



Affordable, dairy-based recovery strategies for athletes.

Leisure sports and physical activity are an important part of everyday life for the many South Africans who have embraced healthy lifestyles. However, physical training does come with risks, and it's important to understand the vital role that nutrition plays in sports recovery.

Maretha Vermaak, registered dietitian at Rediscover Dairy says, "Dedication to your training needs to go hand-in-hand with being equally committed to recovering from your exertions using the right nutrition techniques. Take a look at the proven recovery techniques and think practically about how you can implement them into your everyday diet."

☑ Make sure you eat enough – A significant amount of research has been done on energy availability in active people. The crux of this research shows that when you don't eat enough but you do exercise a lot, your body won't have enough energy to sustain normal bodily processes. When this happens, you'll find that you may be getting sick all the time, struggle to recover from your workouts and may find it harder to keep up your performance. Include a variety of foods in your daily diet to provide sufficient energy for your level of activity. Consuming nutrient rich foods in your diet, may also have other added health benefits. An example of a nutrient rich snack is having plain yoghurt with fruit or a piece of cheese. Dairy products are not only a great source of energy, but also packs a protein punch with up to 7g protein per 200ml serving of yoghurt or 40g of cheese as well as providing a third of your daily calcium needs per serving. Avoid nutrient poor options by limiting the amount of highly processed foods, those with added sugar, salt and fat, in your diet and focusing instead on fresh or minimally processed options, like fresh fruits, vegetables and milk.

☑ Rehydrate properly - If you sweat when you're exercising or if you are training in the heat, you may lose more water and electrolytes such as potassium and sodium than you take in. Depending on a variety of factors, you can lose 0.3 L of sweat per hour, or even more. When this happens you may become dehydrated, and your exercise performance can be affected because of fatigue. Vermaak advises, that a good way to gauge if you are losing too much fluid during exercise, is to weigh yourself before and after a training session. If you have lost more than 2% of your body weight, you need to focus more on your rehydration strategy.

In general, you want to do the following:

- Drink to thirst leading up to your session. But also drink, even if you are not thirsty
- Drink small amounts of fluid, 150 to 300mL every 15 to 20 minutes during your session

If you drank enough before and during your workout, you'll have maintained your weight. If this is the case, then you can just drink to thirst for the rest of the day. If you lost weight and need to replace it, it's recommended that you drink 1 to 1.5 L, which is 4 to 6 cups of fluid per kg of weight you lost. Water is a good choice, but it may be wise to include sources that contain some electrolytes like milk or sports drinks. Hydrating foods like fruits and vegetables or even yoghurt are also very good choices. Electrolytes help the body to hold fluid and is essential for a healthy heart and so can bring you back to a state of balance more easily.

☑ Eat enough protein to repair your muscles – "Many people who exercise know that when you are trying to maintain or build muscle mass, you also need to eat enough protein. That's because protein forms the building blocks of all the cells and tissues in your body, including your muscles", says registered dietitian, Abby Courtenay. For most active people, including a protein source at each meal should be enough to meet your needs. Including a protein rich meal soon after training can specifically help with muscle recovery from that session. In general, you want to try to eat every 3 to 5 hours and include about 20-25g of protein per meal.

You can get approximately 20g protein from the following food sources:

- 50g biltong
- 2 extra large eggs
- 60g cheese
- 600mL low fat milk or flavoured milk

Some research has shown that pairing carbohydrate containing fluid and protein can enhance muscle recovery and potentially reduce muscle soreness and tiredness. So, if this is a problem that you find yourself struggling with, liquid protein sources like milk or flavoured milk may be a better option for you.

☑ Recovery nutrition on a budget - Many South Africans are feeling the pinch in their household budgets and are looking for ways to cut back on monthly expenses. Dr Hester Vermeulen, a specialist in consumer economics at the Bureau for Food and Agricultural Policy (BFAP) has taken a look at the current affordability and comparative macro-nutrient value of several light meals and snacks that are recommended for those with an active lifestyle.



Read more about other food options on the Rediscoverdairy sport page

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The top, affordable snacks and light meals for athletes are:



200g baked potato topped with 40g cheese providing:

ESTIMATED R6.68

- 14.5g /14% protein;
- 46.3g /11% carbohydrates;
- 13.1g /16% fat, and
- 4.8g /16% dietary fibre

This light meal or snack is a great all-rounder and is in the top 3 for most affordable and the top 4 for high fibre content. It also ranks as best value-for-money for energy content, protein content, carbohydrate content and fibre content.

500ml DIY flavoured low-fat milk containing 6 teaspoons flavour powder providing:

- 16.5g /16% protein;
- 45.3g /11% carbohydrates;
- 10.0g /12% fat

ESTIMATED R8.94

This simple, quick to make at home, on-the-go dairy drink ranks in the top 3 for most affordable and the top 3 for the highest protein content. It is also amongst the best value-for-money for energy content, protein content and carbohydrate content.



2 X 330ml commercial flavoured milk providing:

ESTIMATED R25.14

- 19.8g /19% protein;
- 59.4g /14% carbohydrates;
- 12.5g /15% fat, and
- 7.9g / 26% dietary fibre

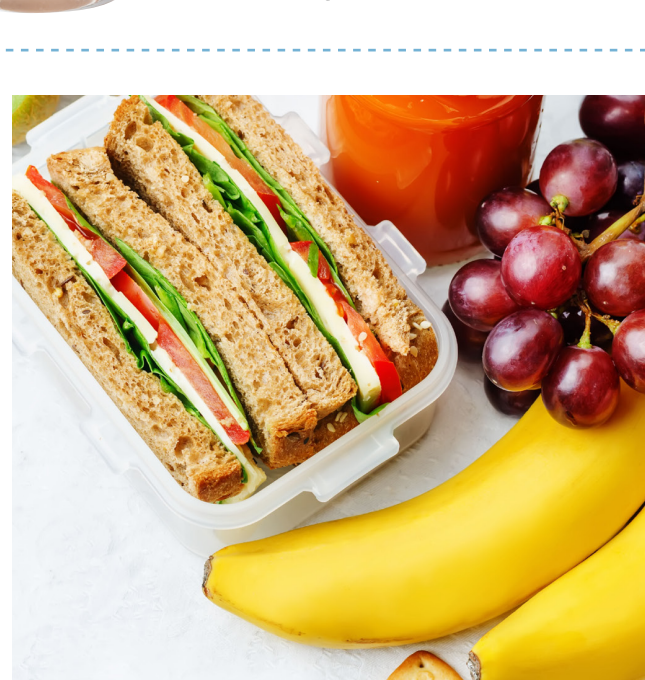
Although this is a more expensive option, it is convenient and popular among athletes.

80g (2-slices) brown bread cheese sandwich containing 40g of cheese and 150g fruit providing:

- 17.1g /16% protein;
- 35.1g /8% carbohydrates;
- 14.0g /17%fat, and
- 4.4g /15% dietary fibre

ESTIMATED R10.30

One of the most popular snacks, this ranks in the top 3 for most affordable, in the top 4 for highest protein content and in the top 4 for the highest fibre content. It is amongst the best value-for-money for energy content, protein content and fibre content, which proves you can't go wrong with a cheese sandwich with a serving of fruit!



Banana and milk combo comprising of 500ml low-fat milk and 150g bananas providing:

- 18.5g /18% protein;
- 52.7g /13% carbohydrates;
- 10.5g /12% fat, and
- 2.6g /9% dietary fibre

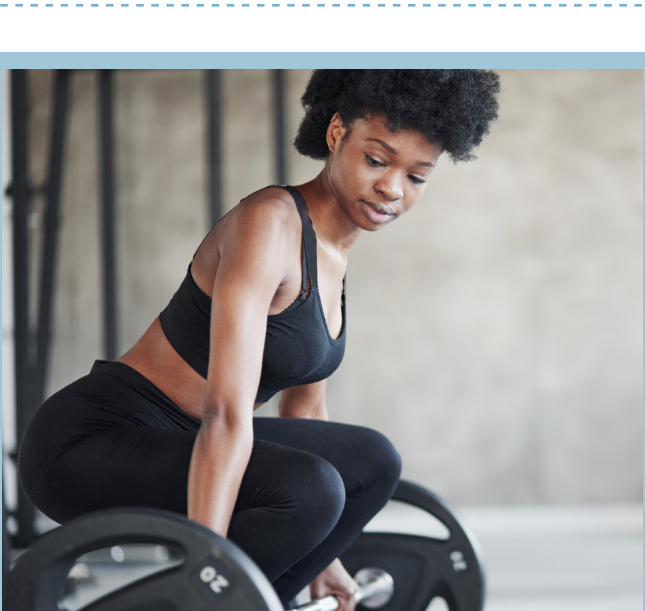
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Bananas are amongst the favourite snacks for those who are physically active. Here, combined with the milk, it ranks in the top 4 for the highest protein content and in the top 2 for the highest energy content. It is also amongst the best value-for-money for energy content, protein content and carbohydrate content.



Top Shopping Tips to help you eat healthily on a budget:

- Plan your meals, snacks and grocery shopping in advance to avoid impulse shopping behaviour, overspending and poor food choices.
- Where possible, purchase larger pack sizes that are more economically priced. However, it is important to ensure that you store products correctly and safely at home.
- Shop seasonal foods, especially when it comes to fresh produce.
- Be brand savvy – explore the quality and value-for-money of generic brands.
- Look for specials and shop around between retail outlets.
- Try to focus on home-prepared meals and snacks and avoid processed foods as far as possible.



Download a copy of the 'Sport Nutrition and the Role of Dairy' booklet from rediscoverdairy.co.za

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