

FOOTBALL

EATING FOR YOUR SPORT



Your sport:

Football is a team sport widely enjoyed at both recreational and professional levels. According to FIFA, the international governing organisation, football, also known as soccer, footy or futbol is considered to be the most popular sport in the world with over 240 million people from more than 200 countries regularly playing.

Typically, football is played between two teams of eleven players, although recreationally, teams of 7 or 5 a side do exist. In general play, the goalkeepers are the only players allowed to use their hands or arms to propel the ball. The rest of the team usually use their feet to kick the ball into position, occasionally using their torso or head to intercept a ball in midair. The team that scores the most goals by the end of the match wins. If the score is tied at the end of the game, either a draw is declared, or the game goes into extra time and/or a penalty shootout, depending on the format of the competition.

A standard adult football match consists of two halves of 45 minutes each. Each half runs continuously, meaning that the clock is not stopped when the ball is out of play. There is usually a 15 minute half-time break between halves.

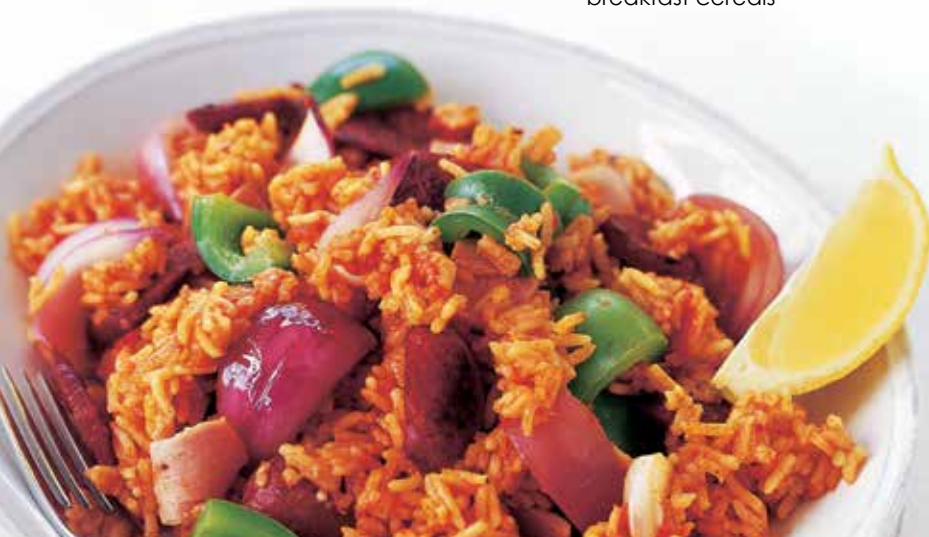
Most professional football is played by male only teams, but increasingly women's football is becoming recognised with competitions like the FIFA Women's World Cup. Football is also an Olympic sport and has been included since 1900.

As with many other team sports, the nutritional demands for football players vary depending on the position played. However, all players rely heavily on the aerobic energy system and require a diet rich in carbohydrate to provide fuel for training and recovery. Adequate protein intake and a diet low in fat also help achieve optimal body composition. This Nutrition Advice Sheet is aimed for those who compete and train at a recreational level. Elite players require different nutritional pre and post training and /or competition strategies.

TRAINING DIET:

Football is a highly physical sport requiring a varied and balanced, carbohydrate rich diet. Players should aim to include:

- Fruits and vegetables – aim for a variety of colours
- Breads and cereals - Pasta, rice, low fat noodles, starchy vegetables (e.g. kumara, potato), bread, oats, breakfast cereals
- Dairy products – choose reduced fat varieties including milk, yoghurt and cheese
- Protein rich foods – including lean meat, poultry (e.g. chicken), fish/ seafood, eggs, tofu and pulses
- Healthy fats including vegetable oils, nuts, seeds and avocado



CARBOHYDRATE

Football players require a carbohydrate rich diet to provide adequate fuel for training and recovery. Basing meals and snacks on healthy carbohydrate rich foods is ideal. This includes oats, grainy breads and crackers, pasta, rice, low fat noodles and starchy vegetables like potato and kumara.

During intense training sessions or games, additional carbohydrate can be helpful to provide extra fuel. Sports drinks may

be useful to top up carbohydrate at this time, particularly in hot conditions when sweat and fluid losses are likely to be high. To promote recovery after training or competition, aim to have some carbohydrates immediately, some examples include sports drinks, jelly lollies, glucose drinks, ripe bananas, pikelets, crumpets or a white roll with jam or honey.

Low carbohydrate diets are not suitable for footballers and can impact on performance and health. Carbohydrate intake should be tailored to your individual's requirements and weight goals. A Sports Dietitian or Accredited Sports Nutritionist can provide further guidance.

PROTEIN

Protein is essential for building muscle and assisting with recovery after training.* Including protein in all meals and most snacks can help meet protein needs. This includes lean meats, fish, chicken, eggs, pulses (e.g. chickpeas, kidney beans, lentils, and baked beans), nuts and dairy products. It is especially important to include some protein in the meal or snack eaten after training as this will assist with rapid muscle repair and recovery. Liquid breakfast drinks and smoothies made with low fat milk, yoghurt and fruit, creamed rice, or cereal with low fat milk or yoghurt are all good options.

FAT

For all football players it is important to include some healthy fats each day including avocado, nuts, seeds, oily fish and vegetable oils. The amount of these fats that are needed will depend on your individual weight goals and energy requirements (i.e. how many calories/ kJs you need each day). For all athletes, unhealthy fats should be avoided as much as possible. This includes the skin on chicken, white fat on meat, butter and fat often used in cakes, biscuits and many takeaways.

FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

Fruit and vegetables are essential for good health and performance and should be included at every main meal. Eating a wide range of fresh, frozen, dried and canned varieties will help players meet their nutrient and antioxidant requirements, and is convenient, tasty and affordable. Adding vegetables into cooking or fruit to your meals is also a great way to boost your fibre, vitamin and mineral intake. Try slicing a banana or pear onto breakfast cereal; adding dried fruit to salad; or incorporating grated carrot and courgette into mince recipes.

KEY COMPETITION FOODS

- ✓ Fruit
- ✓ Low fat yoghurt
- ✓ Breakfast cereal
- ✓ Rice, pasta or noodle dishes
- ✓ Fruit bread, toast, English muffins
- ✓ Creamed rice
- ✓ Sandwiches, filled rolls
- ✓ Fruit bars, muesli bars, breakfast bars
- ✓ Liquid breakfast drinks
- ✓ Smoothies
- ✓ MILO with low fat milk
- ✓ Pancakes
- ✓ Water, sports drink



A SAMPLE ONE DAY MEAL PLAN FOR A FOOTBALLER

BREAKFAST:

- Natural muesli with fresh or canned fruit and low fat milk/yoghurt OR
- Wholegrain toast with poached eggs, tomato and spinach and a glass of fruit juice OR
- Hot oats and a piece of fruit or juice and low fat yoghurt

If travelling, pack a combination of fresh fruit, milk drinks, fruit juice cartons, low fat yoghurt, cereal bars and sandwiches

MORNING TEA:

- Dried fruit and raw nuts OR
- Wholegrain crackers with cottage cheese, tuna or hummus and a tomato OR
- Yoghurt and fresh fruit OR
- MILO with low fat milk plus a piece of fruit

LUNCH:

- Wholegrain bread rolls or wrap filled with hummus, lean meat/canned fish in springwater and salad ingredients OR
 - Pasta/rice with tuna and vegetables OR
 - Healthy Burritos or sushi
- Add a piece of fruit and/or yoghurt to each option

PRE AFTERNOON TRAINING:

Good snacks prior to training may include sandwiches, fruit toast with peanut butter and jam, dairy snacks, smoothies, cereal bars or fruit.

DURING/AFTER TRAINING

Have a bottle of water on hand. You may need a sports drink if training for over 60-90 minutes. After intense training consume some carbohydrate immediately e.g. sports drink, jelly lollies, pikelet, crumpet, white bread roll, ripe banana. To improve recovery it is recommended to consume some protein about 20 minutes after finishing training e.g. pottle of low fat yoghurt, glass of milk, milk based smoothie

DINNER:

- Lean meat or chicken and vegetables with pasta and tomato-based sauce OR
- Steamed or grilled fish with homemade wedges and salad OR
- Lean meat or chicken and vegetable stir-fry with rice or noodles OR
- Lean steak, potatoes and vegetables or salad

SUPPER:

- Milk-based pudding and fruit OR
- Fresh fruit and yoghurt OR
- Toasted fruit bread with a low fat topping

NUTRITION PROFILE: HAYLEY MOORWOOD

Why do you think nutrition is important for your sport?

The training schedule of an elite footballer ranges from 3-5 hours a day, and can consist of playing up to 3 games in 5 days during competitive tournaments. It is important that footballers have a healthy balance of carbohydrate, protein, healthy fat, fruit and vegetables to ensure peak performance. The right nutrition is essential for footballers, as an excessive amount of energy is burned in training and every game.

What are some healthy and tasty foods you recommend?

I recommend pasta. I love pasta, so I try to mix it up and try new things. Some quick and easy meals I like are spaghetti bolognese, chicken fettuccini and spaghetti marinara. The pasta provides me with the carbohydrate I need, and the extra additions provide me with the protein and fats that are also important.



KEY FOODS FOR A FOOTBALL PLAYERS FRIDGE/FREEZER

- ✓ Fresh vegetables – the more variety the better
- ✓ Frozen fruit and vegetables
- ✓ Lean meats/poultry – beef, lamb, chicken, trim pork, low fat ham
- ✓ Fresh and frozen fish
- ✓ Eggs
- ✓ Trim milk and low fat yoghurt
- ✓ Reduced fat cheese e.g. Edam, cottage
- ✓ Canola/Olive/Rice bran spread

NUTRITIONIST'S NOTE

This meal is a general example only. It should be altered to suit individual energy requirements depending on age, gender and training load. For those who train at an elite level and/or twice or more a day additional pre training snacks and post training recovery food/drinks will be required. Contact a Sports Dietitian for guidance.

KEY FOODS FOR A FOOTBALL PLAYERS PANTRY

- ✓ Pasta, rice, noodles
- ✓ Bread – preferably wholegrain
- ✓ UNCLE TOBYS Rolled Oats
- ✓ Canned spaghetti and beans
- ✓ Canned creamed rice
- ✓ Wholegrain crackers, rice crackers
- ✓ Cereal bars
- ✓ MILO Energy Food Drink
- ✓ Canned salmon and tuna
- ✓ Canned pasta sauce, tomatoes, tomato puree
- ✓ CARNATION Light & Creamy Evaporated Milk
- ✓ Sauces and condiments e.g. sweet chilli, BBQ, mustard, relish
- ✓ Vegetable oil/spray
- ✓ Herbs and spices
- ✓ Spreads e.g. honey, jam, peanut butter (low salt & sugar)
- ✓ Canned and dried fruit

COMPETITION DAY EATING

Well-planned game day nutrition can help players running further and faster in the second half of a match. It also helps players to maintain skills and judgment when they would otherwise become fatigued. Depletion of fuel stores can become an issue when playing for longer than 60 minutes, especially for players in mobile positions or with a running game style. Foods and drinks consumed in the hours before an event play a role in fine-tuning competition preparation. The pre-event menu should include carbohydrate-rich foods and drinks. Timing of the pre-game meal is important to allow for digestion to occur:

Early afternoon game – Have a normal breakfast followed by a light pre-game snack/meal 2 hours before the match.

Mid-afternoon game – Have a normal breakfast followed by a pre-game meal 3-4 hours before the match, and a light snack 1 hour prior.

Evening game – Have a normal breakfast, morning tea and lunch followed by a pre-game meal 3-4 hours before the match, and a light snack 1 hour prior.

Have water, low fat milk drinks or a sports drink at regular intervals and practice all

food plans in training sessions to figure out what your stomach can or cannot tolerate, as the size and composition of the pre-event meal may need to be modified if you commonly have gut issues/pain before or during a completion.

During a game it is important to top-up fluid levels and carbohydrate to minimise fatigue and assist with concentration. Aim to drink small amounts regularly whenever breaks in play permit and use half-time to catch up with fluid intake. Drinking some sports drink as well as water will help with fluid intake and also help to top-up carbohydrate levels.

Poor recovery after a game can lead to decreased energy during the following week of training and can slow down repair of injury. Re-hydrating and eating carbohydrate rich foods as soon as possible after a game will increase the rate of your recovery.

SPECIAL ISSUES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR FOOTBALL:

- Recovery – aim to eat your next meal as soon as possible after training, and if this is not practical a snack becomes important to start the recovery process. Sports drinks, sport bars, fruit, rice crackers, yoghurt or MILO with low fat milk, creamed rice, sandwiches or baked fruit bars are all good options.
- High fluid losses – with intense training and fast game play, dehydration can

become a big issue. Try to keep well hydrated at all times, bringing water to all training sessions and games and footballers may also find sports drinks beneficial.

- Periods of inactivity, such as the off-season or a break due to injury, are often a time of significant gain in body fat. If this is an issue for you, target excess sources of 'empty' energy (i.e. foods which provide calories/kJs but few nutrients) yet still maintain an adequate intake of nutrient-dense carbohydrate and lean protein. Key areas to consider include alcohol, high fat foods and refined carbohydrate like those found in cakes, biscuits, lollies and soft drinks. It may also be necessary to reduce the size of meals and reconsider the number of snacks consumed.
- In football, alcohol is often a large part of post-game activities. Drinking alcohol to excess can compromise recovery, slow repair of injury and contribute to excess weight gain. If you are old enough to drink alcohol, concentrate on rehydrating and refuelling with carbohydrate rich foods and fluids before having any alcoholic drinks. Alcohol is best avoided after exercise as it can delay recovery.

* Stuart M Phillips et al. (2011). Dietary protein for athletes: From requirements to optimum adaptation. *Journal of Sport Sciences*, 29(s1): S29-S38

**Louise Burke et al, 2011. Carbohydrates for training and competition, *Journal of Sports Sciences*

THAI-STYLE FISH CAKES

Serves 4

- 1 pkt MAGGI Mash Creamy Potato
- 210g can pink salmon, drained and mashed
- 1/2 cup chopped spring onion
- 1 tsp crushed fresh ginger
- 1 bunch coriander leaves and stalks, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup wholemeal breadcrumbs

ANALYSIS	per serve
Energy [kJ]	1741
Carbohydrate [g]	40
Protein [g]	36
Fat [g]	12

- Preheat oven to 200°C.
- Make MAGGI Mash according to packet directions, but use only 1 1/2 cups boiling water.
- Add salmon, spring onion, ginger and coriander. Mix well to combine. Shape into 8 equal-sized cakes and press into wholemeal breadcrumbs.
- Arrange cakes on a baking tray lined with baking paper and bake for 20 minutes, turning once to brown both sides.
- Serve with sweet chilli sauce and reduced fat sour cream if desired.



This recipe is from the *Fit Food Fast* cookbook. For more recipes visit www.tastyrecipes.co.nz.

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For more information and to obtain further copies of any of the *Eating for Your Sport* Nutrition Advice sheets, visit www.nutrition.nestle.co.nz or www.mish.org.nz

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