

Calories and the Performance Diet

In a performance diet, 10% of your daily calories should come from proteins; 10-30% should come from fats; and 55-75% should come from complex carbohydrates.

1. They raise your glucose level, giving you steady energy for several hours. (If you do a few exercises or take some deep breaths at the same time you'll increase your oxygen level and get even more energy.)

2. They help balance your neurotransmitters so you have the right amount of norepinephrine for energy, plus the right amount of serotonin for pleasure and relaxation. That's the combination for High Positive.

The next time you're feeling sluggish and you need to perform, try one of the "Quick Fix" snacks below. Within a few minutes, you should feel enough energy to get you through the challenge.

experiment:

Don't take our word for it. Try this experiment and see for yourself how food affects your performance.

1. Pick 2 days to be your test days.
2. On Day 1 eat a big lunch that's heavy on proteins and fats. This might include meat and gravy, cheese, salad with a lot of dressing, and/or french fries.
3. Notice how you feel after lunch. Are you tired in your afternoon classes? Or are you alert and ready to work?
4. On Day 2 eat a medium-size lunch that's rich in complex carbohydrates. Possibilities are spaghetti (light on the sauce), fruit, vegetables, bread products, salad with only a little dressing. Eat just until you no longer feel hungry — not until you feel full.
5. Notice how you feel after lunch. Can you see a difference from Day 1? Unless you've overeaten, you should feel more alert and energized.

Try extending the experiment to include breakfast. On Day 1, eat a big breakfast of eggs and bacon (lots of fat and protein). On Day 2 eat a complex carbohydrate breakfast: whole grain cereal, whole wheat toast, fruit and juice. See how you feel during your morning classes. Which breakfast gives you more mental energy?

QUICK FIX SNACKS

fruit
dates

unfrosted angel cake
unsugared crackers

raisins
dried fruit

pretzels
Grape Nuts or other
whole grain cereal