



Fueling Golfers

Fueling Your Sport

- Golf is a skill sport, and your need for calories is not high.
- Golfers who walk the course and carry their bags need more calories than those who take a golf cart. A 160-pound golfer who rides in a cart burns about 3 calories per minute. However, golfers who walk and carry their clubs burn almost 6 calories per minute.
- A typical golf course is about 7,000 yards long. A golfer will walk about 8,500 yards (a little more than 5 miles) for 18 holes.
- Golfers need 2.3 to 2.7 grams of carbohydrate per pound of body weight per day (5 to 7 g/kg/day). Good carbohydrate choices include whole grain breads and cereals, fruits, and vegetables.
- Golfers need 0.55 to 0.8 grams of protein per pound of body weight per day (1.2–1.7 g/kg/day). Good protein choices include fish, chicken, turkey, beef, low-fat milk, cheese, yogurt, eggs, nuts, and soy.
- Golfers need 0.45 grams of fat per pound of body weight per day (1 g/kg/day). Choose heart-healthy fats, such as canola oil, olive oil, and nuts.

Fluid Needs

- Water is the most important nutrient for golfers. Golf is usually played in summer, when temperatures and humidity are high. Just a small loss of body water can affect your performance on the course.
- Older golfers need to take extra care to drink enough. People become less aware of thirst as they age.
- Use sport drinks on hot, humid days.
- Drink 2 cups of fluid before you tee up.

- During the round, drink 4 to 8 ounces for every one or two holes.
- Keep a water bottle with you and refill it at every water station or drinking fountain.
- If you ride in a cart, keep your water bottle in view on your cart to remind you to drink.

Supplements Commonly Used by Golfers

- Energy bars and gels can be a good addition to your golf bag if you are walking the course and playing more than 18 holes in a day. They are especially useful during tournaments when you may play more than one round a day, face playoffs or extra holes, and play on consecutive days.
- Choose an energy bar that provides more carbohydrate than protein or fat.
- Gels are a concentrated source of carbohydrate. You should drink extra fluids if you use gels.
- Decide on a snacking strategy for long days on the course. Plan to eat a snack every four to six holes.
- Some golfers think using creatine will give them a “power swing.” However, there is no proof that using creatine improves driving distance or accuracy. Proper strength training and a good swing technique are more important in golf than using creatine.
- Young golfers who want to gain weight and add muscle should eat three meals a day, snack between meals, and add weight training to their routine. If you want to use protein shakes to add muscle, choose one without added supplements (such as creatine or amino acids) and drink it between meals or in the evening before going to bed.

Top Three Nutrition Tips for Improving Performance

- 1. Eat before you play.** If you have an early morning round, be sure to eat breakfast. Without breakfast, your blood glucose level can dip, which will leave you irritable and tired as the round wears on. Breakfast doesn't have to take a lot of time to prepare. You can eat a bagel with light cream cheese, a peanut butter sandwich, or turkey and cheese rolled in a flour tortilla, along with a 100% fruit juice box, in the car before you get to the course.
- 2. Drink enough fluid.** By the time you feel thirsty, you are already dehydrated. Look at the color of your urine to check your hydration. If your urine is dark yellow, you are dehydrated. Drink fluids before, during, and after every round of golf.
- 3. Avoid high-fat and high-sugar foods at the golf course.** Candy bars, hot dogs, and potato chips are the usual foods sold at the halfway house or clubhouse. Choose healthy foods or pack an energy bar, sport drink, dried fruit, or snack crackers in your bag to get you through the round.

Nutrition Prescription:

- _____ calories per day
- _____ grams of carbohydrate per day
- _____ grams of protein per day
- _____ grams of fat per day
- _____ cups of fluid per day

Special concerns: