

## What to Eat After Running



It's a familiar scenario for a lot of runners. You get back from a run knowing you need input and grab the first thing that comes to hand. Or you finish your run and pop into the nearest shop to be faced with rows of tempting but maybe not so sensible re-fuelling options. If you are tired and blood sugar is low you are likely to choose something high in sugar or without protein. Crisps, chocolate, bagels, coffee, sugary fizzy drinks are all classic cravings after a hard run. You might also be tempted to head straight for a shower and a lie down without eating anything at all.

**There are two main windows after a run to be aware of...**

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## The first window is the half hour immediately after your run

During this period your muscles have been shown to be more receptive to rebuilding glycogen stores. Carbohydrate is stored in the muscles and liver as glycogen, and is a primary energy source for runners. The body can only store a limited amount of glycogen, making it vital to replenish, especially after a long run or hard workout.

The best way to do this is to have a snack with a ratio of 4:1 carbohydrate to protein. The protein provides amino acids which will rebuild muscle. However, too much protein can slow carbohydrate absorption so it's important to try and keep that balance.

### Good choices for this window are:

- Banana and a small handful of nuts
- Toast or oatcakes with nut butter or hummus
- Yogurt with fresh fruit
- Energy bars
- Protein shakes and smoothies

SIS Rego Rapid Recovery gives an ideal ratio of protein as well as a good range of vitamins and minerals. Protein bars such as Clif Builders bar or Chimpanzee organic protein bar are great tasting options too. Both these bars have higher protein ratios than you would want so you could have either a carbohydrate drink or some fruit to up the carbs.



[SIS Rego Rapid Recovery Drink Sachet](#)

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[SIS Rego Rapid Recovery Drink 500g](#)

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[Clif Builders Bar](#)

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[Chimpanzee All Natural Protein Bar](#)

If you have a sensitive stomach or find it hard to eat solid food immediately after a run, try having a smoothie or protein shake. You can also leave it until nearer the end of the 30-minute

window, giving the body 20 minutes or so to recover before taking something in. Remember to check the protein to carb ratio on energy bars and protein shakes as they are not all created equal!

Homemade smoothies are a good option too: try mixing a cup of coconut water with a banana, a small scoop of protein powder or nut butter and a couple of sticks of celery. The coconut water and celery are full of natural electrolytes to help re-hydrate. You can also add a couple of dates or some more fruit like berries if you crave something a bit sweeter. If you prepare your post-run smoothie or snack before your run and have it ready in the fridge, you will be less likely to munch on biscuits.

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### **The second window is within 1-3 hours of a run**

In this time you should try to eat a meal or larger snack with a higher level of protein, and also some healthy fat and carbohydrates. You also need to be aware not to over-eat at this meal, as too much food will slow the absorption of nutrients. The body can only absorb 20g of protein in one go, so be careful not to overload your plate with protein.

Eating the right combination of nutrients here will continue to repair muscle damage, decrease inflammation and rebuild glycogen stores. There are almost endless possibilities for this meal depending if it's breakfast, lunch or dinner and on your food preferences.

#### **Options would include:**

- Large salad with a good protein source and avocado or nuts/seeds
- Stir-fry vegetables with quinoa and chickpeas
- Veggie/cheese omelette with small salad or protein shake
- Porridge with fresh fruit and a scoop of protein stirred in
- Large smoothie including a decent scoop of protein
- Fruit and some greens (spinach is ideal)

The key thing to remember is to include a portion of good quality protein, some healthy fats and carbohydrates (focus on vegetables, fruit and whole grains).

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**With a bit of planning, what you eat in the few hours after running can help you recover better, minimise muscle stiffness and leave you better prepared for your next run.**