Energy to go the distance

What to eat and drink before, during, and after long runs

	WHAT	WHEN	SUGGESTIONS
Before the run	**EAT** 350 to 550 calories of high-carbohydrate, low-fiber, low-fat foods	90 to 120 minutes before the run (the bigger the meal, the more time needed to digest)	Energy bars, sports drinks, low-fiber cereal and skim milk, fruit and yogurt, fig cookies, pretzels, bagel with jam
	DRINK at least 8 to 16 ounces	1 hour before the run	Water, sports drink
During the run	**EAT** Have 45 to 60 grams of carbohydrates each hour	Take in some fuel every 20 minutes	Energy gels, bars, sports drinks, or chews
	DRINK 3 to 6 ounces of water or sports drink	Every 15 to 20 minutes. Aim for 16 to 20 ounces per hour (depending on your sweat rate)	Sports drinks
After the run	**Aim for a 4:1 ratio of carbs to protein**	**Within 15 to 30 minutes of finishing**	
	EAT a healthy, carbohydrate- and protein-rich, low-fat meal when you have fully recovered	Within 2 hours of finishing your healthy snack. If you're eating the meal right away, you can skip the above snack	Low-fat chocolate milk, energy bar, ham sandwich, pretzels and peanut butter, fruit smoothie with a little protein
	DRINK 8 to 24 ounces; more if it's hot	Within 60 to 90 minutes of finishing	Water or sports drink

EAT LIKE AN ATHLETE

Five rules for everyday eating when you're in training

1 DON'T RUN ON EMPTY Have a 200-calorie snack at least an hour before your run so you stay energized while you're on the road. Head out on an empty stomach, you won't be able to go as far or as fast.

2 DEVELOP A DRINKING HABIT Stay hydrated. Each day, aim to drink half your weight in ounces. That is, if you weigh 120 pounds, drink 60 ounces a day. If you weigh 180 pounds, drink 90 ounces a day.

3 MAINTAIN A HEALTHY BALANCE Carbs are the body's preferred source of fuel, but the protein and fat are vital as well. Protein helps rebuild muscle tissue, and unsaturated fats help keep the heart healthy and prevent injuries. Be sure to get all three nutrients at each meal.

4 KEEP A FOOD DIARY Do this for three consecutive days to get a sense of your calorie and fat intake, overall food variety, and whether you are getting all the nutrients you need. Make any adjustments accordingly.

5 CUT BACK ON THE JUNK There's nothing worse than starting a long run when you're nursing a hangover or feeling bloated from that seventh chocolate-chip cookie. Follow the 80-20 rule: 80 percent of the time, be careful to eat healthfully; 20 percent of the time, give yourself some leeway to indulge a little.

RUNNER'S DIGEST

Don't let GI distress sideline your training or your race

WATCH THE FIBER AND FAT
→ Fiber is good for your heart, and it helps keep your digestive system running smoothly, but on the run, it can give you trouble. Keep your pre-run meals low in fiber and fats, and high in carbs.

HOLD THE SWEETENERS
→ Check the label of your energy bar for anything ending in "ol"—sorbitol, mannitol, and so on, and avoid gels with fructose as the first sugar on the ingredient list. These can cause stomach problems. Also, take gels with water, not sports drinks, so you don't overload your GI tract.

WATCH THE TIMING
→ Allow three hours between big meals and your run, and eat dinner at least two hours before bed. Try to empty your system before a run. Coffee and tea can help move things along, but limit your intake to one cup. Caffeine can trigger GI complaints when taken in large amounts.