NUTRITION ESSENTIALS

for dancers

PEAK HEALTH AND FITNESS
Welcome to "Nutrition Essentials" your go-to nutrition guide tailored for the dynamic lifestyle of dancers. As aspiring artists, we understand the challenges you face – tight schedules, limited budgets, and the constant demand for peak performance.

This booklet aims to help you achieve a nourishing diet while respecting your time and resources. Recognizing the uniqueness of each body, remember this guide is a flexible tool, not a rigid rulebook.

As athletes, your nutritional needs are unique, requiring attention to both macronutrients and micronutrients. While this guide provides practical tips and budget-friendly recipes, it is crucial to remember that individual preferences and requirements may vary.

Listen to your body, make adjustments as needed, and seek personalized advice from a nutrition professional. May this guide empower you to nourish your passion for dance while maintaining a healthy, budget-friendly lifestyle.
Whether it's a training day, a competition day, or just a regular day as a student, the first priority is to make sure you're eating enough to support your body's needs. Once you've covered this basic requirement, then you can start considering the timing, amounts, and types of macros that suit your goals.
CARBOHYDRATES

• The recommended range for general population is 45 - 65% of daily intake. This can vary for athletes based on training load.

• Main source of energy used by the body.

• Helps prevent breakdown of muscle.

*Complex Carbohydrates:* slowly digested (due to fiber), longer energy, provides greater satiety, contains natural vitamins and minerals (e.g., whole grains, starchy vegetables).

*Simple Carbohydrates:* easily digested, quick energy, fortified with vitamins and minerals (e.g., white grains, fruit and fruit juices, sport drinks).
The recommended range for general population is 10 - 25% of calories. This can vary for athletes based on training load (usually 1.2 - 1.7 g/kg).

- Synthesis and maintenance of multiple body tissues.
- Maintains fluid balance.
- Non-preferred energy source.

**Animal protein:** complete protein, has all essential amino acids (e.g., beef, chicken, eggs, greek yogurt, cottage cheese).

**Plant protein:** incomplete protein, inadequate amounts of one or more amino acid, needs pairing (e.g., beans, legumes, tofu, soy milk, nuts, seeds, quinoa, grains).
FAT

• The recommended range for general is 20 - 35% of daily intake, can vary for athletes based on training load.
• Our bodies require **essential** body fat just for survival, and additional amounts to support primary functions.
• Long-term energy source.
• Hormone and cell signaling function.

**Unsaturated:** mono-unsaturated (e.g., olive oil, avocados), poly-unsaturated, essential, omega-3 (e.g., salmon, tuna, flax seed), omega-6 (e.g., nuts, sunflower, corn oil).

**Saturated:** not-essential (e.g., dairy, meat, coconut oil).
SPORT PERFORMANCE: 
benefits of omega-3

- Anti-inflammatory
- Promotes faster recovery between training and performances
- Cardiovascular health
- Skeletal muscle growth and regeneration
- Neuroprotection (concussions)
- Efficiency for memory and reaction time
THE
ATHLETE’S
DIET
Embracing an athlete's diet during in-season peaks can be a game-changer. *This targeted approach, designed for energy, rapid recovery, and peak performance, propels dancers to shine on stage daily.* Opting for an athlete's diet isn't just about sustenance; it's a strategic choice that amplifies performance excellence.
THE ATHLETE’S PLATE
high-intensity training

- Fats 2-3 tbsp
- Fresh Fruit
  - Stewed Fruit
  - Dried Fruit
- Pasta
- Rice
- Potatoes
- Cereals
- Breads
- Animal protein
  - Eggs
  - Legumes
  - Dairy/Soy
  - Nuts/Seeds
- Raw Veggies
- Cooked Veggies
- Veggie Soups

plate suggested for in-season **
rehearsal, performances
THE ATHLETE’S PLATE

moderate training

plate suggested for pre-season**
rehearsal, training
BALANCED DIET PLATE

easy or no training

Pasta
Rice
Potatoes
Cereals
Breads

Animal protein
Eggs
Legumes
Dairy/Soy
Nuts/Seeds

Raw Veggies
Cooked Veggies
Veggie Soups
Fresh Fruit

Fats
1-3 tsp

plate suggested for post-season **
The smaller portion for fruits and vegetables on plates designed for high-intensity and moderate-intensity training doesn't mean limiting these important food groups. It just emphasizes the importance of prioritizing other components for recovery. In these athlete plates, more focus on carbohydrates and proteins in higher and moderate intensity variations supports sustained energy and muscle repair. This distribution aligns with a balanced approach for both performance and overall health. These plate compositions are strategic adaptations to meet athletes' diverse needs during different training intensities.
RECOVERY NUTRITION
**WHEN IS IT IMPORTANT?**

- High volume or intensity training sessions
- Heavy lifting sessions
- Competition
- Consecutive days of competition
- 2-3 training sessions in a day

*Following a light training session (e.g. skills/drills, yoga, stretching, recovery day) the next meal or snack is sufficient to meet recovery needs.*
SUCCESSFUL RECOVERY WILL ONLY OCCUR WITH PROPER PLANNING.
THINK ABOUT TRAINING SESSIONS AHEAD OF TIME IN ORDER TO PLAN AND PACK THE APPROPRIATE FOODS.
THE 4 R’S OF RECOVERY

**REPLENISH:** muscle glycogen (carbohydrate stored in muscle) following a training session.

**REPAIR:** and regenerate skeletal muscle with high quality protein sources and key amino acids (e.g. leucine).

**REINFORCE:** muscle cells, immune function, and central nervous system function with colorful and anti-oxidant rich foods.

**REHYDRATE:** with fluid and electrolytes according to individual sweat lost during training.
pre training

**goal:** top off energy stores with carbohydrates, maximize hydration, optimize glycogen stores.

- **1-3 hrs before:** carbohydrates with moderate protein, fat and fiber.
- **within 1 hr:** carbohydrates with lower protein, fat, and fiber. easily digestible carbohydrates.

**examples:** toast with nut butter, banana, granola bar, applesauce, pretzels, graham crackers, sports drink.
DURING TRAINING

goal: prevent depletion of glycogen stores and maintain glucose levels in the blood when exercise is greater than 45 minutes.

- **45-75 minutes:** 15 - 30 g carbs/hr banana, rice cake with jam, energy gel
- **1 - 2.5 hrs:** 30 - 60 g carbs/hr PB & Jelly sandwich, sports drink
- **> 2.5 hrs:** up to 90 g carbs/hr bagel with jam and honey, fruit smoothie
**POST TRAINING**

**goal:** replenish carbohydrate stores, protein for repair, rehydrate with fluids and electrolytes, normalize appetite cues.

- the earlier the better
- best if within 30 minutes after activity
- use liquid nutrition for convenience

**examples:** chocolate milk, yogurt with fruit and granola, nuts and fruit, dried fruit and cheese.
HYDRATION

**goal:** replenish fluid and electrolytes lost through sweat, reduce the risk of muscle cramps and injuries, prevent a decline in performance.

1. monitor urine: the lighter the color the better.
2. start class and rehearsal in a **euhydrated** state: appropriate and balanced level of water content.
3. Replace 100 – 150% **total body weight lost** during training.
TIPS
BUDGET TIPS

- **Buy in bulk:** places like Winco or Costco will offer items like quinoa, rice, pasta, nuts, seeds, and legumes.

- **Frozen fruits and vegetables:** They are more affordable than fresh produce and have a longer shelf life. They are also just as nutritious.

- **Canned Goods:** Opt for low/no sodium canned beans, legumes, and vegetables. They are convenient, have a long shelf life, and can be a cost-effective source of protein and fiber.

- **Seasonal and Local Produce:** Buying fruits and vegetables that are in season and locally sourced can be more affordable.
BUDGET TIPS

- **Meal Planning:** Plan your meals for the week and create a shopping list. This helps avoid impulsive purchases and reduces food waste.

- **Generic Brands:** Consider buying store or generic brands instead of name brands.

- **Protein Sources:** Eggs, canned tuna, and chicken thighs are often more budget-friendly protein sources.

- **Cook in Batches:** Prepare larger quantities of meals and freeze portions for later. This can save time and money.

- **Discounts and Coupons:** Keep an eye out for discounts, sales, and coupons.
TIME SAVING TIPS

- **Pre-Washed and Pre-Cut Kits:** Invest in salad and veggie stir-fry kits that come pre-washed and pre-cut, reducing prep time and making meal assembly quick and easy.

- **Pre-Chopped Vegetables:** Cut down on prep time even further, allowing you to focus more on cooking and less on chopping.

- **Instant or Microwaveable Grains:** Opt for instant or microwaveable rice, quinoa, or other grains for quick and easy carbs that require minimal cooking time.

- **Fully Cooked Proteins:** Utilize fully cooked proteins such as rotisserie chicken, canned tuna, canned beans, sliced deli meats, or fully cooked frozen proteins to cut down on cooking time and streamline meal preparation.
TIME SAVING TIPS

- **Frozen Vegetables in Steamable Bags**: convenient and nutritious additions to meals, eliminating the need for washing and chopping.

- **Batch Cooking**: Batch cook grains, proteins, and vegetables in advance to have ready-to-assemble components throughout the week, saving time on cooking and allowing for quick meal assembly.

- **Kitchen Gadgets**: Use kitchen gadgets like a slow cooker, pressure cooker, or air fryer to streamline cooking processes and save time, allowing you to multitask or attend to other activities while your meals cook.

- **Prepared Sauces, Dressings, and Marinades**: Buy or prepare ahead for easy flavor enhancement, eliminating the need to make them from scratch each time you cook.
TIME SAVING TIPS

- **Meal Prep Containers:** Make use of meal prep containers to portion out meals in advance, making it easy to grab and go during busy days and reducing the need for daily meal preparation.

- **One-Pan or One-Pot Recipes:** Minimize cleanup and simplify cooking procedures, saving time on both cooking and cleaning tasks.

- **Multitask with Sheet Pan Meals:** Prepare sheet pan meals that allow you to cook everything on a single pan in the oven allowing you to engage in other activities while you wait.
GROCERY LIST
GROCERY LIST

CARBOHYDRATES

Amaranth  White/sweet corn
Couscous  Whole grain pasta
Quinoa  Sourdough bread
Buckwheat  Whole grain bread
Bulgur  Rice (white, black, wild, red, brown)
Barley  Black, Red, White kidney beans
Potatoes  Peas (black, green, yellow)
Sweet potato  Oats (gf, whole, steel cut)
GROCERY LIST

PROTEIN

Eggs
Chicken
Fish (salmon, tuna, cod)
Dairy products (cheese, milk, yogurt)
Turkey
Shellfish (shrimp, crab)

VEGAN PROTEIN

Legumes (beans, lentils, chickpeas)
Tofu and soy products
Tempeh
Seitan
Edamame
Quinoa
Protein powder
GROCERY LIST

FATS
Plant oils
Nut butters (peanut, almond, cashew)
Avocados
Flax seeds
Hemp seeds
Full-fat dairy products
Fatty fish

CONDIMENTs
Apple cider vinegar
White/wine vinegar
Lemon/lime
Ketchup
Mustard
Mayo

Tomato sauces
Hot sauce
Honey
Maple syrup
Hummus
Salsa
GROCERY LIST

SPICES

Cinnamon
Cumin
Paprika
Turmeric
Garlic powder
Onion powder
Chilli powder
Cayenne pepper
Black pepper
Red pepper flakes
Coriander
Ginger

Cloves
Allspice
Basil
Oregano
Thyme
Rosemary
Sage
Bay leaves
Parsley
Dill
Mint
ENJOYING A VARIETY OF FOODS IS KEY!
ALL FOODS FIT IN A HEALTHY DIET WHEN BALANCED WITH NUTRIENT-RICH FOODS.
SAMPLE DAYS
OMNIVORE
SAMPLE DAY

BREAKFAST
Breakfast sandwich and iced coffee
1 bagel
2 tbsp cream cheese
1 egg
1 slice cheddar cheese
1 apple sliced
1 cup milk
1/2 cup cold brew

Approx. $2.50 - 5.25
protein: 33 g
fiber: 6 g

LUNCH
Deli box
2 oz turkey breast
1 hard boiled egg
1 oz cheese cubed
1/4 cup almonds
6 - 8 pita crackers
1/4 cup cherry tomatoes
1/4 cup baby carrots

Approx. $2.10 - $4.70
protein: 33 g
fiber: 10 g

AM SNACK
1 medium banana
1 greek yogurt

Approx. $0.95 - $2.00
protein: 20 g
fiber: 2 g
DINNER

*Chicken stir fry*

- 4 oz chicken breast, thinly sliced
- 1 cup mixed vegetables (bell peppers, broccoli, carrots, snap peas)
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/2 tbsp soy sauce
- 1/2 tbsp oyster sauce
- 1/2 tsp cornstarch
- salt and pepper
- cooked rice for serving

*Approx. $2.50 - 4.00*

*protein: 30 g*

*fiber: 4 g*

PM SNACK

- 1 apple
- 2 tbps peanut butter
- optional: honey, cinnamon, chopped nuts, chocolate chips

*Approx. $1.50 - $3.00*

*protein: 8 g*

*fiber: 6 g*
VEGETARIAN SAMPLE DAY

BREAKFAST

PB and J smoothie
1 banana
1 cup frozen berries
3/4 cup greek yogurt
1 tbsp peanut butter
1 cup milk

Approx. $3.00 - $3.90
protein: 31 g
fiber: 8 g

AM SNACK

1/2 cup hummus
11 cup chopped carrots

Approx. $1.25 - 2.50
protein: 8 g
fiber: 10 g

LUNCH

Quinoa salad
1 cup cooked quinoa
1 cup canned chickpeas
1/4 avocado
1/4 cup diced cucumber
2 tbsp chopped parsley or cilantro
1 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp lemon juice
3 oz feta cheese

Approx. $4.30 - $6.50
protein: 27 g
fiber: 16 g
VEGETARIAN SAMPLE DAY

DINNER
Spaghetti with lentil marinara (makes 2 servings)

4 oz whole wheat spaghetti
1/2 cup can canned lentils
1/2 can diced tomatoes
1 tbsp tomato paste
1 cloves garlic
1 tbsp olive oil
1 tsp dried basil
1 tsp dried oregano
salt and pepper
parmesan cheese

Approx. $4.00
protein: 26 g
fiber: 11 g

PM SNACK
1 medium banana
1 greek yogurt

Approx. $0.95 - $2.00
protein: 20 g
fiber: 2 g
VEGAN SAMPLE DAY

BREAKFAST
High protein oatmeal
1/2 cup rolled oats
1 cup soy milk
2 tbsp chia seeds
2 tbps flaxseed
1/2 ripe banana
1/4 cup chopped nuts
1/2 tsp cinnamon
berries to top
Approx. $4.00 - 5.50
protein: 33 g
fiber: 20 g

AM SNACK
1/2 cup hummus
11 cup chopped carrots
Approx. $1.25 - 2.50
protein: 8 g
fiber: 10 g

LUNCH
Cold peanut salad
2 oz noodles
1 cup edamame
1/2 red bell pepper
1/2 cup cabbage
1 small carrot
green onions
cilantro
2 tbsp peanuts
Peanut dressing: 2 tbsp peanut butter, 1 tbsp soy sauce, 1 tbsp rice vinegar, 1/2 tbsp maple syrup, lime juice, garlic, water.
Approx. $3.00 - $4.00
protein: 24 g
fiber: 7 g
VEGAN SAMPLE DAY

DINNER
*Tofu and vegetable stir fry*

1/2 block extra-firm tofu
1 cup mixed vegetables (bell peppers, broccoli, carrots, snap peas)
1 tbsp vegetable oil
1 clove garlic
1/2 tbsp soy sauce
1/2 tbsp maple syrup
1/2 tbsp rice vinegar
1/2 tbsp cornstarch
1 tbsp water
salt and pepper

*Approx. $2.00 - $3.50*
*protein: 22 g*
*fiber: 5 g*

PM SNACK

1 apple
2 tbps peanut butter
optional: honey, cinnamon, chopped nuts, chocolate chips

*Approx. $1.50 - $3.00*
*protein: 8 g*
*fiber: 6 g*
SOCIAL MEDIA RED FLAGS

Watch out for social media accounts that:

- Emphasize rigid food rules or encourage restrictive eating.
- Deliver an “Eat like me, look like me” approach.
- Promote certain food brands, herbal supplements or weight-loss systems—especially when those posts are sponsored.
- Label foods as “good” or “bad.”

RECIPES

- https://therealfooddietitians.com/
- https://www.jessicagavin.com/recipe-index/
- https://www.instagram.com/bakedbymelissa/?hl=en
- https://plantbasedwithamy.com/recipes/
- https://www.instagram.com/nutritionbykylie/
- https://www.budgetbytes.com/category/recipes/

ATHLETE RESOURCES

https://sportsrd.org/downloadable-resources/
RESOURCES

BOOKS

- **Intuitive Eating** by Evelyn Tribole and Elyse Resch
  Read this if you want to gain more insights regarding intuitive eating!
- **The Food Mood Connection** by Uma Naidoo MD
  Read this if you want a more science-y look into how our food and gut health impact our mood and brain health!
- **How to Eat** by Thich Nhat Hanh
  Read this to get a look into mindfulness and eating!
- **Gentle Nutrition** by Rachel Hartley RD
  Read this for recipe ideas, tips, and trips to build a healthy relationship with your food and body!

PODCASTS

- **Maintenance Phase**
  Fad diets, body image and debunking common nutrition myths
- **The Find Food Freedom Podcast**
  Body image and building a healthy relationship with food
- **The Eat for Endurance Podcast**
  Fueling for sports
- **Uphill Athlete Podcast**
  Training and nutrition for endurance athletes