

Good food on-the-go

Ideas for a healthy snack stash. *by Karen Giles-Smith*

When you're on your way to a workout and haven't eaten for a while, a healthy snack stash can make the difference between a feel-good and a dragged-out exercise experience.

Active people tend to get hungry at least every four hours. To have adequate energy to fuel physical activity, a pre-exercise meal or snack is a must.

If you've eaten a large meal 3-4 hours before exercise or a small meal 2-3 hours before exercise, you'll be stoked and ready to go. If not, a snack will energize your workout and make it enjoyable.

The two tenets of super snacking

Think quality calories, not the standard sugary, salty snacks like candy or potato chips. Super snacks are like mini-meals that contain two or three of the five food groups. Consider convenience and food safety, since you'll want to keep your snack stash in a desk drawer, gym bag, or the trunk of your car.

Snack solutions

Pumped-up cereal: Mix your favorite cereal with raisins, dried fruit, cinnamon or nuts.

Energy bars, breakfast bars and low-fat granola bar:

Energy bars such as PowerBars and Luna bars are convenient but costly. For a better value with comparable nutrition, try low-fat granola bars, breakfast bars, or make your own (*see recipe*). Energy bars have a low water content, so drink plenty of water.

Nuts and seeds: Peanuts, walnuts, almonds, sunflower seeds, and pumpkin seeds are powerhouses of protein, B vitamins, vitamin E and healthful fats.

Fruit: Any fruit makes a great snack. Especially convenient are dried fruits like raisins, cranberries, cherries, apricots, apples, plums, and banana chips.

Sandwich: PB & J, turkey, hummus, lean roast beef, or tuna with light mayo. Be sure to put sandwiches with perishable ingredients in an insulated cooler with an ice pack.



Peanutty Energy Bars

This prizewinning recipe, courtesy of the Peanut Institute, is a tasty alternative to commercial energy bars. For variety, make this recipe with cashews and cashew butter, and/or add a variety of dried fruits (cranberries, cherries).

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup salted dry-roasted peanuts
- 1/2 cup roasted sunflower seed kernels (or more peanuts/other nuts)
- 1/2 cup raisins or other dried fruit
- 2 cups uncooked oatmeal, old-fashioned or instant
- 2 cups toasted rice cereal, such as Rice Krispies
- 1/2 cup peanut butter, crunchy or creamy
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup light corn syrup
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Optional: 1/4 cup toasted wheat germ

Directions:

In a large bowl, mix the peanuts, sunflower seeds, raisins, oatmeal, and toasted rice cereal (and wheat germ). Set aside. In a medium microwavable bowl, combine the peanut butter, brown sugar, and corn syrup. Microwave on high for 2 minutes. Add vanilla and stir until blended. Pour the peanut butter mixture over the dry ingredients; mix well. For squares, spoon the mixture into an 8" x 8" pan coated with cooking spray; for bars spoon it into a 9" x 13" pan. Press down firmly. (It helps to coat your fingers with oil or cooking spray.) Let stand for about an hour, then cut into squares or bars.

Yield: 16 squares or bars

Total calories: 3,600

Calories per serving: 225

30g carb; 6g protein; 9g fat

Recipe from: "Holiday Gift Ideas: Yummy Sports Foods" by Nancy Clark, www.active.com

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