

ALL THE INFORMATION YOU NEED TO TRAIN STRONG AND STAY HEALTHY DURING RAMADAN.

The cornerstone to staying fit and eating well when fasting is maintaining hydration. It is important to drink a few pints of water as soon as you wake up, before Suhoor, to keep you hydrated for the day; your strength can drop by around 20 per cent with dehydration. From a training perspective, dehydration would be a concern, therefore we would want to get rid of long steady-state cardio sessions in favour of walking, or maybe even a short bout of HIIT training. Your main focus, as always, should be a good resistance workout.

To workout at your optimum level you should try and aim to be fully hydrated and fed, but also able to refuel and rehydrate afterwards. If possible, leaving your session until late at night would be a major plus here. This way, you can wait until after you've eaten and also refuel after your workout.



If this is not an option for you, then training right after Fajr, when you are rested, fully hydrated, and have food in your system, could be. However, it might leave you fairly drained for the rest of the day. There is also a happy medium of doing your workout after Maghrib, but first having a small carb-dense snack, such as a handful of dried fruit (dates, raisins etc.) with lots of water (a few pints). After your session, you can have a nice full meal to refuel.

It takes approximately eight hours after the last meal for your body to properly identify a fast. This is when the gut finishes absorbing nutrients. Glucose from the liver and muscles is our primary energy source, so this stored energy will be utilised first. The secondary source is body fat. During a prolonged fast of days or weeks the body will switch to protein as its source when the first two are completely depleted. Restoring the body's fuel source pre-dawn and after dusk allows the body to switch safely between glucose energy and fat-stored energy without muscle tissue breakdown. This can result in reduced body fat, reduced diabetes risk, reduced blood pressure and reduced toxicity levels. However, you should not break the fast with a binge, as

this could cause weight gain. A balanced food and fluid intake is essential between fasts to prevent loss of water and salts, especially if you're perspiring. To prevent muscle breakdown your meal should contain energy foods, complex carbohydrates, essential fats balanced with a good source of protein. Try to include seeds and nuts. Grill any meat and fish or oven bake instead of deep frying. Include complex carb sources, so oats, lentils, black or brown rice. Figs, apricots and prunes can be substituted for dates despite the traditional use. They should be eaten with a slow energy-release food. Try to avoid fast-burning foods that contain refined carbs, such as sugar and white-flour biscuits, and fatty foods including chocolate and sweets.

Avoid caffeine-based drinks as the diuretic effect will leave you more prone to dehydration. Avoid deep-fried foods. Fluids and dates are extremely important and effective both pre-dawn, Suhoor, and after the Iftar that ends your fast. So, what can you eat? Try Porridge with almond milk, some nuts and dates, or a crumpet with a pear or banana, cheese with dried fruit and a couple of rye crackers. Chicken salad with hummus and dates are perfect follow. You

could also have chicken with boiled black rice or vegetable curry, with dried fruit to follow. Baked fish and roast vegetables are also good, fish curry (no cream) with boiled black rice or gram flour chapatti with dates. Barenaked foods products are halal certified, so they can be added to your meal. The konjac powder they're made from also helps to stabilise blood sugar. Snacks you could use instead of dates (or pre-dawn) include date-based bars like TREK, filling protein and energy bars that are vegan friendly. Some PULSIN bars are vegan friendly, too. BOUNCE balls are a great buy, but do check the labels. These can be purchased at shops such as Holland and Barrett.



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