



# Health-Full Eating & Nutrition



## Eating a Vegetarian Diet to Fuel Your Workouts

### Making the Switch

In a day and age where people are willing to give different diets a chance, more people are attempting to go vegetarian than ever before. People are enticed by the numerous health benefits and decide to give it a shot. However, this poses a question to those who are more physically active. Can you make the switch to a vegetarian diet without negatively effecting performance? Of course you can, and it's a lot easier than it may seem. Let's take a look at the two macronutrients most closely associated with performance; carbohydrates and protein.

### Carbohydrates

Of the macronutrients we'll be looking at, carbohydrates are the simpler of the two. The vast majority of carbohydrate sources come from plants. This means our carbs are relatively unaffected. Complex carbs such as whole wheat, millet, barley, beans and legumes are always great choices. Add in lots of fruits and you've got a great mix to fuel your workouts. The key is to consume these carbohydrates one to three hours before a workout. Eat too early, and you'll feel famished and have no energy. Eat too close to your workout, and you'll feel sick. A good general rule is the larger the meal, the longer you should wait before exercising.

### Protein

Here's where it becomes a little tricky. Carbohydrates are predominantly a plant-based macronutrient, while protein is traditionally associated with meat. Just as there are lots of amazing plant-based foods to provide us with carbs, the same can be said about protein. Lots of plants that provide us with quality carbohydrates may also provide us with quality protein. Foods like nuts, seeds, soy, and beans all provide quality protein. But what's the exercise connection? Continue to the next page...

## Protein Continued...

Carbohydrates directly fuel our workouts by providing us with energy, while protein indirectly fuels our workouts by strengthening and supporting our muscles. We predominantly used carbs in our pre-workout meal, so where does protein fit in? During our post-workout meal. Once we've finished working out, it's time to consume some protein. By doing this we're aiding our muscles in recovery, while simultaneously helping them come back stronger than before. The best way to do this is by consuming quality protein found in some of the sources previously mentioned. Also, there are two additional sources of vegetarian protein depending on what type of vegetarian you are. If you're what's known as a lacto-ovo-vegetarian, you may also consume dairy and egg, both of which are quality sources of protein. [Need some vegetarian inspiration to get started? Check out the pre-workout and post-workout recipes below!](#)

### Pre-Workout Meal: Easy Strawberry Oatmeal Breakfast Smoothie

#### Ingredients

1 cup soy milk, ½ cup rolled oats, 1 banana broken into chunks,  
14 frozen strawberries, ½ teaspoon vanilla extract,

#### Instructions

In a blender, combine soy milk, oats, banana and strawberries.  
Add vanilla if desired. Blend until smooth. Pour into glasses and serve.



### Post-Workout Meal: Lentil Spinach Soup

#### Ingredients

1 onion, 1-2 carrots, 3 gloves garlic,  
1 cup green/brown lentils (uncooked),  
15 oz. can diced tomatoes, 3 oz. spinach, 1 teaspoon cumin,  
½ teaspoon smoked paprika, ¼ teaspoon salt

#### Instructions

Dice onion and carrot. In a stockpot over medium-high heat, sauté onion and carrot for about 7 minutes. (I use 3 Tbsp. water/broth for oil-free sauté method.) Meanwhile, mince garlic and rinse lentils. Add garlic, cumin, smoked paprika, and salt to stockpot. Sauté for 1 minute. Add broth, tomatoes, and lentils. Increase heat and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer for about 30 minutes or until lentils are tender. Meanwhile, roughly chop spinach. Add spinach during last couple minutes of cooking.



#### References:

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