

Sailing Sports Nutrition

What I love about sailing is it is such a physical and mental sport, both your **muscles** and your **brain** need to be fueled and sports nutrition is the perfect way to do that.

Keep hydrated

Even if you're only slightly dehydrated your brain performs 10 to 15% more slowly. This will affect your attention, memory, and concentration levels which can be the difference between a good race and a great race. If you are feeling even a little bit thirsty you are already on your way to dehydration.

Electrolytes In summer when it is hot, you sweat and lose electrolytes which make you more dehydrated quickly. It is my recommendation that you have both water and an electrolyte mix in your dry bag on the coach boat. You need to get a brand that has a high enough sodium content - a good formula will mimic the electrolyte composition of your body, so what is lost through sweating is replaced. I have used many in my years of training and racing and I find Skratch a really good brand. You can buy it here <https://www.trevscycleshop.co.nz/search?type=product&q=skratch> You can get single 350 ml serve sachets which are great to take away when traveling and they are not too sweet and have a range of flavors. (My kids like the strawberry and lemonade flavor best).

Fuel your brain

Did you know that the brain is the most energy demanding organ in your body? It uses half of all the sugar energy that your body needs but it is the **ONLY** part of the body that can't store sugar! Our muscles do this in the way of glycogen storage, which fuels them, giving energy so they can move and perform. Because the brain can't store sugar it needs to be drip fed, so it can perform all its functions properly. The *type* of sugar you eat is very important as it does very different things to your brain. Sugar comes in the form of complex carbohydrates and refined sugar. When you eat refined sugar it has already been broken down so is very easily absorbed and so goes straight into your bloodstream and up to your brain. As it can't store this extra sugar (glucose) it sends signals to the pancreas to release insulin to get rid of it and store it for later use in your liver and muscles. This means your brain is left with none of the sugar and so you end up feeling tired, and it's hard to concentrate. When you have a race in 3 minutes that you need to be on form for this is totally not ideal!

To combat this you need to eat complex carbohydrates as they are slowly absorbed by the body allowing for a constant flow to the brain which helps to keep your blood sugar levels even. This helps to calm your nerves and promote clear thinking, both of which are very important when you race! Types of complex carbs to eat are whole grains, legumes, and vegetables. This is only one half of the equation though, one other key macronutrient to help keep your blood sugar levels stable is protein.

Keep your blood sugar levels stable

Protein is made up of amino acids which are the building blocks for our muscles, skin, bones, tissues, organs, hair and nails. It is important for modulating hormones, regulating your metabolism, building enzymes and creating antibodies that are vital for our immunity.

The body can only store a small pool of amino acids at a time so we need to eat them regularly with a protein rich diet. You need to include a source of protein **at every meal** to stabilize your blood sugar and energy levels, build muscle and healthy bones.

Protein slows down glucose getting into our blood stream so it can help with that steady stream our brain prefers.

So how do you put all this together on race day to get the most out of your foods and fuel not only your muscles but your brain? Below I have given you an example of a race day nutrition - each meal or snack contains 20 to 25g protein and contains complex carbohydrates to help keep your blood sugar levels even and keep you feeling full, have energy to perform the best you can while out racing.

Tip - it is **very** important that you try out new stuff when you are training NOT on race day as you may not like the flavor of something or it upsets your stomach. Keep trying different food/ drinks until you know what works for you and how you like it. If you have it in your bag but don't take it, or don't eat it, it's not going to help you.

I have given you animal and plant based options to cater for all food preferences.

ANIMAL BASED

PLANT BASED

BREAKFAST

It is **so** important to start your day off well with a good breakfast, the protein will keep your blood sugar levels even and set you up for the day.

2 large boiled eggs (14g)
2 pieces of wholemeal toast (5g)
¼ avocado
Total 19g protein

2/3 cup cooked oats (11-14g)
2 tbsp almond butter(4g)
½ cup soya milk (7g)
Total 21-25g protein

Could add baked beans or bacon for extra protein

BRIEFING

This is a great time to refuel before getting out to the start. Make a smoothie before you go and take it to drink while you are listening. To get the protein hit I recommend putting 20g of protein powder in it. They often come in single serve sachets which makes it easier when traveling,

I always add either frozen or fresh berries in the smoothie. Blueberries are my favorite as they have the highest antioxidants and also have been proven to improve your cognitive function and attention span - things that are very important in racing!

I took our nutribullet away with us at this year's nationals as it doesn't take up much space and most hotels/motels will have some form of fridge to store milk and berries etc so easy to make before you leave for the day.

Below are animal and plant based options.

Smoothie

Protein powder (20g)
Whey based the easiest
and often come in single serves
¼ flax seeds (5g) -optional
½ cup frozen berries
Water and or milk/yogurt

Total 25g -30g protein

Smoothie

Protein powder (20g) Nuzest Pea or
Hemp connect good brands
¼ flax seeds (5g) -optional
½ cup frozen berries
Water and or plant based milk,
coconut yogurt

Total 25g - 30g protein

IN LIFE JACKET

Depending on the wind you can be out on the water for anywhere up to 4 hours and so you need to keep your brain and muscles fueled.

Have a muesli bar or some frooze balls, but make sure they have around 15- 20 g protein in them. (usually the protein balls contain about 4g so you will need about 4). You can have snakes or some other sugar, but save if for the last race so you don't get a sugar crash and lose your concentration.

LUNCH BOX

I know you don't have a lot of time between races and that eating out of your boat can be difficult if the wind is up so I'm making simple options, the easiest being a wholemeal bun with a form of protein in it.

Wholemeal bun (7.9g)
50g chicken (10g)
Or 3 slices ham (12g)
Or 50 g mince (12g)
Or 2 slices cheese (11g)
Or 50g tinned tuna ((12g)

Total 18-22 g protein

Wholemeal bun (7.9g)
3 tbsp nut or butter (6g)
Or 3 tbsp hummus (3.6)
Or 50g baked beans (3g)
Or 2 tbsp peanut butter ((8g)
Or 50g tofu/tempeh (7g)

Total 12g-16 g - handful of nuts as Protein top up.

POST RACE REFUEL

It is important to keep fueled even after racing, especially if you are racing more than one day. If you don't, you risk getting tired and tired after each passing day which can really affect your racing. There is a sweet spot of time where your insulin receptors are open and glycogen synthesis is very active. At this time you need to eat mid to high glycemic foods to promote the release of insulin which stimulates muscle glycogen replacement. It also helps to speed up recovery time. This must be done within 2 hours of finishing racing, (though optimal time is the 1st hour). You need to eat the carbs with protein in a ratio of 4:1 (carbs to protein). The easiest way to do that is to drink a 500ml chocolate milk (Or plant based choc milk). It is used a lot post race in the running world and has the correct ratio while also tasting great!

There are many other food combos you can use to get this ratio, and many other ways sports nutrition can help you with your training and racing, so for a more detailed explanation that is tailored to your needs you can book an appointment with me to go through everything.

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