vitamin C.
- At least one orange/yellow fruit or vegetable (e.g. carrots, orange peppers, mango) for antioxidants and beta-carotene.

### Bread, Cereals & Potatoes - provide energy to train and fibre for a healthy digestive tract.

Your goal - include 6 – 11 servings a day. Many slimmers need approx 6 servings, whereas competitive runners with high energy requirements will require much more carbohydrate.

- Start each day with at least 2 or 3 portions from this group e.g. porridge or a wholegrain cereal with wholegrain toast and a banana
- Make sure you choose wholegrain varieties of bread, breakfast cereals, pasta and rice to boost your fibre intake
- Choose your fillings and toppings carefully – e.g. olive-based spreads and oils are healthier than saturates, tomato-based sauces instead of cream-based sauces.
- Eat potatoes with their skins on e.g. baked potatoes, baby boiled potatoes

### Milk & Dairy Products - provide calcium for bone health, vitamins A & D and protein

Your goal – 3 servings a day

- Swap full-fat milk for low-fat or skimmed
- Choose low-fat yoghurts, reduced-fat crème fraiche
- Choose lower fat cheese or go for soft cheeses such as cottage cheese or philadelphia light.  
*As a general rule: the harder the cheese the more calories and fat it contains*

### **Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans, nuts - provide protein and some minerals such as iron, zinc and selenium**

Your goal – 2-3 portions a day

- Choose lower-fat foods from this group such as lean chicken and turkey, fish, eggs, pulses & beans
- If you are eating red meat, trim all visible fat before cooking
- Grill or bake meat or fish rather than frying
- Beans, pulses and lentils can bulk out meals and are a valuable source of soluble fibre

### **Essential fats & oils - provide energy, essential fatty acids and fat-soluble vitamins**

Your goal is 1 – 2 portions

- Choose olive or rapeseed oil instead of butter or vegetable oils
- Oily fish (salmon, sardines, mackerel, herring) will provide you with essential omega-3 fatty acids. Try to eat 1-2 portions a week.
- Nuts & seeds are also good providers of good fats so snack on a handful of these a day (be sure to choose unsalted versions. If you are slimming, don't choose these as frequently for a snack)

### **What is a Serving?**

#### **A rough overview of your needs in servings .....per day**

#### **Carbohydrates**

**Choose any 6 servings if you are slimming and more depending on how active you are.**

**1 serving =**

- 1 slice of bread or
- 1 serving of breakfast cereal as per pack or
- 1 medium potato, boiled / baked or
- 2 tablespoons cooked rice or pasta

#### **Fruit & Veg**

**Choose at least five servings whether you are slimming or not.**

**1 serving =**

- ½ glass fruit juice (1 serving only if you are slimming as fruit juice can be high in sugar)
- 2 heaped tablespoons cooked vegetables or salad

- Small bowl of home-made vegetable soup or fruit salad
- 1 medium fruit e.g. banana or apple
- 2 small fruits e.g. plums or satsumas
- 2 tablespoons cooked fruit

*Tip - If you are a diabetic, spread your fruit throughout the day and only eat one portion at a time.*

### **Dairy**

**Choose any 3 servings each day and go for low fat dairy options e.g. milk, cheese, yoghurt. Teenagers, pregnant or breastfeeding mothers need up to 5 servings each day.**

**1 serving=**

- 1/3 pint of milk
- 1 small 125g carton of yoghurt
- 1oz / 30g (matchbox size) of cheese

### **Protein - Meat, Fish and Alternatives**

**Choose any 2 servings each day or choose any 3 servings each day during pregnancy.**

**1 serving=**

- 2oz cooked lean meat or poultry
- 3oz cooked fish (eat oily fish where possible e.g. salmon, fresh tuna, herring, mackerel, sardines)
- 2 eggs
- 3oz nuts
- 6 tablespoons beans / lentils

**Less nutritious foods (eat these foods only very sparingly)**

- Fats & oils
- Limit fried foods to 1-2 per week.
- Confectionery and high fat snack foods - small amounts not too frequently
- Avoid excessive intake of sugar e.g. fizzy drinks, chocolate, jams, honey, desserts etc.

**Next week we take a closer look at carbohydrates. Good luck with your training!**