

Here are the top 10 super foods for endurance athletes that should be staples in your diet.

Oatmeal

Oatmeal has a high soluble fiber content, is high in complex carbohydrates, is a good source of protein and has a low glycemic index, which provides a sustained release of energy into the bloodstream—imperative for runners. Oatmeal offers your body a regular dose of Vitamin B and is rich in minerals and antioxidants. It's credited for maintaining the good level of cholesterol in the body and is known as one of the most nourishing foods for the body, especially for athletes.

Cherries

Cherries are one of the most antioxidant-rich fruit and provide a wide range of health benefits, as well as performance and recovery benefits for athletes. Research has shown that runners who consumed tart cherry juice, twice a day for seven days a week, had strikingly less muscle pain following a long distance run. The post-exercise benefits are astonishing because of the fruit's natural anti-inflammatory components. A recent study from the University of Michigan revealed that a cherry enriched diet lowered total weight, body fat and inflammation, all associated with heart disease.

Kale

Kale is a member of the cabbage family and contains high levels of vitamins: A, K, B6, calcium and iron. It's an antioxidant-rich vegetable that helps regulate the body's inflammatory process. Kale also contains carotenoids and flavonoids, two powerful antioxidants that protect cells from free radicals that cause oxidative stress, as well as a high fiber content that helps lower cholesterol.

Milk

With all the different types of milk out there today, soy, almond, rice and even hemp, it seems that good old fashioned milk is still number one when it comes to athletes. Milk is loaded with carbohydrates and protein, which makes it an ideal post exercise muscle recovery beverage for endurance athletes. When carbohydrates and proteins are consumed together, muscle tissues are repaired at a faster rate than if consumed separately.

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Bananas

Bananas are one of the best pre- and post- workout snacks. It's no surprise that they seem to be included in every post-race goodie bag. Loaded with potassium and vitamin B6, bananas help maintain low blood sugar, regulate

digestion and re-stock your body with lost electrolytes after any sort of physical exertion. Vitamin B6 in bananas acts as an anti-inflammatory agent that helps ward off cardiovascular disease.

Chia Seeds

Chia seeds are a nutrient dense super food that contains a high amount of fiber, three times the amount of antioxidants than blueberries, and are loaded with calcium, iron and protein. They also contain a high amount of omega-3 fatty acids and hydrophilic properties, which means that the seeds have the ability to absorb more than twelve times their weight in water, thus allowing prolonged hydration. The seeds help in retaining moisture and regulate the body's absorption of nutrients.

Walnuts

Walnuts are a plant-based protein, rich in fiber, B-vitamins and antioxidants, such as vitamin E. They contain the most Omega-3 fatty acids than any other nut and the anti-inflammatory nutrients are great for bone health. Walnuts have also been shown to lower LDL cholesterol, are beneficial for a healthy heart and make a great healthy and energizing snack on-the-go.

Sweet Potatoes

Sweet potatoes are a starchy vegetable, rich in vitamins A and C, which are both powerful antioxidants that work in removing free radicals from your body. They help lower blood pressure and are a powerful food for athletes because of its high vitamin and mineral content. The potassium, iron, manganese and copper are all minerals that many athletes lack; manganese and copper being crucial in healthy muscle function.

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Wild Salmon

Salmon is one of the most nutrient dense proteins, full of essential Omega-3 fatty acids, as well as vitamins B12 and B6. Salmon can help reduce inflammation in our bodies through its high content of Omega-3's, which is valuable for athletes. Salmon is known to be the king of fish because of its high quality protein. A weekly consumption of this power food has been shown to decrease the risk of numerous cardiovascular problems, such as heart attack, stroke and high blood pressure. The antioxidant in salmon, selenium, has been shown to be beneficial in cardiovascular protection.

Whey

Whey protein isolate is the purest form of whey protein and is a complete protein that contains all of the essential amino acids. It's absorbed quickly and efficiently into the body, making it an athletes dream. It doesn't contain any fat or cholesterol. The protein and array of amino acids are essential in muscle re-building, especially after a strenuous workout or race. For athletes, it's a great fast recovery method because it helps prevent muscle breakdown and is the fastest digesting protein.