



by Coach Frank Pucher

The Cross Country Season is almost here! So before it begins, let's talk about Race Day Nutrition.

Morning Races

For morning races, always eat something 2-3 hours before race time. Some toast or a bagel with some peanut butter is an excellent race day breakfast. A ClifBar / PowerBar is another good choice. Be sure to drink 8-10oz of water with breakfast. Avoid fruit with skin (apples, plums etc.) before races unless you've tried them before other races as they may cause stomach discomfort if not digested in time.

Afternoon Races

Afternoon races pose a different strategy. Beginning in the morning eat a typical day's breakfast (whatever that may be). Assuming lunch in school around 12pm, try to eat an easily digested meal - perhaps a chicken/turkey sandwich with a Banana. Drink 8-10oz of water with lunch. Assuming a 4pm Race Start consume 1/2 of a ClifBar / PowerBar with another 8-10oz of water about 1- 1 ½ hrs before the race if you're still feeling hungry.

An **accepted principle** is that you can consume 100 calories for each hour before your event.

After the Race

After you finish your race and have properly warmed down, you should eat something within 1 hour to help spark the rebuilding and recovery process. Yogurt, fruit, or a sandwich with some more water are the best choices. The worst choices you can make after a race are cookies, crackers, chips and cokes.

Your body wants to rebuild and recover; bad food choices will simply delay the process. An athlete who eats properly "post race" has an advantage over their teammates and competitors almost immediately. If you've ever felt really bad the day after a race, take a good look at what you ate right after!

In Summary

There is no "magic formula" for eating that will lead to excellent performances. However, there are plenty of things you can do to SABATOGUE all of your hard work and miles run. Follow the suggestions listed and you'll be on your way to a safe and successful season.

"I've never finished a run and thought, that was a waste of time."

Frank Pucher is a former 2x All-Conference Distance Runner and NCAA XC Qualifier for East Stroudsburg University. A 6x Boston Marathon Qualifier, he owns a Sub-3hr PR in the Marathon and a ½ Marathon best of 1:15. In addition to being the personal coach to many outstanding athletes, Frank is also the owner of Fitness 121 Personal Training in Livingston. He is one of the few Coaches/Trainers to receive certification as an Endurance Performance Specialist from The National Endurance Sports Trainers Association (NESTA). Frank is also certified by The American Council on Exercise and The Cooper Institute of Aerobic Research in Dallas, TX. Visit his websites: TheRunCoach.com and Fitness121Online.com.