



[Running Nutrition](#) > [Running Nutritional Advice](#) > [Eat your way to running success](#)

Eat your way to running success

Top foods to make you a better runner

You'll never be a great runner if you don't eat right. Good nutrition can mean the difference between languishing at the back of the field and storming home to a PB. Here are the foods you need to stock up on to eat your way to running success.



Eat lean chicken for a protein hit

As a runner, you need to be taking on as much protein as possible every day – around 0.5g for every kilogram of bodyweight in fact. Protein is perfect for runners for two reasons. First, it takes your body a long time to digest protein, meaning it keeps you feeling full and energised. Secondly, and most importantly, it helps your muscles recover and develop, giving you the power you need to run faster.

For a great source of protein, look no further than good old skinless chicken. The combination of high protein and low fat makes it a definite win-win for runners looking to build lean muscle.

Eat pineapple to speed up protein absorption

Now that you're giving your running body the protein it needs, it's time to speed the process along even further. Say hello to your new protein absorbing best friend – pineapple. Pineapple is packed with bromelain, an enzyme that aids with the breakdown of proteins. That means after a quick snack of tasty pineapple your body is able to absorb protein more easily, aiding with recovery and lean muscle building. As an added bonus, bromelain also speeds up your metabolism.

Eat beetroot for a quick speed injection

Beetroot juice has long had an air of mystery surrounding it in the world of running. Does it actually benefit runners? How does it help? Why does it taste so weird? Well, turns out researchers at St Louis University in Chicago

have answered everything except the last question, and the news is good. In their study, runners who ate or drank beetroot before a 5k race experienced a boost in speed when they reached the finish line – a whole 41 seconds faster than their non-beetroot eating compatriots in fact. The reason behind this, according to the researchers, is the high level of nitrates found in beetroot. These help to dilate blood vessels, improve the flow of oxygen throughout your body, and give you more energy to run.

Eat salmon to accelerate recovery

Training efficiently is just as much about recovering correctly as it is putting in the hours out on the road. If you need an easy to prepare recovery meal after your run, you can't go wrong with wild salmon and its high levels of polyunsaturated fats. Don't worry, this is one of the few 'high fat' foods you can eat, as our polyunsaturated friends fall firmly into the 'good fats' category. These fats actually help your body recover from exercise by lessening post-training muscle inflammation. Salmon will also bring your energy levels back up after a run – a study published in the European Journal of Applied Physiology found that fish oils increase cardiac output and efficiency.

Eat mustard to burn body fat

Want to turn yourself into a lean, mean running machine? Add a few dollops of mustard to your next meal. Mustard is high in isothiocyanate chemicals, which increase your body's production of ephedrine. Ephedrine is a hormone that speeds up the rate at which your body burns fat, and suppresses your appetite. Ephedrine's fat burning powers are so potent, that according to a study at Oxford Brookes University, adding 20g of mustard into a meal can increase your metabolism by 20%.

Eat brown pasta for a long lasting energy boost

Any runner worth their salt knows that pasta is a food they should have in their cupboards. But if the pasta you're stocking isn't brown or whole-wheat, then you're missing out. Brown pasta is the perfect food for runners because it provides you with long lasting energy, and because of its low Glycaemic Index the boost it gives you will be consistent throughout your training session or race. What's more, whole-wheat pasta contains 5g more fibre per serving than regular pasta, and 2g more protein.

Eat flaxseed oil for stronger joints

Every time you go out running, your joints take a beating as you pound the pavement. The stronger your joints are, the longer you'll be able to run for and the faster you'll go. But how do you strengthen your joints? Easy – by swapping out olive oil for flaxseed oil. Flaxseed oil is extremely high in omega 3 fatty acids, which have been proven to protect your joints. A Spanish research project found that people with oil in their diets had higher levels of osteocalcin in their bodies, which is a skeleton-strengthening protein.