

# What Not to Eat After a Workout

## Steer clear of these foods after workouts to maintain your fitness gains.

Ian Cohen

An intense, calorie-burning workout can do wonders for your physique, but it doesn't give you the [green light](#) to go to town at the nearest Burger King once you're done. If you're serious about building muscle and losing fat, you need to get serious about your post-workout meals.

After an exhausting workout, the body sends a signal to the brain that says something to the effect of "feed me dammit, I'm starving!" In an effort to quickly satisfy that demand, many choose the wrong foods, which are full of the wrong ingredients. While this is a bad move for anyone trying to maintain good health, it's especially harmful after exercising, since it will negate the efforts of your hard training.

To get the biggest bang from your workout buck, it's vital to replenish calories and nutrients with the right combination of [protein](#) and carbs. On the other hand, it's also important to limit calories that come from unhealthy foods loaded with fat and sugar. Avoid eating these types of foods after putting your body through the paces, and chances are good you'll achieve your fitness and [weight loss](#) goals much faster.

## Savory Sins

### Raw Vegetables

It might seem shocking that raw vegetables are a no-no after a workout, but on their own, they're just not enough. Carrots, celery bell peppers, and broccoli might be great as a healthy, low-fat, party snack, but as a post-workout recovery food, forgetaboutit. These minimal calorie foods just aren't substantial enough to help you restore energy and maintain a healthy metabolic rate. Make them more substantial by combining them with healthy, protein-packed dips like yogurt dip, nut butters or hummus. Stay away from fatty cream dips.

### High Fat, Fast Food

French fries, cheeseburgers, chili-dogs and nachos sound like a worthy cheat and may satisfy the spikes in your appetite after a tough workout, but they can also wipe out the fitness progress you made while exercising. All that fat slows down digestion, which is the exact opposite of what you want to happen after working up a sweat. The goal after exercise is to replenish your body's glycogen and reduce, not add to, the amount of fat your body stores.

### Salty Snacks

Downing salty snacks like potato chips and pretzels can lower your levels of potassium, which is of greater importance to your recovery phase than salt. Potassium, a mineral essential to your body for cell function, is a more important electrolyte than sodium. Because your body loses electrolytes during a workout, the last thing you need is to deplete more potassium with a salty chip binge.

## **Bacon**

This breakfast treat is actually OK in moderation, but only if you eat it at the start of your day when it can prepare you to burn calories throughout the day, not at the end of your workout. That's because it's slow to metabolize after a high-octane, calorie-burning workout, and will slow down the metabolism spike you got from exercising. If you want a protein fix, go for eggs instead.

## **Pizza**

Sorry, but this food favorite is another no-go for an after-workout meal, especially if topped with fatty sausage or pepperoni. Dripping with grease, just one slice can instantly cancel out the gains made during your sweat soaked routine. Opt for a whole-wheat English muffin with cheese if you're craving a cheesy snack.

## **Sugary Offenders**

### **Soda and Fruit Drinks**

Yeah you're thirsty, but whatever you do, don't replenish lost fluids with sweetened beverages—including sugary sports drinks. Whether it's soda, or fructose filled fruit juices, downing sugary drinks after intense exercise is counterproductive for anyone seeking to lose weight, due to the slowing effect on the metabolism. Reach for sports drinks only if your workout required you to sweat profusely to replace the electrolytes you lost. But to quench your thirst, rehydrate and replenish electrolytes, go with plain water and eat a potassium-rich banana.

### **Milk Chocolate**

High in sugar and calories, milk chocolate offers virtually nothing of what you need in order to recharge after training. The negative effects to your fitness results are far more damaging than the brief burst of energy you may get from scarfing down a Snickers bar. Dark chocolate (at least 70% cacao), however, has healthy [antioxidants](#) that fight free radicals and act as anti-inflammatories, which can help you recover post-workout. Just be sure to consume it in moderation.

### **Doughnuts and Pastries**

Yes, you need carbs to replace the muscle fuel (glycogen) lost after a vigorous workout, but not artery clogging ones like these nutrient deprived, mega-fat carriers. Better carb options after a workout would be a bagel or whole wheat toast with peanut butter or fruit preserves.