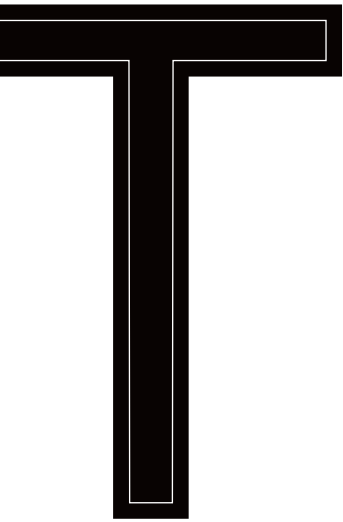


The secret to losing weight and riding better begins with a practice so simple and so easy that you may be overlooking it—**eating the right breakfast.**

by Julie Upton, R.D.
photographed by Thomas MacDonald



THE LONG BURN
This breakfast has the right blend of carbs and fat to effectively fuel a long morning ride.
FOR RECIPE SEE PAGE 57



The fact is drilled into the brain of every kid in America, as sure as state capitals and the Pledge of Allegiance: Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Simply put, our bodies cannot function without regular nourishment. If it has been nine to 12 hours since your last meal, your body has gone into starvation mode: Your blood-sugar levels, not to mention your muscle and liver carbohydrate stores, have dropped. Your metabolic rate has slowed. We won't belabor the old gas-in-the-tank metaphor, but without morning calories your brain won't work well and your morning ride will feel harder and burn fewer calories, plus the intensity or duration—or both—will suffer. Plenty of scientific studies show that breakfast provides many physical and mental benefits, yet nearly one in six Americans skips it altogether.

If you're still not convinced to fuel up as you start your day, consider this: A growing body of research shows that people who eat a healthy breakfast are thinner. Period. Nearly 80 percent of successful dieters eat breakfast every day, and only 4 percent report skipping it regularly, according to the National Weight Control Registry, a research group that tracks nearly 5,000 people who have lost at least 30 pounds and kept them off for at least one year. Scientists believe that the breakfast-weight loss connection has to do with appetite control. "If you skip breakfast, your appetite may regulate upward, so that you end up overeating the rest of the day," says Mark Pereira, Ph.D., a professor at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis-St. Paul who has researched the health benefits of breakfast. "Even though you skipped a meal, you'll end up eating too many calories."

Routine breakfast eaters also tend to have a lower Body Mass Index (BMI), the height-weight measure used to determine whether a person is healthy, overweight or obese. What you eat also appears to be related to body weight: Some studies have found that people who ate breakfasts of ready-to-eat cereal, hot cereal or quick breads had significantly lower BMIs than those who ate meat-and-egg breakfasts, or skipped breakfast altogether.

Fast First Meals

Variety, speed and ease are all important to a successful breakfast. These quick-menu ideas provide plenty of carbohydrates, lean protein and healthy fats to help you keep the pounds off and fuel your daily exercise.

- n **Multigrain bagel with low-fat cream cheese, sliced melon, a glass of skim milk, and 100 percent fruit juice or sports drink**
- n **One to two cups of ready-to-eat, low-sugar cereal with skim milk, ½ cup of berries or one small banana, and juice or sports drink**
- n **Fresh fruit salad, two slices of whole-wheat toast spread with almond butter, a glass of milk, and fruit juice or sports drink**
- n **One cup of granola or muesli topped with nonfat or low-fat yogurt and berries, and fruit juice or sports drink**
- n **One or two whole-grain English muffins spread with whole-fruit jam, a handful of whole almonds or trail mix and a bottled low-fat yogurt smoothie**

Of course, the benefits don't stop there. Breakfast eaters tend to consume larger amounts of dietary fiber, as well as many key nutrients, such as B vitamins and calcium. One recent Michigan State University study found that average calcium intake at breakfast was seven times greater when milk and cereal were on the menu. Many studies have also examined the influence of both breakfast frequency and quality on risk for cardiovascular disease, and research indicates that consuming whole grains

Continued on p. 59

4 MORE WINNING HABITS OF BIG LOSERS

Those successful at shedding at least 30 pounds—and keeping them off—do more than just eat breakfast regularly, according to the National Weight Control Registry (NWCR). Here are other behaviors that can help you lose weight, too.

CRUNCH THE NUMBERS. Read labels, be mindful of the number of calories in food, and actively monitor and limit your daily intake to be sure that you're burning at least as many calories as you take in. Simple inattention leads to mindless eating.

GO LOW-FAT, NOT LOW-CARB. No matter how they initially lost weight, NWCR members reported that they kept the weight off by limiting fat, not carbohydrates, in their daily diets.

EXERCISE AT LEAST ONE HOUR A DAY. You've probably got this one covered.

STEP ON THE SCALE. Those who maintain their weight use the scale at least once a week, and they take action as soon as they notice the number tipping north.—J.U.



HIGH-INTENSITY FUEL
Short, hard rides require the healthy, fast-acting carbs in this breakfast to speed energy to working muscles.
FOR RECIPE SEE PAGE 57

People who eat a healthy breakfast are thinner. Period. Nearly 80 percent of successful dieters eat the morning meal every day.

Eating slow-burning carbohydrates at breakfast has been shown to improve concentration, reaction time, mood and memory.



FOR EVENING RIDES OR DAYS OFF

An everyday breakfast should stick with you to keep your appetite in check all day.

FOR RECIPE SEE PAGE 57

Your Best-Bet Breakfasts*

THE LONG BURN



WHAT: For endurance rides (three hours or more) of lower intensity, eat a broader spectrum of foods. The meal can include a higher percentage of calories from fat and protein. Eggs, waffles, French toast, pancakes and peanut butter are all good options. **WHY:** Adding fat and protein will make the meal more filling and provide nutri-

tional balance. **WHAT ELSE:** On long rides, eat and drink on a schedule to ensure you stay fueled and hydrated. For an easy reminder, set a watch alarm to go off every 15 or 20 minutes, then take a sip or nibble.

3 WHOLE-WHEAT PANCAKES (4-inch diameter)

- n With 2 tsp. of margarine and 2 tbsp. of maple syrup
- n ½ cup of fresh berries
- n 8 oz. 100 percent fruit juice (no added sugar)
- n Coffee or tea, as desired

495 calories; 9g protein; 83g carbohydrate; 15g fat

HIGH-INTENSITY FUEL



WHAT: An easy-to-digest, carb-heavy breakfast with some lean protein for shorter (up to two hours), fast rides. **WHY:** Liquids such as smoothies are easy to consume first thing in the morning, even for those with sensitive stomachs. This menu is low in fat, which slows digestion, because the goal here is to supply glucose to muscles quickly.

WHAT ELSE: To speed recovery postride, have a minimeal of 150 to 200 calories that contains carbs and protein, such as a container of yogurt with two tablespoons of granola.

FRUIT SMOOTHIE

- n In blender, combine ½ cup of low-fat plain yogurt, ½ cup of orange juice or plain or vanilla soymilk with ½ banana and ½ cup of strawberries; add ice and honey as desired
- n 1 slice toast with 2 tsp. jam or jelly
- n 8 oz. sports drink, coffee or tea, as desired

425 calories; 10g protein; 92g carbohydrate; 3.5g fat

FOR EVENING RIDES OR DAYS OFF



WHAT: When you're riding later in the day, you need a breakfast that will go the distance. Eat junk in the morning, and you won't have energy in the afternoon. **WHY:** Oatmeal is one of the most satisfying foods you can eat. Its long-lasting energy keeps your blood-sugar levels in control until lunchtime.

WHAT ELSE: If you need a mid-morning snack, eat

a piece of fruit, which provides fiber, and carbs for energy.

1½ CUPS OATMEAL

- n With 2 tbsp. of raisins, 2 tsp. of brown sugar and 2 tbs. of nonfat plain yogurt or ½ cup of skim milk
- n 1 egg, scrambled
- n ½ English muffin, toasted
- n Coffee or tea, as desired

440 calories; 22g protein; 70g carbohydrate; 9g fat

RECOVER RIGHT



WHAT: This protein-focused meal is ideal for the day after you've completed a race, century or other epic ride. **WHY:** Protein provides the essential amino acids that are the building blocks of muscle protein, and will help repair the micro-tears in your muscles that occur when you pound the pedals. **WHAT ELSE:** Antioxidants also speed

recovery. Some of the best sources: berries, nuts, herbs and spices, coffee, tea and red wine.

3 SCRAMBLED EGGS (one whole egg with two egg whites)

- n 1 English muffin with 2 tsp. of jam or jelly and 2 tsp. of margarine
- n 8 oz. of 100 percent fruit juice (no added sugar)
- n Coffee or tea, as desired

500 calories; 24g protein; 63g carbohydrate; 15g fat

One recent study of female runners suggested that eating a slow-burning, low-glycemic breakfast resulted in an increased rate of fat burning.



Continued from p. 54

for breakfast offers benefits—such as fiber, antioxidants and other phytochemicals—that help decrease heart-disease risk factors.

What to eat? First, include carbs to jump-start your mind. The brain's only source of energy is glucose, which is supplied by carbohydrate. (The boost that energy gels provide during exercise results more from their effect on the brain and nervous system than on muscles.) Upon waking, your glucose levels are depressed and should be replenished with some low-glycemic, or slow-burning, carbohydrates such as whole grains, which have been shown to improve concentration, reaction time, mood and memory. Slow-burning carbs also make you feel full and control blood sugar, though research is less conclusive when it comes to performance. While most studies have found no differences in the effect of high-glycemic pre-exercise meals, such as an energy bar and sports drink, versus low-glycemic, one recent study suggested that, among female runners, a low-glycemic breakfast resulted in an increased rate of fat burning and a sparing of carbohydrate.

The American College of Sports

Nervous Stomach?

Some people cannot eat breakfast before a race or big ride, no matter how important they know it is to fuel up. "Try having breakfast right before bedtime, or wake up in the early hours to eat something, then go back to bed," says sports nutritionist Nancy Clark, R.D., author of *Cyclist's Food Guide: Fueling for the Distance*. "These strategies will help maintain a normal blood-sugar level and allow you to still function reasonably well in the morning."

Medicine and the American Dietetic Association recommend a high-carb, 400- to 500-calorie meal two to three hours before exercise. Remember the two-to-two rule: Eat two grams of carbohydrate per kilogram of body weight two hours prior to exercise. Even if you're not a morning exerciser, you need to eat breakfast, but you don't need to aim for a specific amount of carbohydrate in your a.m. meal.

The Best-Bet Breakfasts on page 57 allow you to tailor your breakfast to the duration, intensity and timing of your ride for maximum performance and recovery. Experiment with a variety of breakfasts to find which ones work best for you. Ⓢ

Julie Upton, a registered dietitian and avid cyclist, splits her time between New York City and Tiburon, California.

RECOVER RIGHT
Muscle-mending protein speeds recovery after a hard ride or race, and will have you hammering again in no time.
FOR RECIPE SEE PAGE 57

WHOSE BREAKFAST IS THIS?

You'd be hard-pressed to find a top cyclist who skips the morning meal. We spoke with several to learn what fuels them right. Match the pro with his or her preride breakfast.

| | |
|--|---|
| A Adam Craig, Team Giant MTB champ | 1 Heaping bowl of oatmeal with dried fruit and a cup of green tea |
| B Jeff Louder, Health Net Pro Cycling | 2 Eggs, toast, a "hippie" cereal (i.e. Kashi, Peace, Optimum) and coffee with half & half |
| C Dave Zabriskie, Team CSC | 3 Two bowls of Special K cereal, 2 slices whole-wheat toast with raspberry jam and French press coffee |
| D Levi Leipheimer, Discovery Channel | 4 Cereal, yogurt, eggs and coffee |
| E Kristin Armstrong, Team Lipton | 5 Quaker Old Fashioned oatmeal with golden raisins and a banana, plus hot black tea |
| F Kelli Emmett, Team Giant MTBer | 6 Muesli with soymilk, 2 breakfast burritos (eggs, whole-grain tortillas, veggies) with fresh pico de gallo on top |

Answers: A-6; B-2; C-4; D-1; E-5; F-3