

Nutrition Tips for Running Long ***by Rachael Verry - Hammer Nutrition NZ***

Longer distance runners often train really diligently but are let down by missing just a few key basics of nutrition. Or the plan they used for a 2 hour race simply won't see them through those longer events in good shape. Even if you are an experienced ultra runner, there are probably a few simple changes you can make to your nutrition plan in training and on race day that will improve your race day experience.

Fluid

Most people seem to be able to comfortably consume and absorb 300-500ml fluid per hour. Runners of smaller stature need less than larger athletes, and weather conditions are also an important factor. The longer we go, the less forgiving the body is if we get our fluid intake wrong, and I'm sure most of us have experienced dehydration and the nasty feeling that goes with it, at some stage in our athletic endeavours. That said, it is also important not to consume too much fluid as this can be equally as dangerous. In most usual NZ weather conditions, consuming more than 750ml per hour should NOT be necessary. It's not only important how much fluid we consume, but also what it is that we are consuming. We strongly recommend that you have fluid that doesn't contain calories eg water with an Endurolytes Fizz per 750ml, as often your stomach will need a rest from calories but still needs to keep the fluids coming in. If you have sports drink mixed into your fluids, then you are unable to do this. If you like your water unflavoured, then use plain water and take a couple of Endurolyte capsules per hour.

Fuel

We recommend Perpetuem as the main fuel of choice for endurance events where the heart rate is mostly expected to be below 75% MRH and run time will exceed 3 hours. And while you need to experiment in training, we find most people only need ½ - 1 scoops or 1-3 Perpetuem Solids per hour to fulfil ALL their calorie needs.

Perpetuem differs from the traditional gels and sports drink in that it contains a little protein which helps reduce muscle soreness, and a little fat, which will help you to feel full. It is an economical option for fueling, both in terms of cost and weight that needs to be carried - your fuel for most events will fit into a couple of flasks carried in your pocket. But don't then start adding in bars, bananas, fruit cake etc or you will find yourself well and truly overfed. If you prefer to use gels then 1-3 per hour, depending on your size should be sufficient.

We strongly recommend that you stay away from products that contain a lot of simple sugar ie those ending in -ose: sucrose, fructose, glucose. In simple terms, we can consume them faster than we can absorb them and their use increases your chance of the dreaded stomach distress. It's like trying to run after eating a couple of bars of chocolate! Sugars will also give you highs and lows, not something you want during an endurance event and your teeth are also going to be much much happier if they aren't being constantly bathed in sugar and the accompanying citric acid. If you are going to hit the trusty coke in the last hour or so of your event, then make sure you have practised this in training, and don't consume too much!

Electrolytes and Cramping

Cramp seems to be the biggest limiting factor for many athletes. It is incredibly frustrating if you have trained well, are primed for a great race, then it all falls apart. So what can you do to minimise the chances of cramp? It's an article all on its own but here are a few pointers to start with.

- *Correct fluid intake.* See above.
- *Specificity of training.* If you usually train at x intensity then come race day you are running at y intensity then chances are you going to have some issues. Include some intensity in your training that simulates what you experience in racing. Make sure that your training terrain replicates as best as possible what you will experience on race day. Doing all your training on road, then doing an event that's off road is likely to be asking for trouble.
- *Correct caloric intake.* See above.
- *Insufficient electrolytes.* Electrolyte requirements differ significantly between individuals so it can be tricky to judge. We recommend taking a couple of Endurolytes per hour or put an Endurolytes Fizz in each water bottle. Always carry extra Endurolyte capsules on long training sessions and during races.
- *Too much simple sugar.* See above.
- *Keep your muscles in good order.* Knots in calves and tight quads aren't going to help you not to cramp. Find yourself a good massage therapist and treat those legs to a rub, or do them yourself.
- *Get your spine checked.* I learnt this one from Lucy-May Holtzhausen who was the doctor at Ironman NZ when I was working there as part of the massage team. Sometimes cramp is due to nerve impingement in the neck and/or spine. If you have ongoing issues with cramp in spite of addressing the above issues then chances are a few well placed adjustments could be your missing link.

Always ensure that you test out your nutrition plan in training, including some testing at race pace intensity.

We recommend that you read the article [15 Simple Ways to Improve Your Performance](#) which you will find in the articles section on our website as this will explain some of the rationale behind the above suggestions.

And if you have any questions or need further assistance, please don't hesitate to contact us info@hammergel.co.nz or tel toll free 0508 284 538.

Nutrition Plan

No breakfast unless you can eat three hours before the start - yes really! Read the articles on the website for further info. About 30mins before the start, take 2 Endurolyte capsules. About 10mins before the start, take a gel with some water.

We recommend that you aim to work out how little you can go well on, not how much you can consume! This is why we tend to fuel you at what should be a little on the low side to start, but suggest you always take a few extra gels with you in case you run low.

For the Run

Hammer Gel - 1.5 - 2 per hour **OR**

Perpetuem - 3/4 or up to 1 scoop per hour (Perpetuem is our recommended fuel for training and events exceeding around 2 hours)

Water - 300-500ml per hour

Endurolytes capsules - 1-2 per hour. If it is hot or you are prone to cramping, you may need a higher dosage.

Anti Fatigue capsules - 1 per hour.

Notes

Fluid

Aim 300-500ml per hour - this is for most people 4-5 BIG swallows every 20mins. Add 1 Endurolytes Fizz tablet to each 750ml or if you prefer plain water, take 1-2 Endurolytes per hour.

- If you start to feel nauseous this usually means you have consumed too many calories. Reduce or stop your fuel intake for a while until you feel ok (but keep your fluid intake going). Sometimes incorrect fluid intake can also make you feel unwell so check and see if you are about on target.
- Cramping - assuming that you are running at a level appropriate for which you have trained, check fluid intake. Too much or too little can cause cramping. Take a couple of Endurolytes. You can increase Endurolytes up to 6 per hour if necessary.
- If conditions are warm, you may find you need less calories and more fluid. If you feel scratchy, chances are you are due to eat, drink or take an Endurolyte.

Post ride/training, take two scoops of **Recoverite** in a bottle of water.

This is a basic plan and you need to test it in training, including at simulated race pace. Don't be afraid to deviate a bit from these recommendations if necessary, but we would caution about increasing your caloric intake much above what we have suggested.

Perpetuem Mixing Instructions

We suggest that you mix your Perpetuem into a pancake batter consistency and carry it in flasks so that your bottles are free for fluids. To make a three hour flask assuming 1 scoop of Perpetuem per hour, put 3 scoops of Perpetuem into a dry bottle, then fill a Hammer flask to the 3 serving mark with water. Add this water to the bottle containing the Perpetuem, put the lid on and shake vigorously. Pour the mixture back into the flasks. If the weather is going to be hot, make it the night before and freeze it.