RUNNERSCONNECT

About Us: Our mission is to revolutionize how runners of all ability levels train and prepare for races. We know you're curious, so go ahead and *see what we're all about.*

Be Ready for Race Day with Our

MARATHON WEEK NUTRITION GUIDE

During extensive marathon training you will build strength, endurance, and confidence in your ability to take on the marathon. At the same time, marathon training can break you down. It will break down your muscle fibers, deplete your glycogen stores, and leave you feeling tired and fatigued.

That is why the marathon taper is such an important component of training. You need time to heal any damage that has happened from training and also to fill up your muscles' glycogen stores.

Here's what you should focus on and some foods that will help you run best come race day

5 Days Before

Begin to increase your total carbohydrate intake by adding in more pastas and starches (low glycemic index foods) to your diet throughout the week. The old idea of depleting your carbohydrate stores the week before the race and binging on carbohydrates the last few days in an attempt to trick your body into overcompensating and storing more fuel is outdated. Ensuring that you consume a higher percentage of your total daily calories as carbohydrates is sufficient

Turkey burger on a whole wheat bun

Baked fish with steamed zucchini and rice

Chicken Breast with quinoa

Baked potato with tuna and sweetcorn

Oatmeal with blueberries and almonds

48-24 Hours Before

Your last big meal should be two nights before the race. It will give your body ample time to digest anything you eat so you won't feel bloated on the morning of the race. I've seen too many people gorge on pasta the night before the race only to reach the starting line the next day stuffed and lethargic.

Have you ever tried to run the morning after Thanksgiving? If you have, you know the bloated feeling I'm talking about, and if you haven't, I don't recommend scheduling a tough workout.

Your main meals should still be in the form of low glycemic to medium glycemic index foods. Ideally, you won't be too active on the day before the race, so you may feel full quickly. That is fine, you shouldn't try to stuff yourself.

Sweet potatoes

Tomato basil pasta

Ham and pea risotto

Ham pizza

Spaghetti bolognaise (with or without meat)

18 Hours Before

Start eating small meals every 2-3 hours, but after lunch, cut out red meat, fried foods, dairy products, fats, nuts, and roughage. You should only be consuming light, digestible foods like energy bars, bread, and small sandwiches. Keep drinking water and electrolyte beverages and avoid salty foods.

Energy bars

Toast with peanut butter

Bagel with banana

2-4 Hours Before

You should be up early enough before the race to eat a small breakfast with plenty of time to start digestion before the gun goes off.

If you need 3 hours to eat a small meal before running, then you need to get up at least three hours before the race to get in a light breakfast. You'll want to drink mostly water (unless you know temperatures at the race are going to be warm), with some electrolyte fluid. Don't try to get all your fluids down by chugging your water bottle.

Drink small, regular sized amounts. Room temperature water is absorbed quicker than warm or cold water. I estimate that you'll need 6 oz. every hour or 8 oz. every hour on hot days.

Lots of runners will take a GU or energy gel right before the gun goes off. I only recommend this if you have a weak stomach and you haven't eaten in 3 hours.

If you're able to stomach more solid foods 60-90 minutes before the race, this is preferable. Basically, energy gels are mostly simple sugars and you'll be consuming another 2 or 3 gels before the race is over. Even for the biggest sweet tooth this is a lot of sugar.

Oatmeal with sliced banana

English muffin with peanut butter

Sweet potato with almond butter

Toast with jelly

Dry cereal