

## Lifestyle Choices: Athletes



Athletes

Athletes require different food and energy intakes to encourage and support a healthy and long life. Since they have active daily lives, they need different food from those who lead more sedentary lives, as they use more energy.

The quality and quantity of food eaten makes a great difference in the way an athlete can train and compete. Good nutrition is important to develop a strong body and energy has to be stored for endurance. Special attention to nutrition will ensure that you get the best from the activities of your choice, and maximum benefits over the long term.

## Lifestyle choices

Different lifestyles require different food and energy intakes to encourage and support a healthy and long life. People with very active daily lives need different foods from those who lead more sedentary lives, as they expend more energy.

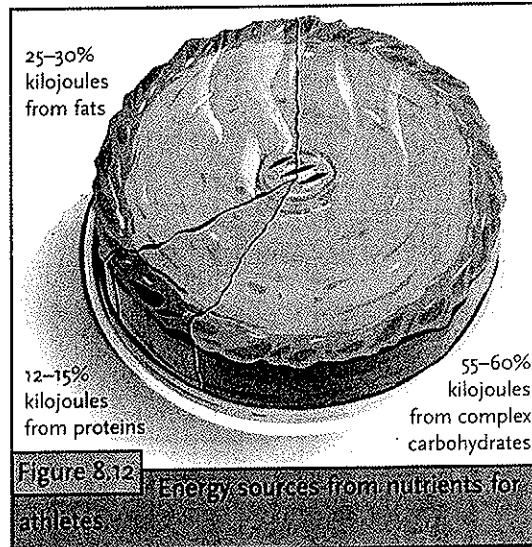
### Athletes

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Here are some important principles of sports nutrition.

- Keep fat intake to 25–30 per cent of your kilojoules.
- Keep your muscles fuelled by eating plenty of complex carbohydrate foods, as they supply the body with sustained energy. Fifty-five to sixty per cent of the total kilojoules intake should come from complex carbohydrates such as breads, cereals and grains.
- Consume 1 gram of protein per kilogram of body weight per day. Twelve to fifteen per cent of kilojoules should come from protein-rich food.

- Drink fluids before, during and after exercise sessions to prevent dehydration, overheating or heat stroke.
- Female athletes should make sure that their iron intakes are high by including iron-rich foods in their diet.



### Looking back

- 1 Outline the role each major nutrient plays in sports performance.
- 2 When many athletes cease to participate in sports they tend to gain weight. Why do you think this happens?

### Did you know?

Athletes in heavy training are at risk of iron deficiency because they lose iron through the sweat and tissue damage that occurs when the body is injured during exercise. Female athletes are particularly at risk.

### Did you know?

An athlete's last meal should be consumed three to four hours before competing and should not be too rich or heavy as they cannot perform at their peak with a stomach full of undigested food.