

Dixons Carphone Race to the Stones 2019

Nutrition Tips – Walking

Tip 1:

Carbs are good: Even though walking is a lower intensity and in theory you will be using more fat stores rather than carbohydrate stores, at each meal you need to have a portion of carbohydrate. This could be a piece of wholegrain toast at breakfast, 2-3tbsps of rice/pasta with lunch and 2 egg size potatoes with your evening meal.

Tip 2:

Do I need to go Paleo? The Paleo diet promotes predominantly meat, fish, vegetables and fruit, and nuts, while food that come from agriculture, including all grains, dairy foods, sugar, salt and low nutrient processed foods are to be avoided, since they were not consumed by Paleo people.

The Paleo diet does not provide exceptional results in terms of weight loss or health advantages. Little is known about what actual foods were eaten by our Paleolithic ancestors but there is evidence that they ate some grains and legumes. It is important to consider that humans have evolved since the advent of agriculture and the consumption of dairy foods, as several populations have evolved to tolerate lactose. Thus, the Paleo diet is not a miracle diet and several of the premises of the Paleo diet are not supported by evidence.

Tip 3:

Dietary supplements – do I need to take any? Many people take dietary supplements, and there are potential interactions between dietary supplements and medications, nutrients and/or foods that may cause adverse effects. If you are taking any, ensure you have discussed this with a health professional. Additional supplements that you should take would only really need to be a vitamin D supplement (10mcg/d during the winter months) as there just isn't enough sunlight during these months for us!

Tip 4:

Alcohol: Moderate alcohol consumption may have health benefits or only slight negative effects when taken in an appropriate manner – i.e. avoiding excessive intake and minimizing risk taking behaviour while drinking. However, when you're doing your training walks try to ensure you are eating properly and drinking rehydrating fluids before you get on the alcoholic beverages!

Tip 5

Dairy: Calcium and protein are two extremely important nutrients in our diet, for bone health, muscle function and muscle growth and repair. So ensure you are eating 2-3 portions of dairy (e.g. glass of semi skimmed milk, a low fat Greek yoghurt etc.). Myth: Full fat milk does not have more calcium in it!

Tip 6:

Is fruit bad for me with all the sugar in it? No. The sugar in fruit is trapped in the cells, therefore when you eat it your body has to work for it and so the sugar is released slowly. This means that fruit juices aren't as good as the whole fruits themselves – as you're lacking the fibre, so sugar is quickly absorbed by your body and will affect your blood sugars. Stick to fresh or frozen ideally for the greatest health benefits, and if you're walking - dried fruit is a great fuel to keep you going.

Tip 7:

How much do I need to eat when walking? Snacking on the walk is a good idea to keep your energy and concentration levels up. The walks will be a prolonged effort you will need to keep energy up. Foods eaten throughout the event should be carbohydrate based and lower in fat for easier digestion. Small amounts of protein can help to avoid hunger. Setting an alarm as a reminder to eat regularly is a useful strategy to avoid 'hitting the wall' (running out of muscle fuel).

At the end of the day ensure you have a fist size portion of protein (eggs, chicken, steak) or vegetarian options include tofu, beans, lentils and nuts, cheese to help your legs recover for the next day.

Tip 8:

Food and Mood: There is a messenger chemical in the brain called serotonin, which improves mood and how we feel. Serotonin is made with a part of protein from the diet (tryptophan), and more of this may get into the brain when carbohydrate-rich foods are eaten. This might explain why people "crave carbs". Therefore not consuming enough carbs can actually cause you to crave them more, and eating diets low in carbs can lead to a low mood.

Tip 9:

Eat more fish: We should be aiming for 2 portions of fish, 1 of which is oily, a week. White fish is a great lean protein, and oily fish such as salmon, mackerel and trout provide the heart healthy omega 3 fats – which can help lower our cholesterol.

Tip 10:

Bowels: If you feel bloated often or have difficult passing stools, or have diarrhoea you can use your diet to help improve these annoying toilet habits! Some people respond well to gradually introducing more fibre in your diet (with alongside enough water) by introducing whole grains, oats, vegetables, fruit and linseeds. They help to soften stools and make it easier to pass. Also if you have the opposite and have loose stools try avoiding sugar free sweets

(although your dentist may say otherwise) and chewing gum can also cause bloating/diarrhoea (look for the foods containing sorbitol, mannitol and xylitol).

Tip 11:

Probiotics: If you've recently been unwell and are in the training for the trails, and have been on antibiotics, probiotics could help you get better quicker and stop the gut upsets associated with taking them too. Probiotics must be taken as soon as you start the antibiotics and continue for at least one week after the end of the course.

Tip 12:

Nutrition and sleep: Intensifying training can cause poorer sleep quality and quantity, which may impact performance. Making sure your diet has a good amount of carbohydrate in it can help, as well as good quality protein, but a high fat diet may cause lower total sleep time. Food containing tryptophan (e.g. turkey and fish) helps to make melatonin, which improves sleep/wake cycles.

Tip 13:

Glycemic index: All carbohydrates are digested by your body at different rates, which then affects your blood sugars. The Glycemic index (GI) is a ranking of how quickly these foods will cause your blood sugars to rise. Choosing a low GI carbohydrate will help your energy levels be maintained at a continuous level and prevent the mid-afternoon drop in energy causing you to go for that biscuit in the afternoon.

Tip 14:

Feel the fat burn. Increase the fat and calorie burning to your walks by using hills and adding in plyometric (resistance) exercises – squats and high knees can all help.

Tip 15:

Fasted walks: Have a low carb dinner and walk before breakfast. Don't do this on every walk, but once a week will help adapt your body to a better fat burner and may increase your body's fat oxidation. But ensure you eat after this otherwise you may end up putting your body into a super stressed mode where it will try and conserve energy as much as it can i.e. "starvation mode".

Tip 16:

Hydration: Walking is lower intensity than running; however, during your walks ensure you keep hydrated. Dehydration can impair concentration and overall performance. It also increases body temperature and heart rate, increasing perception of fatigue. During the walk, fluid should be taken regularly with sports drinks or electrolyte replacement considered in the lead up to, and during the event to ensure walkers are adequately hydrated.