



PERFORMANCE VOLLEYBALL CONDITIONING

A NEWSLETTER DEDICATED TO IMPROVING VOLLEYBALL PLAYERS

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Recovery Nutrition for Volleyball

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Explosiveness, power, quickness, and physical and mental clarity are all important aspects of a successful volleyball athlete. There is no question that optimal nutrition is essential in maximizing these athletic qualities. Generally, most athletes grasp the importance of fueling properly before and during activity. Eating a solid pre-game or pre-training meal, and maintaining fluid and energy levels during activity are all essential to performing well. Most athletes get the fact that skimping on this will result in immediate and obvious decreases in performance. But, good nutrition doesn't just take place before game time. Maximizing nutrition potential is an ongoing process. Preparation for the next game begins immediately after stepping off the court from the game prior. Perhaps one of the most forgotten times of nutrition optimization is during the "recovery phase"--the nutrition necessary within 30 minutes of finishing activity. Let's begin by addressing the when's, why's, and what's of recovery nutrition.



Why? Recovery nutrition is important for several reasons. Proper nutrients within this time-frame can help repair broken down muscle, replace depleted fuel and fluid stores, decrease inflammation and soreness, and help regulate natural hormones released during exercise. Think about how much more an athlete would get out of a practice or lift if they weren't sore, fatigued, or depleted from the rigorous game the day before. This is where recovery nutrition can work its magic!

When? The 30 minute window is essential, because simply put, the body is most "willing to accept nutrients" at this time. Thinking about all the activities that revolve around post-game can make nutrition quickly fall to the wayside. Post-game celebrations, locker room talks, showers, etc. can make these 30 minutes expire quickly. But, make no mistake, the bodies clock is ticking. Having snacks prepared and ready to go will help guarantee optimal recovery. A common question is if a meal can serve as "recovery". The answer is yes—as long as it's within 30 minutes. If not, a small recovery snack is suggested followed by a balanced meal.

What? There are two major nutrients essential for optimal recovery nutrition; carbohydrates and protein. The anaerobic nature of volleyball, characterized by short explosive bouts of play, requires a strong dependence on carbohydrates as a fuel source. Stored carbohydrates—known as glycogen—are nearly (if not entirely) depleted by the end of a workout, practice, or game. Replenishing the body with carbohydrates will be important for re-stocking fuel stores for the next bout of exercise. In addition, a good source of protein is essential to repair and prepare muscles. Research has suggested that a 3:1 carbohydrate to protein ratio is optimal for recovery.

A common post-game complaint also involves fatigued legs. Food with anti-inflammatory properties, including fruits and vegetables (especially cherries, berries, broccoli, sweet potatoes, etc.) can help decrease swelling. On the contrary, foods that promote inflammation include refined sugars, and foods high in saturated fats. Thus, staying away from sugar-sweetened beverages, fried foods, and high-fat foods post-activity will be essential in recovering properly. See the list below for some great recovery snack ideas.

Volleyball Recovery Nutrition Examples:

The following are some great recover snack ideas. Use your creativity to combine carbohydrates and protein for other recovery snacks! The "(P)" indicates the protein portion and "(C)" indicated the carbohydrate portion.

- Chocolate Milk (P,C): Recent studies have shown that the carbohydrate: protein ratio and anti-inflammatory properties of cocoa in chocolate milk make for a great recovery beverage!
- Peanut butter crackers (P,C) and fruit (C)
- Protein bar or shake (P) and fruit (C)
- Pretzels/Crackers (C) & Cheese stick/cubes (P)
- Peanut butter & Jelly sandwich (P,C) with milk (P)
- Fruit & Yogurt parfait with yogurt (P), granola (C), and berries (C))

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