



## IMT Des Moines Marathon

### What to Eat & When

In addition to daily nutrition requirements, eating the right food at the right time is essential for maintaining energy during any run and for maximum post-run recovery.

While running, your body depends on glycogen and fat as sources of fuel (primarily glycogen). By increasing carbohydrate consumption in daily meals, you increase your glycogen storage – thus, adding fuel to your tank.

The longer the run, the more you begin to deplete glycogen storage until it would eventually run out if not replenished. When glycogen runs out, your body transitions itself to burn only fat. This physical transition stage is commonly referred to as THE WALL by long distance runners. Eating before, during, and after a run will help you maintain adequate glycogen levels and can help your body to deal with depleted glycogen levels.

When eating **before** a run, it is best to have a light snack (such as a banana, yogurt and/or a wheat bagel) an hour or two before the run. Whatever you choose to eat, it should be something that your body digests well.

Try different foods to see what works best for you. Eating before a run is a good way to help maintain glycogen storage; however as humans we all digest foods differently so it is important to test a few different foods before shorter runs before trying something new before a long run. It is also advised to try different foods during your training program rather than experimenting with something new on the day of the race.

Consuming snacks **during** the run, especially runs of ten to twenty-plus miles, will help replenish what you burn and give you more energy. The key to eating during the run is that anything you consume should be quick and easy to digest, such as fruits or energy gels and bars, are light, small, easy-to-carry, and loaded with complex carbohydrates. Most recommend consumption of one every 30-45 minutes during activity.

How to carry snacks is another thing. Running gear manufacturers are making it easy for runners though by offering a number of belts/fanny packs designed specifically for carrying fluids and nutrition snacks for consumption during a training run. Take advantage of them! You will also find energy gels at first aid stations along the IMT Des Moines Marathon course.

**After** a run, your body is begging for replenishment. It is mostly begging for more carbohydrates to store as glycogen and for protein to help muscles recover. Our bodies are not very understanding when they don't get their way and you can bet it'll make you pay for it by overlooking its desires. Within thirty minutes after each run, **always feed your body after a run** with carbohydrates and protein to help your body recover and be strong for the next run. - *Brad Bougham, The Marathon Rookie Times 9/06*

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