10 Great Snacks for Athletes Jill Parnell PhD

Here are 10 easy to pack and go snacks for athletes. They are all quick to make and have good sources of protein and carbohydrates to refuel you. Many of them even have some fruits and veggies thrown in to help you get those essential vitamins and minerals.

## Yogurt Parfaits

Instructions:

1. Take ½ cup of Greek yogurt, place it in a freezer safe container and top with your favourite fruit. Stick it in the freezer. Consider making several at once so you have a bunch ready to grab and go.
2. When you are ready to leave, grab the yogurt cup and a snack size baggie with granola (see pg 4 for a recipe for healthy homemade granola if you want to make your own).
3. When you are ready to eat, sprinkle the granola on top and dig in. Don’t forget the spoon!

Notes:

\*No need to freeze this snack if you will be eating it within a couple of hours but adding the granola at the last minute will keep it crunchy.

\*\*Greek yogurt will have more protein than regular yogurt but regular works as well. Try to use plain yogurt and add honey to sweeten it as the flavoured ones can be quite sugary.

## Veggies and Hummus

Instructions:

1. Chop up your veggies (carrots, snap peas, zucchini, peppers etc.). Buying the pre-cut ones saves time but can be more expensive.
2. Grab a snack pack of hummus (they make snack size ready to eat packs) or you can divide up a larger container up on your own.

Notes:

\*Consider taking one day a week to take time to chop all of your veggies and place in the

baggies then they will be ready to grab and go.

## Berry Smoothie

Instructions:

1. Place ½ banana, 1 cup blueberries, small handful of spinach, ½ cup orange juice (adjust to get it as thick as you like), ¼ cup plain or vanilla Greek yogurt, and 1 scoop of protein powder (optional) in a blender.
2. Blend it up and enjoy.

## Chocolate Energy Bites adapted from Oh She Glows

Ingredients:

* 1 cup whole raw almonds
* 120 grams pitted Medjool (not honey) dates (about 8)
* 1/2 cup dried cranberries (you can use other dried fruit: raisins, cherries, blueberries)
* ¼ semi-sweet chocolate chips
* ¼ cup raw pecans
* ½ tsp vanilla or almond flavour (optional)
* ¼ tsp sea salt

Instructions

1. In a food processor, process the almonds until finely chopped. It’s ok if some bigger pieces remain. Just be sure not to pulverize it into a flour as you want some texture.
2. Add the pitted dates in (along with the almonds already in the processor) and process until finely chopped and sticky.
3. Add cranberries and process again until combined. The mixture may form into a large ball. If this happens, break it up with a spoon and process more if necessary.
4. Add in the chocolate chips and pecans and process until they are just chopped.
5. Add salt to taste.
6. Roll into small balls (should make 15).
7. Place energy bites in a container or baggie and store in the fridge or freezer.

## Fruit, Veggies and Almond Butter

Instructions:

1. Chop up your fruit and veggies (apples, pears, carrots, and celery work well) and seal in a baggie.
2. Place almond butter in a small container.
3. Dip and enjoy.

Notes

\* Banana’s taste great too, just grab one and peal when you are ready to dip. Peanut butter works as well but almond butter will have more iron and calcium.

## Bagels and Peanut Butter

Instructions: Really no instructions needed.

Notes:

\* If you need an extra energy boost add some honey, fruit spread, or a banana.

## Homemade Granola Bars

Ingredients:

* 1.5 cups mashed ripe banana (about 3 medium/large bananas)
* ¼ honey or maple syrup
* 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
* 2 cups quick cooking rolled oats
* 3/4 cup dried cranberries
* 1/2 cup walnuts, chopped
* 1/2 cup sunflower seeds
* 1/2 cup shelled pumpkin seeds
* 1/2 cup sliced almonds
* ½ cup chocolate chips (optional)
* 1/4 cup hulled hemp seeds
* 1 teaspoon cinnamon
* 1/4 teaspoon sea salt

Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350F. Lightly grease a large rectangular baking dish (approx. 8.5" x 12.5") and line with a piece of parchment paper so the bars are easier to lift out.
2. In a large bowl, mash the banana until smooth. Stir in the vanilla and honey/maple syrup.
3. Stir remaining ingredients into the banana mixture.
4. Spoon mixture into prepared dish. Press down until compacted and smooth out with hands until even.
5. Bake for 23-27 minutes, until firm and lightly golden along the edge.
6. Place dish on a cooling rack.
7. Slice into bars once they are cool.

## Hearty Crackers and Hummus

Instructions:

1. Find a healthy whole grain cracker not to high in salt (read the label!) or make your own. I like these ones <http://www.thekitchn.com/recipe-harvest-crackers-with-cranberries-pecans-amp-rosemary-recipes-from-the-kitchn-197627>
2. Grab one of your snack packs of hummus.
3. Spread and enjoy.

Notes:

\*Almond butter, peanut butter, or the snack packs of canned tuna also work.

## Peanut Butter and Chocolate Smoothie

Instructions:

1. Place 1 banana, 1 TBSP peanut butter, 1 tsp unsweetened cocoa powder, ¼ cup plain or vanilla Greek yogurt, ½ cup milk (adjust to get it as thick as you like) and 1 scoop of protein powder (optional) in a blender.
2. Blend it up and enjoy.

## Veggies and Guacamole

Instructions:

1. Chop up your veggies (carrots, snap peas, zucchini, peppers etc.).
2. Dip in Guacamole (see instructions below)

Ingredients:

* 3 avocados peeled and mashed
* Juice from 1 lime
* 1 tsp salt
* 3 TBSP fresh cilantro
* 2 Roma tomatoes
* 1 pinch cayenne pepper if you like it spicy (optional)

Instructions:

1. Mash it all together in a bowl

Notes:

\*They do make ready to busy snack packs of guacamole if time is an issue. The guacamole doesn’t stay fresh for too long so you need to be ready to eat this sometime near when you make it.

## Homemade Granola (for Parfait above) from Oh She Glows

**Ingredients:**

**Wet:** (See note below)

* 4 tbsp maple syrup
* 1 tbsp honey
* 1 tbsp coconut oil
* 2 tbsp applesauce, unsweetened
* 2 tbsp peanut butter
* 1/3 cup packed brown sugar

**Add-ins:**

* 1/3 cup dried cranberries
* 1/3 cup raisins
* handful pepita seeds

**Dry:**

* 2.5 cups rolled oats (regular not instant)
* 1 cup raw almonds, roughly chopped
* 1/2 cup raw walnuts, roughly chopped
* 1/2 cup raw sunflower seeds
* 1/2 cup raw sesame seeds
* 2 tbsp ground flax
* 2 tbsp sweetened coconut flakes
* 1 tsp ground cinnamon
* Pinch of ground nutmeg
* 3/4 tsp sea salt

**Instructions**:

1. Preheat oven to 300F.
2. In a medium saucepan over medium heat, add the wet ingredients. Stir well. Bring to a boil and then simmer on low for 5-10 minutes, stirring frequently.
3. In a very large mixing bowl, Mix together the dry ingredients. Add the wet mixture (while still warm!) over top the dry mixture and stir well.
4. Spread onto a pan lined with parchment paper or a non-stick mat and bake in the oven for 45 minutes at 300F.
5. Remove the pan from the oven every 15 minutes and give the granola a good stir to ensure even baking.
6. Allow to cool for 20-25 minutes on the pan before serving. The granola will stiffen up as it cools.
7. Makes about 6 cups and will keep for 1 month in the fridge in an air-tight container.