

# Athlete Nutrition Problems, Needs, and Goals

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## Common Problems

- Poor knowledge of foods and inadequate cooking skills
- Poor or outdated knowledge of sports nutrition
- Lack of access to dietitians, nutrition professionals, or other credible resources
- Inadequate finances
- Busy lifestyle leading to inadequate time to obtain or consume appropriate foods
- Dangerous strategies to “make weight”
- Poor availability of good food choices
- Frequent travel
- Indiscriminate use of supplements or failure to use evidence-based supplements and sports foods in the appropriate way
- Sport-specific limitations

## Common Needs

- Biological determination of nutrient inadequacy (iron-deficiency anemia, cortisol, etc.)
- Assessment of nutritionally related conditions (food allergies, food intolerances, GI issues, diabetes, stress fractures, etc.)
- Nonburdensome assessment of nutrient intake (RED-S and WIDEB determinations to lower illness and performance risks)
- Establishment of integrated exercise and nutrition strategy (performance enhancement or injury recovery)
- Satisfaction of all nutritional needs (before, during, and after event) to optimize training benefit and performance

## Common Goals

- Sufficient fuel of the *right kind*, in the *right amount*, and at the *right time* to train and perform at the elite level
- Achieve optimum benefits from the training program
- Improve recovery between workouts and between events
- Achievement and maintenance of an ideal body mass and physique
- Reduced risk of injury, overtraining, fatigue, and illness
- Confidence in being well prepared to face competition
- Consistency in achieving high-level competition performances
- Enjoyment of food and social eating occasions at home and during travel

SOURCES: Nutrition Working Group of the Medical and Scientific Commission of the International Olympic Committee, *Nutrition for Athletes: A Practical Guide to Eating for Health and Performance*, Revised and Updated June 2016; R. Reale, G. Slater, and L.M. Burke, “Individualized Dietary Strategies for Olympic Combat Sports: Acute Weight Loss, Recovery and Competition Nutrition,” *European Journal of Sport Science* 17, no. 6 (2017): 727-740.

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