

# **SURGE**

## **PERFORMANCE LADDER**

*Fuel Better, Perform Better. Recover Better.*

**RESTORE**  
Post activity, recover & rebuild

**IGNITE**  
30-45 min, quick carbs

**PREPARE**  
1-2 hrs, light fuel

**BASE**  
3-4 hrs, big meal

**HYDRATE**  
All day hydration

**PLAY FUEL**  
DURING ACTIVITY  
(60+ MINUTES)

A Simple System to Help Athletes  
Have **More Energy, Recover Faster,**  
and Perform Consistently

**FUEL THE WORK.**  
**RECOVER THE WORK.**  
**REPEAT.**

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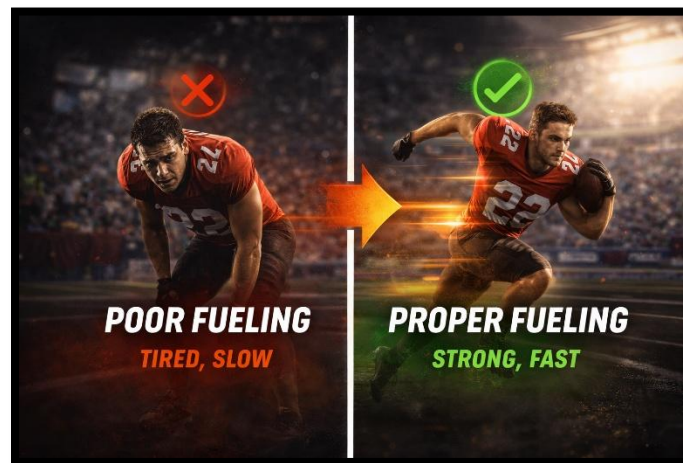
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# Welcome to the Surge Performance Ladder

## [Welcome and Intro Video](#)

If you've ever watched your athlete start strong and then slowly fade as the game goes on, you're not alone. Or maybe it looks like low energy at practice, struggling to focus, constant fatigue, continual soreness, or always feeling like they're trying to catch up. Most people assume this is a conditioning issue; the reality is that more often than not it's a fueling issue.

The truth is, a lot of athletes are working hard, but they're not giving their body what it needs to support that work. Skipping meals, grabbing quick snacks, under-hydrating, or just not knowing what to eat or when to eat it. This happens not because they don't care. It's because no one ever really showed them a simple, practical way to do it.



I remember when that clicked for me. One of the greatest gifts I was ever given came from a coach and mentor who challenged everything I thought I knew about nutrition and performance. It forced me to look at things differently. It opened my eyes to just how important fueling really is when it comes to energy, recovery, and performance.

From that point on, I started to see it everywhere. Food and nutrition became a bit of a “cheat code.” Not in a shortcut kind of way, but in a way that unlocked better energy, faster recovery, and more consistent performance. This showed me the sad fact that athletes weren’t lacking effort; they were lacking the right support. That’s what this guide is here to fix.

This isn’t about strict diets, complicated plans, or trying to be perfect. It’s about learning how to fuel your body in a way that actually supports performance, energy, and recovery. By using simple habits and a structure that fits real life. When athletes understand how to fuel their body the right way, everything starts to change. They have more energy, recover faster, and perform more consistently. More importantly, they feel better and have increased confidence.

And once that starts to click, it changes the way they approach training, competition, and even their day-to-day life.

Which is exactly what the Surge Performance Ladder is built to do. It gives athletes a simple way to know what to eat, when to eat it, and why it matters.



# Rung 1 – Hydrate

## Your #1 Performance Enhancer

[Hydrate Video](#)



### HYDRATE – QUICK START

- **Morning:** 12-20 oz right away
  - **All Day:** ~½ your bodyweight in ounces
  - **Hot / Intense Days:** Increase fluids
  - **Performance Support:** Add electrolytes, salt, lemon, or coconut water
- \*Don't wait until you're thirsty

Before we talk about meals, snacks, carbs, protein, or anything else, we start with the simplest performance upgrade an athlete can make: **Water**

It's not flashy. It's not expensive. But it might be the single easiest way to improve athletic performance.

### Why is Hydration So Important?

Your body is made up of about 60-70% water, and your muscles contain even more than that. Water helps regulate body temperature, move nutrients into muscles, support joint lubrication, and keep the brain firing quickly. When hydration drops, performance drops with it.

Trying to perform dehydrated is a little like running a race with sand in your shoes. You can still move forward, but everything becomes harder than it should be. Research consistently shows that losing just 2% of body weight from dehydration can significantly reduce endurance, strength, power output, and cognitive performance. In simple terms, athletes get tired faster and think slower.

### The Impact of Dehydration

In another study looking at young athletes, mild dehydration was shown to slow reaction time, reduce accuracy in decision-making, and increase perceived fatigue. Three things that matter a lot when you're trying to track a ball, read a play, or make a quick pass.

Hydration also plays a role in injury prevention. Research published in the Journal of Athletic Training found that athletes who were dehydrated had a higher risk of muscle cramps, heat illness, and soft tissue injury, especially during intense practices or hot-weather competitions.

Athletes perform best when they start activity already hydrated. Once practice or a game begins, you're playing catch-up.

### The Daily Hydration Guidelines

A great starting point for most athletes is to drink about half your bodyweight in ounces of fluid each day.

For example:

<b>Bodyweight</b>	<b>Daily Water Goal</b>
80 lb athlete	~40 oz
120 lb athlete	~60 oz
150 lb athlete	~75 oz
180 lb athlete	~90 oz

200 lb athlete	~100 oz
250 lb athlete	~125 oz
300 lb athlete	~150 oz

This doesn't need to be complicated. The key is spreading fluids out across the day instead of chugging a giant bottle right before practice. If it's a hot day, long practice, tournament, or double-header, bump hydration closer to: 60–63% of bodyweight in ounces.

This helps replace fluid lost through sweat and increased breathing during activity.

Prioritize hydrating early. Not just before practice.

One of the biggest mistakes athletes make is waiting until practice to start drinking water. Unfortunately, hydration doesn't work that way. When you drink fluids, your body has to move them through several steps before they can actually help your muscles and brain. This process takes time.

Research from sports physiology studies shows that meaningful hydration typically takes about 30–60 minutes after drinking fluids, depending on factors like stomach contents, electrolyte levels, and exercise intensity. However, full rehydration after dehydration can take several hours, which is why starting hydration earlier in the day matters.

### A Simple Hydration Timeline for Athletes

To help make hydrating easier, think about hydration in waves. Rather than a single drink or overloading yourself right before your activity.

#### Morning (Waking)

- Start the day with 12–16 oz of water after waking.

- This replaces fluids lost during sleep.

#### Midmorning-Afternoon

- Drink 8-16 oz of water throughout the day.

#### 2–3 Hours Before Activity

- Drink 12–20 oz of water or an electrolyte drink.
- This gives the body time to absorb fluids and stabilize hydration levels.

#### 30–45 Minutes Before Activity

- Drink 6–10 oz of water.
- This tops off hydration without causing stomach discomfort.

#### During Activity

- Sip fluids regularly, especially if the session lasts longer than 60 minutes.
- Typical guideline: 4–8 oz every 10–20 minutes depending on sweat rate.

#### After Activity

- Drink 16–24 oz of fluid within the first hour after exercise to begin rehydration.

Think of hydration like watering a plant. If you dump a gallon on it once a week, it struggles. But if you give it water consistently, it grows strong. Your body works the same way.

#### Hydration Support Tools

Plain water is great. But during hot weather or intense training, a few simple additions can improve hydration.

#### Electrolytes

- Electrolytes help the body absorb and retain fluids while supporting muscle contractions and nerve signaling.
- They're especially useful during:
  - Hot weather
  - Long practices
  - Tournaments
  - High sweat sessions

### Lemon Water

- A squeeze of lemon in a water bottle is an easy upgrade. Adding lemon to water can:
  - Improve taste (kids drink more)
  - Provide small amounts of potassium
  - Stimulate digestion

### A Pinch of Salt

- Athletes lose sodium through sweat. A small pinch of salt in water can help the body hold onto fluids and improve hydration.
- This can be helpful before long practices or games in warm conditions.

### Coconut Water and Hydration

- Coconut water has become popular among athletes as a natural hydration drink, and research suggests it can be a useful option in certain situations.
- Coconut water naturally contains electrolytes such as:



- Potassium
- Sodium (in smaller amounts)
- Magnesium
- Calcium

### Tart Cherry Juice (Recovery Hydration)

- Tart cherry juice is more of a recovery hydration tool.
- Research suggests it may help reduce inflammation and muscle soreness after intense training. A small serving diluted in water in the evening can support recovery after a tough day.

### A Quick Hydration Check

Athletes can use a simple test:

Check the color of your urine.

Light pale yellow → hydrated

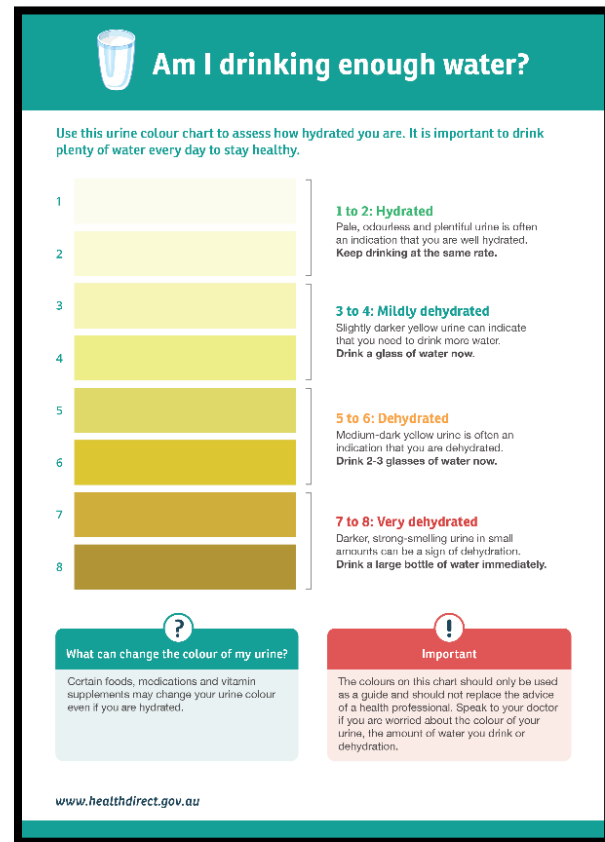
Dark yellow → drink more fluids

It's not the most glamorous performance metric, but it works.

Simple Athlete Reminders:

When it comes to hydration: **Hydrate early. Hydrate often. Hydrate before you're thirsty.**

If you're thirsty during activity, your body is already trying to catch up. Climbing the SURGE Performance Ladder starts here, before the meals, before the snacks, and before game fuel. An athlete who shows up hydrated is already one rung ahead of the competition.



## Rung 2 – BASE

### Builds the Foundation for Energy

#### Base Video

After hydration, the next rung on the SURGE Performance Ladder is the Base meal. This is the meal that builds the energy foundation for everything that comes later.

Think of it like laying the foundation of a house. If the base is strong, everything built on top of it is more stable. If the base is weak, things tend to wobble and be problematic. Athletes are no different.

#### Why the Base Meal Matters

When athletes skip this meal, eat too little, or rely on ultra-processed snacks, they often find themselves feeling tired, sluggish, and unmotivated halfway through practice or fading late in a game. The Base meal is where the real fuel for performance begins. A strong base meal gives the body the fuel, nutrients, and stability it needs to perform well later. When athletes hydrate well, eat balanced meals, and give their body time to digest. They show up to practice or competition with energy in the tank.



### When to Eat the Base Meal

The Base meal should happen about 3–4 hours before activity. This timing gives the body enough time to digest the meal and move nutrients into the bloodstream where they can be used for energy.

If the meal is eaten too close to practice, digestion may still be happening during activity. That's when athletes start to feel heavy, sluggish, or uncomfortable. 3-4 hours allows the body to do its job.

### What Makes a Good Base Meal?

A strong Base meal should include three main components: Carbohydrates, protein, and fruits or vegetables.

Carbohydrates provide the primary fuel source for muscles during activity. Protein supports muscle repair and growth. Fruits and vegetables provide vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants that support recovery and overall health. You don't need complicated recipes to make this work. In most cases, a balanced plate does the job.

### Base Meal Guidelines

A helpful rule for parents and athletes is to think in terms of balanced portions on the plate.

- A solid serving of carbohydrates (1 serving = size of your cupped palm)
- A source of whole protein (1 serving = size and thickness of your palm)
- Fruits or vegetables for nutrients and fiber (1 serving = size of your fist)

When those pieces are present, the meal usually checks the right boxes.

\*Below is an example of how to create and portion your base meal performance plate.

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## Examples of Strong Base Meals

The good news is that many normal family meals already fit this category. Some examples include:

- Rice bowl with grilled chicken, peppers, and avocado
- Pasta with meat sauce and a side salad
- Sweet potato with ground turkey and roasted vegetables
- Burrito bowl with rice, beans, chicken, lettuce, and salsa
- Eggs, oatmeal, and berries for an earlier practice

None of these meals are fancy. They're simply balanced and satisfying, which is exactly what the body needs at this stage before activity.



## The Home Team SHIFT Connection

If you're following the Home Team SHIFT principles, this is the perfect time to apply them.

The Base meal is where athletes can prioritize:

- Whole protein at the meal
- A large portion of fruits and vegetables
- Whole-food carbohydrates

This meal does a lot of heavy lifting when it comes to reaching the 800 grams of fruits and vegetables goal for the day. Since this meal is eaten several hours before activity, the body has time to digest fiber-rich foods and absorb their nutrients.

## Common Base Meal Mistakes

There are a few common pitfalls families run into with this stage.

Eating too little is a major one.

- Many athletes simply don't eat enough at this meal. A small snack or light breakfast isn't going to carry them through a two-hour practice or game.
- Athletes need enough fuel to support their activity.

Relying on Processed Snacks

- Grabbing chips, cookies, or convenience foods might fill the stomach, but those foods often lack the nutrients and sustained energy athletes need.
- The Base meal works best when it's built from whole, balanced foods.

Eating Too Close to Activity

- Eating a large meal right before practice can lead to stomach discomfort or sluggish movement. That's why the Base meal belongs 3-4 hours before activity, leaving time for digestion.

Simple Helpful Questions for Athletes

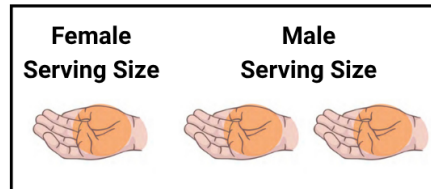
If you're not sure whether your Base meal is doing the job, ask yourself three quick questions:

- Did I eat a good source of carbohydrates?
- Did I include protein?
- Did I add fruits or vegetables?

If the answer is yes to all three, you're probably on the right track to building a solid foundation.

If you want more variety and options below are lists of common and popular food choices along with serving sizes for carbohydrates, proteins, fruits, vegetables, and healthy fats. Your options are not limited to these lists. They are meant to help give you direction along with additional options to choose from.

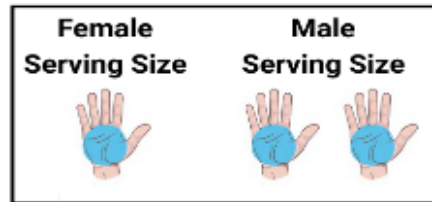
# Carbohydrate Food List



## Common Carbohydrate Food List (Not Limited to List Only)

- Potato (sweet, red, white)
- Bean/Legume
- Cooked Rice (White/Brown)
- Ezekiel Bread
- Oats/Oatmeal
- Cereals
- Bread (sandwich bread, rolls, bagels)
- Pasta (Chickpea, Spaghetti, Lasana, etc.)
- Cooked Quinoa
- Amaranth
- Wild Rice (brown, white)
- Sprouted Grains
- Black Bean
- Green Lentil
- Kidney Bean
- Lima Bean
- Navy Bean
- Yams
- Corn
- Peas
- Butternut squash
- Tortillas (corn or flour)
- Couscous
- Bagels
- English muffins
- Toast
- Wraps
- And Others

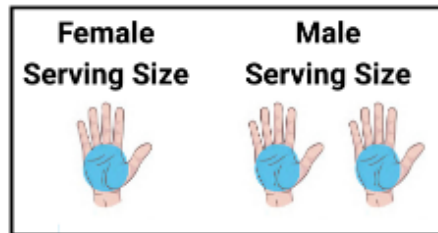
# **Protein Food List**



## **Food List**

- Chicken Breast Skinless
- Sirloin
- Turkey Breast
- Pork Tenderloin
- Lean Ground Beef/Bison
- Fish/Tuna
- Eggs
- Cottage Cheese/Greek Yogurt
- Cage-free egg [whole]
- Egg white
- Egg substitute
- Bacon Grass-Fed
- Beef Grass-Fed
- Bison
- Canadian Bacon
- Corned Beef
- Chicken
- Duck
- Ham
- Pork
- Lamb
- Pepperoni
- Salami
- Turkey Ground
- Bass
- Bluefish
- Calamari
- Catfish
- Cod fish
- Clam
- Crab
- Halibut
- Lobster
- Mackerel
- Salmon
- Sardine
- Scallop
- Shrimp
- Snapper
- Swordfish
- Trout
- Tuna Steak
- Tuna [canned in water]

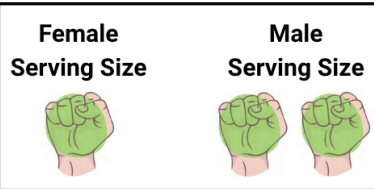
# Protein Food List



## Vegetarian/Vegan Food List

- Tempeh
- Tofu
- Edamame
- Split Peas
- Lentils (French, Red, Green, Black, Brown)
- Beans (Navy, Lima, Kidney, Black, Great Northern, Garbanzo, etc.)
- Eggs
- Cage-Free Egg [whole]
- Egg White
- Egg Substitute
- Cottage Cheese/Greek Yogurt
- Protein Powder
- Spirulina
- Chickpea
- Chlorella
- Hemp Seeds
- Bee Pollen
- Colostrum
- Blue-Green Algae
- Raw Milk and Yogurt
- Quinoa
- Maca
- Marine Phytoplankton
- Goji Berries
- Heirloom Beans
- Almonds
- Walnuts
- Pumpkin Seeds
- Chia Seeds
- And Others

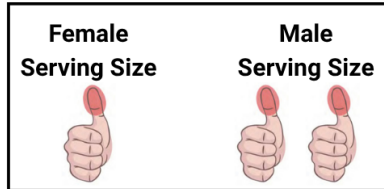
# Fruits/Vegetable Food List



## Common Fruit/Vegetable Food List (Not Limited to List Only)

- Blackberry
- Blueberry
- Strawberries
- Cherry
- Grapefruit
- Lemon
- Lime
- Raspberry
- Banana
- Cranberry
- Kiwifruit
- Mango
- Orange
- Pineapple
- Watermelon
- Apple
- Pomegranate
- Asparagus
- Broccoli
- Bell Peppers
- Celery
- Brussels
- Sprouts
- Carrots
- Green Bean
- Any type of Squash
- Beets
- Artichoke
- Arugula
- Bok Choy
- Cabbage
- Cauliflower
- Celery
- Chive
- Collard greens
- Cucumber
- Eggplant
- Green Bean
- Jalapeño Pepper
- Kale
- Mustard Greens
- Onion
- Radicchio
- Radish
- Sea veggies (kelp, dulse, nori, etc.)
- Snap Bean
- Snow Pea
- Spinach Sprouts (broccoli sprouts, clover, etc.)
- Tomato
- Watercress
- Zucchini
- And Others

# Healthy Fats Food List



## Common Healthy Fats Food List (Not Limited to List Only)

- Nut Butter
- Coconut Oil/Extra Virgin
- Olive Oil/Avocado Oil
- Pasture Butter
- Medium Avocado
- 1/4 Cup ANY NUTS
- 1/4 Cup Any Seeds
- Coffee Creamers (4TB)
- Almonds (and unsweetened almond butter)
- Brazil Nuts
- Grass-fed Cocoa nibs
- Cashew
- Caviar
- Chestnut
- Chia Seed
- Coconut
- Flax Seed
- Hazelnut
- Hemp Seeds
- Macadamia Nuts
- MCT Oil
- Olives
- Pecan
- Peanuts (and unsweetened peanut butter)
- Pine Nuts
- Pistachio Nut
- Pumpkin Seed
- Sesame
- Sunflower Seed
- Walnut
- And others

## Rung 3 – PREPARE

### Top Off the Tank Without Weighing It Down – NOT A FULL MEAL

#### [Prepare Video](#)



When you get closer to practice or competition, the goal shifts. This is where you're not trying to build a full meal, you're simply topping off your energy.

A Prepare meal should be light, easy to digest, and focused mostly on carbohydrates with a small amount of protein. This helps give your body accessible energy without feeling too full or heavy when you start moving.

The biggest mistake here is eating too much or choosing

foods that take too long to digest. That can leave you feeling sluggish instead of ready.

Keep this step simple. A small, familiar option that you know works for your body is all you need.



### Why the Prepare Stage Matters

This is the bridge between having fuel in your system and being ready to use it.

Without this step, athletes often:

- Start Slow
- Feel Flat Early
- Rely Too Much on Last-Minute Snacks

With it, they show up feeling:

- Energized
- Ready
- Consistent From the Start

### Simple Prepare Rung Guidelines

These meals work best when they are:

- 1–2 hours before activity
- Light but satisfying
- Mostly carbs with a little protein
- Not too greasy
- Not super high in fiber

1-2 hours is the sweet spot. Close enough to provide energy, but far enough away to allow digestion. Too early, and the athlete may start to feel low on energy again. Too late, and they may feel heavy or sluggish.

### What Makes a Good Prepare Meal?

This is where we simplify things. At this stage, meals should be:

- lighter than the Base meal
- focused on carbohydrates
- include a small amount of protein
- lower in fat and heavy fiber

Why?

Because digestion speed matters now. Heavy meals, especially those high in fat or fiber take longer to break down and can sit in the stomach during activity. That's when athletes complain about feeling "full," "slow," or "off."

The goal here is:

**Easy fuel. Easy digestion. Ready to move.**

### Examples of Strong Prepare Meals

These are simple, familiar options that work well for most athletes:

- Greek yogurt with granola and fruit
- Oatmeal with berries
- Turkey sandwich
- Peanut butter toast and banana
- Cottage cheese with fruit
- Smoothie with fruit and protein

These meals are balanced but not heavy, which is exactly what we want.

### How This Fits With Home Team SHIFT

This stage still supports your overall nutrition habits, just with a slight adjustment.

You can still include:

- Protein
- Fruits
- Whole Foods

But portions are smaller, and fiber is more moderate. This is not the time to try and “catch up” on vegetables or eat a huge salad. That work was already done in the Base meal.

### Common Prepare Stage Mistakes

#### Skipping This Meal Completely

- A lot of athletes rely only on their Base meal and then go several hours without eating before activity. That’s when energy dips show up early in practice or games.

#### Eating Too Heavy

- Trying to eat another large meal too close to activity can lead to:
  - Sluggish Movement
  - Stomach Discomfort or Cramping
  - Feeling “full” during play

#### Grabbing Only Junk Food

- Highly processed snacks or sugary foods can cause quick spikes in energy followed by a crash. This stage works best with real, simple foods.

### A Simple Question for Athletes

At the Prepare stage, ask:

“Will this give me energy without making me feel heavy?”

If the answer is yes, you’re on the right track to toping off your tank.

### The Bottom Line

The Prepare rung is simple, but powerful. It’s meant to help make sure the engine is ready before it’s time to ignite. Light fuel. Right timing. Easy



digestion. It's the difference between starting practice or a game trying to find your energy and starting already ready to go. Remember think top off the tank – not fill it!

Below are Super Simple Meal ideas for the prepare rung. Pick 1 and keep it simple.

## Super Simple Prepare Rung Meals Ideas

### 20 Pre-Practice / Pre-Game Meals

These meals work best about 1–2 hours before activity

#### 1. Greek Yogurt + Granola + Berries

##### What you need

- 1 cup Greek yogurt
- 1/2 cup granola
- 1/2 cup berries

##### Steps

1. Spoon the yogurt into a bowl.
2. Add granola on top.
3. Add berries.
4. Eat and try not to leave the spoon in your sports bag.

#### 2. Banana + Peanut Butter Toast

##### What you need

- 2 slices toast
- 1 banana
- peanut butter

##### Steps

1. Toast the bread.
2. Spread a thin layer of peanut butter on each piece.
3. Slice the banana and place it on top.
4. Eat open-faced or turn it into a sandwich.

### **3. Turkey Sandwich**

#### **What you need**

- 2 slices bread
- 3–4 slices turkey
- mustard or light mayo if wanted

#### **Steps**

1. Lay out the bread.
2. Add turkey.
3. Add a little mustard or mayo if using.
4. Put the sandwich together and eat with fruit if desired.

### **4. Oatmeal + Banana**

#### **What you need**

- 1 packet oatmeal or 1/2 cup oats
- 1 banana
- water or milk

#### **Steps**

1. Cook the oatmeal according to the package.
2. Slice the banana on top.
3. Stir and eat warm.

### **5. Cottage Cheese + Pineapple**

#### **What you need**

- 1 cup cottage cheese
- 1/2 to 1 cup pineapple

#### **Steps**

1. Scoop cottage cheese into a bowl.
2. Add pineapple.
3. Stir if you want or eat it layered.

### **6. Bagel + Cream Cheese + Fruit**

#### **What you need**

- 1 bagel
- cream cheese
- 1 piece of fruit

#### **Steps**

1. Toast the bagel if you want.
2. Spread cream cheese on both sides.
3. Eat with fruit on the side.

### **7. Applesauce + String Cheese + Crackers**

#### **What you need**

- 1 applesauce pouch or cup
- 1 string cheese
- a handful of crackers

#### **Steps**

1. Open everything.
2. Eat the applesauce.
3. Have the string cheese and crackers with it.
4. Congratulations, you made a pre-game meal with zero dishes.

### **8. Smoothie**

### **What you need**

- 1 banana
- 1/2 cup frozen berries
- 1/2 to 3/4 cup Greek yogurt
- splash of milk

### **Steps**

1. Put everything in a blender.
2. Blend until smooth.
3. Pour into a cup.
4. Drink slowly, not like you're trying to win a contest.

### **9. English Muffin + Jam + Yogurt**

#### **What you need**

- 1 English muffin
- jam
- 1 small yogurt

#### **Steps**

1. Toast the English muffin.
2. Spread jam on both halves.
3. Eat with yogurt on the side.

### **10. Rice Bowl Lite**

#### **What you need**

- 1 cup cooked rice
- 2–3 oz cooked chicken
- a little soy sauce or teriyaki

#### **Steps**

1. Heat the rice.
2. Add the chicken.
3. Drizzle a small amount of sauce on top.
4. Eat warm.

### **11. Cereal + Milk + Banana**

#### **What you need**

- 1 bowl cereal
- milk
- 1 banana

#### **Steps**

1. Pour cereal into a bowl.
2. Add milk.
3. Slice banana on top or eat it on the side.
4. Keep it simple.

### **12. Tortilla Roll-Up**

#### **What you need**

- 1 tortilla
- sliced turkey
- a little cheese if tolerated

#### **Steps**

1. Lay the tortilla flat.
2. Add turkey and a small amount of cheese.
3. Roll it up.
4. Slice in half or eat whole.

### **13. Pretzels + Yogurt + Fruit**

#### **What you need**

- 1 handful pretzels
- 1 yogurt cup
- 1 apple or banana

#### **Steps**

1. Put the pretzels on a plate or in a bag.

2. Grab the yogurt.
3. Add fruit.
4. Eat before heading out.

#### **14. Mini Pancake Stack + Greek Yogurt**

##### **What you need**

- 2–3 pancakes
- syrup or honey
- 1/2 cup Greek yogurt

##### **Steps**

1. Heat the pancakes.
2. Add a small amount of syrup or honey.
3. Eat with yogurt on the side.

#### **15. Overnight Oats**

##### **What you need**

- 1/2 cup oats
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/2 banana or berries
- spoonful of yogurt if wanted

##### **Steps**

1. Put oats and milk in a container the night before.
2. Add fruit.
3. Refrigerate overnight.
4. Grab and eat the next day.

#### **16. Toast + Honey + Greek Yogurt**

##### **What you need**

- 2 slices toast
- honey

- 1/2 to 1 cup Greek yogurt

##### **Steps**

1. Toast the bread.
2. Drizzle a little honey on top.
3. Eat with yogurt on the side.

#### **17. Ham and Cheese Wrap**

##### **What you need**

- 1 tortilla
- 2–3 slices ham
- 1 slice cheese

##### **Steps**

1. Lay out the tortilla.
2. Add ham and cheese.
3. Roll it up.
4. Heat for a few seconds if wanted, or eat cold.

#### **18. Fruit + Granola Bar + Milk**

##### **What you need**

- 1 piece of fruit
- 1 granola bar
- 1 glass of milk

##### **Steps**

1. Grab the fruit.
2. Grab the granola bar.
3. Pour the milk.
4. This is the “we’re leaving in 3 minutes” option.

#### **19. Bagel Sandwich**

##### **What you need**

- 1 bagel

- turkey or ham
- light cream cheese or a slice of cheese

### Steps

1. Slice and toast the bagel.
2. Add the meat and spread or cheese.
3. Put it together.
4. Eat with a few grapes or a banana if wanted.

## 20. Yogurt Parfait To-Go

### What you need

- 1 yogurt cup
- granola
- sliced fruit

### Steps

1. Add yogurt to a container.
2. Top with granola and fruit.
3. Put on the lid.
4. Take it with you if you need to eat in the car.

## Rung 4 – IGNITE

### Quick Energy Spark Right Before You Go

#### [Ignite Video](#)

You've hydrated. You've built your Base. You've topped things off with the Prepare meal. Now it's time for the next rung on the SURGE Performance Ladder: Ignite.

This is the final step before action. If the Base meal fills the tank and Prepare meal tops it off. Then Ignite is the spark that gets the engine going.

#### Simple Ignite Rung Guidelines

These foods work best when they are:

- 30–45 minutes before activity
  - Before:
    - Warm Ups
    - Practice
    - Kickoffs
    - First Pitch
    - Tip-off



- Puck Drop
- Small and light (not a full meal)
- Mostly quick carbs
- Low in fat
- Low in fiber
- Easy to digest
- Something the athlete actually likes and will eat

At this point, your body doesn't have time to digest a full meal. So it's important to keep it simple.

### What Makes a Good Ignite Snack?

We want energy to be available fast, not sitting in the stomach. This is not the time for a full meal. This is not the time for "healthy but heavy." This is the time for simple fuel your body can use right away.

### Examples of Great Ignite Foods

These are go-to options that work for most athletes:

- Banana
- Applesauce (pouch or cup)
- Pretzels
- Crackers
- Rice cakes
- Granola bar
- Fruit snacks
- Graham Crackers
- Toast with a little honey or jam
- Dry Cereals

Liquids can also work well here.

Examples:

- Sports drink



- Small juice
- Smoothie (light, not heavy)

These can be helpful when athletes don't feel like eating solid food.  
Goal is Simple. Quick. Easy.

### Common Ignite Mistakes

#### Eating Too Much

- More is not better here. A large snack right before activity can lead to:
  - Feeling heavy
  - Sluggish movement
  - Stomach discomfort (Bloating, Cramping)

Ignite is about a small boost, not a full meal.

#### Choosing Slow Foods

- Foods high in fat or fiber take longer to digest. Examples to avoid right before activity:
  - Greasy foods
  - Heavy protein meals
  - Large portions of vegetables
  - Anything that sits heavy in the stomach

#### Skipping It Completely

- Some athletes go straight from their Prepare meal into activity. That can work sometimes, but many athletes benefit from a small Ignite snack to:
  - increase energy
  - sharpen focus
  - prevent early fatigue

### A Simple Question for Athletes

At the Ignite stage, ask:

“Is this light, quick, and easy?”

If yes, you're good.

### How This Fits With the Rest of the Ladder

Ignite is not meant to replace earlier steps. It works because of them.

- Base gave you energy
- Prepare topped it off
- Ignite makes it available right when you need it

Skip the earlier steps and Ignite can't do much. Use all the steps together, and performance feels different.

### The Bottom Line

Ignite is simple but important: Small. Quick. Timed right. Not a full snack. It helps athletes start strong instead of trying to find their energy after things begin. When athletes consistently use this rung, they don't just feel better at the start. They perform better from the very first play.

## **Play Fuel (During Activity)**

**Keep the Energy Going When It Matters**

[Play Fuel Video](#)

The SURGE Performance Ladder is built on five main steps:

Hydrate → Base → Prepare → Ignite → Restore

\*But there's one extra tool that comes into play when the situation calls for it. That's where Play Fuel comes in.



### What Is Play Fuel?

Play Fuel is small amounts of quick energy during activity. Not a meal. Not a full snack. Just enough to help the body:

- Maintain energy
- Stay sharp
- Avoid that "second half drop"

### Simple Play Fuel Guidelines:

- Not every athlete needs this.
- Only used if activity lasts

longer than 60–75 minutes

This could include:

- Long practices
- Double headers
- Tournaments
- Multiple games in a day
- Extended training sessions

Prioritize foods/Drinks that are:

- Small amounts, not a full snack or meal
- Quick and Easy to Eat
- Mostly Carbohydrates
- Easy to eat during breaks
- Low in fat and low in fiber



- Something the Athlete Can Grab, Eat Quickly and is Portable
- Spread out (a few bites or sips at a time)
- 

Think:

**Small, Simple, and Fast.**

If the activity is short, the earlier steps on the ladder usually cover it. But when things go longer, the body starts to run low on available energy. That's when Play Fuel helps.



### Example Foods for Play Fuel

- Orange slices
- Banana
- Grapes
- Fruit Snacks
- Dried Fruit
- Applesauce Pouches
- Pretzels
- Crackers
- Rice Cakes
- Small juice boxes
- Sports Drinks
- Granola bars (simple ones)

### Usually Not the Best Foods During Activity

- Full Meals
- Sandwiches
- Pizza
- Burgers
- Fries
- Protein-Heavy Foods
- Cheesy Foods
- High-fiber Snacks
- Anything Greasy
- Anything that Makes the Athlete Feel Full or Sluggish

### How Much Should Athletes Eat?

Keep it simple. Small amounts spaced out as needed. A few bites or sips. Not a full snack, the goal is to maintain energy, not feel full.

### Common Play Fuel Mistakes

#### Eating Too Much

- This is the biggest one. Too much food during activity can lead to:
  - Stomach Discomfort
  - Sluggish Movement
  - Feeling Heavy
- Play Fuel should be just enough, not a full refill.

#### Waiting Too Long

- Some athletes wait until they feel exhausted before eating. At that point, they're already behind.
- It's better to add small amounts before energy drops too far.

#### Choosing the Wrong Foods

- Heavy, greasy, or high-fiber foods are not a good fit here. Those take too long to digest and won't help during activity.

### A Simple Reminder for Athletes

Play Fuel is a simple tool for longer sessions. Think of it like adding a little wood to the fire during a long burn.

It's not mandatory so use it when needed. Keep it small. Keep it simple. When athletes learn how to use it at the right time, they don't just survive long games. They stay strong all the way through them.

## Rung 5 – RESTORE

Refuel, Rebuild, and Get Ready to Do It Again

[Restore Video](#)

You've climbed the ladder. You hydrated, built your base, prepared, ignited, and competed. Now comes the step most athletes overlook: **Restore**

This is where the body recovers, repairs, and gets better. The truth that most athletes don't understand is that training, practice, and competing actually breaks the body down, making it weaker. Through the process of restoring and recovery the body adapts, improves, and increases potential performance. Therefore, performance doesn't just come from what you do during practice. It comes from how well you recover after it.

### Why the Restore Meal Matters

When athletes skip this step, wait too long to eat, or just grab whatever is easiest, recovery doesn't happen the way it should. Energy stays low, soreness lingers longer, performance drops, and the next practice or game starts to feel harder than it needs to.

This is the point where the body is ready to take advantage of



everything that just happened. After activity, your body is primed to absorb nutrients, refill energy stores, and begin the rebuilding process. But it can't do that well if nothing comes in. The Restore meal gives the body what it needs to:

- Bring energy levels back up
- Start repairing muscles and tissues
- Support growth and adaptation
- Reduce the wear and tear from training

Without implementing the restore rung, athletes are essentially asking their body to recover on empty. With it, they're giving their body the tools to come back stronger. Over time, this is one of the biggest differences between athletes who consistently improve, stay healthier, show up ready to perform, and those who feel like they're always trying to catch up.

### Simple Restore Rung Guidelines

These meals work best when they are:

- Within 30–90 minutes after activity
- A mix of carbohydrates + protein = recovery
- Easy to eat (even if the athlete isn't very hungry)
- Built around mostly whole foods
- Hydrating (fluids included)
- Big enough to refuel, but not overwhelming

### What Makes a Good Restore Meal?

At this stage, your body needs two main macro nutrients, carbohydrates and protein. Carbohydrates help replace the energy (glycogen) that was used during activity. While protein helps repair and rebuild muscle and other tissues. You're essentially helping the body refill and repair the system so it can perform again the next day.



### Examples of Strong Restore Meals

These don't need to be complicated. In fact, simple is usually better.

- Chocolate milk
- Protein smoothie with fruit
- Greek yogurt with fruit and granola
- Rice with chicken and vegetables
- Eggs with toast and fruit
- Turkey sandwich with fruit
- Wraps (chicken, rice, veggies)
- Oatmeal + protein + fruit
- Pasta and meat sauce
- Cottage cheese and fruit
- Burrito bowl with rice, beans, and protein

These meals are all great examples of meals with carbs + protein, which is exactly what the body needs.

### The Home Team SHIFT Connection

This is where everything comes full circle. The Restore stage is a great opportunity to focus on whole protein sources, fruits and vegetables and

balanced meals. This is another key moment to move toward that 800g fruit and vegetable or the “eat the rainbow” goal.

Unlike right before activity, your body can now handle more fiber and variety.

### Don't Forget Hydration

Recovery isn't just food. After activity, athletes should also focus on replacing fluids, adding electrolytes if needed and continuing to hydrate into the evening. Again, just 2% dehydration has massive negative effects on the body. So emphasizing rehydration is key to support recovery, muscle function and next-day performance.

### Common Restore Mistakes

#### Skipping It Completely

- Many athletes finish practice and then go hours without eating. Which slows recovery and can lead to:
  - Fatigue the next day
  - Poor performance
  - Increased soreness

#### Only Eating Protein

- Protein is important, but without carbohydrates, recovery is incomplete.
- The body needs both, especially after vigorous training, practice or competition that most likely drained glycogen stores.

#### Grabbing Only Junk Food

- Highly processed foods might be convenient, but they often don't provide the nutrients needed for proper recovery.
- Simple, balanced meals work better.

### A Simple Question for Athletes

“Did I eat carbs and protein?” If yes, you're on the right track for recovery.

Miss the Restore step, and the next day starts a little lower. Hit it consistently, and performance starts to stack.

## Bringing It All Together ([Video](#))

You don't need to do everything in this guide to see results. You don't need a perfect plan, perfect meals, or perfect timing. What matters most is consistency.

Fueling your body the right way isn't about doing everything at once, it's about building simple habits that you can repeat day after day. That's where real progress happens.

Start small. Pick one or two things from this guide and focus on those. Maybe it's drinking more water. Maybe it's adding a better pre-practice snack. Maybe it's making sure you refuel after activity. Over time, those small changes begin to add up.

- More energy.
- Better recovery.
- More consistent performance.

And most importantly you feel better. That's the goal.

### **Start Here**

Pick one area to focus on this week:

- Drink more water earlier in the day
- Eat a better base meal before activity
- Add a simple pre-practice snack
- Refuel after workouts

This guide gives you the structure. If you're looking for more support, deeper guidance, or help applying this to your athlete or team, there are

additional tools, resources, and coaching options available. But for now, start here.

Use what you've learned. Keep it simple. Stay consistent.