

Investing in the Right Fuel High-yield Foods Lead to Peak Performance

By Kim Galeaz, RD CD

You only have so many calories to spend every day, so it's critical to choose foods wisely and stay within your budget. But are you considering return on investment? If you select foods that are high-yield (nutrient-rich), you'll get back the maximum return on nutrients and disease-fighting components from the calories invested, or spent.

And since everything you eat and drink before, during and after work plays a role in top-notch performance and overall wellness, learn to make high-yield choices every day at every meal.

Better breakfasts

Breakfast is the most critical meal for peak performance and, according to recent scientific research, plays a significant role in weight maintenance and weight loss. Unfortunately, breakfast is the most skipped meal, yet it's the necessary fuel to get your body going. Although any breakfast choice is better than no breakfast at all, the latest studies indicate the best choices include fiber and lean protein. These two components provide maximum satiety, a feeling of fullness and satisfaction that helps curb overeating and mindless munching. High-yield breakfast combinations include:

- **Cereal, milk and fruit or juice** – Highest fiber cereal choices are those with at least three grams fiber in a serving, like raisin bran, toasted o-shaped cereal and plain or frosted wheat squares. Pour protein-rich 1% or fat free skim milk or soymilk over your cereal and top with fiber-filled fresh, canned or frozen berries or fruit. Or get a dose of antioxidants from 100% orange, grapefruit or pomegranate blueberry juice.
- **Breakfast sandwich and juice** – Stuff or top a fiber-rich whole wheat or whole grain flour tortilla, pita pocket, bagel or English muffin with lean protein from a couple scrambled eggs, reduced fat 2% milk cheese and either Canadian bacon or ham (the high-protein, low-fat breakfast meat choices instead of bacon and sausage). Serve sandwiches with eight ounces of 100% juice.
- **Fruit, fiber and yogurt** – Mix fiber-filled wheat germ, ground flaxseed or granola with lowfat or fat free protein-rich yogurt (any flavor) and fresh, frozen or canned fruit or berries.

Smart lunches

Think P.A.C.K. when brown bagging it for foods that keep you fueled and satisfied instead of tired and sluggish.

- **P: Protein.** Make sandwiches with lean protein-rich fillings like turkey, chicken, ham, tuna, hard-boiled eggs or low-fat cheese slices. Remember, protein provides satiety and can help prevent overeating.
- **A: All fruits and vegetables.** Aim for at least one serving of each. Nutrient-rich fruits and veggies provide vitamins, minerals and disease-fighting components, plus they're typically lower in calories than cookies and chips. Choose canned fruits packed in natural juice, any favorite fresh fruit or 100% juice boxes.

Good lunch-packing vegetables include baby carrots, sugar snap peas, grape tomatoes, cucumber slices and bell pepper strips. Find other great fruit and veggie ideas at www.makethemost.com.

- **C: Complex carbohydrates.** Make sandwiches with 100% whole wheat bread, flour tortillas, pita pockets, bagels or English muffins. These whole grains offer more fiber, nutrients and satiety than white refined versions.
- **K: Keep beverage calories under control.** Choose no and low calorie versions as often as possible. Regardless of calories, though, all beverages – juice, milk, water, soda, energy and sports drinks, coffee, tea, lemonade – provide hydration, which is critical to peak performance. Find out your exact fluid requirement with the hydration calculator at www.beverageinstitute.org.



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Dinnertime dash

Create quick and healthy dinners just by making a few simple, nutrient-rich substitutions in family favorites.

- **Burritos and tacos** – Make them with another high yield all-star: beans. Choose any variety, like canned refried, pinto or black beans, and pair with whole wheat tortillas. Include plenty of other vegetables like tomatoes, salsa, jalapeno peppers and onions. Switch from full-fat to 2% reduced fat shredded cheese and light sour cream. Don't skip the avocado, though. It's packed with heart-healthy fat and helps keep eyes healthy.
- **Meat, poultry and fish** – Select the lowest fat cuts of pork and beef – those with “round” and “loin” in their name. In fact, pork tenderloin happens to be just as low fat (three grams in a three-ounce portion) as skinless chicken. Include fish at least two times weekly. Broil or bake instead of frying.
- **Spaghetti and meatballs** – Choose whole wheat spaghetti and pasta shapes for more fiber and protein. Save time with angel hair pasta; it cooks in nearly half the time as other pastas. Top with cancer-fighting, tomato-based marinara or pasta sauces. (Just one-cup of pasta sauce counts as two vegetable servings). Replace meatballs with a sprinkling of protein and calcium-rich cheese.

INFORMATION LINK

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