

## The benefits of breakfast

**The importance of breakfast is in its title, its breaking the overnight fast!**

The body uses fuels that are readily available in the blood stream. After sleeping and 8-10 hours, without any intake of food, the body then becomes ready for a refill of easily accessible energy to be used during the day.

*In the same way you wouldn't set out on a long drive when the petrol light on in your car, you also don't want to head out for the day with no fuel in the system – as you won't get very far!*

Within 30 minutes of waking up the body is like a sponge in anticipation of absorbing energy from food so there is fuel available to use in the blood. If this opportunity is passed **your metabolism starts to slow down**, and will stay slow. Your body is then forced to find energy through breaking down the body's stores which is a slow and inefficient process and it will most likely come from breaking down muscle mass which will further slow metabolism.

The body's response to this delay in food intake, especially with a high energy demand, is to shift into 'conservation mode' where it holds on to what energy it has rather than burning it up, and putting it to use. If this happens at training it might mean not lifting as heavy or not running as fast. Some people might not eat before an early training because they aren't hungry that early. It might be best to view a light meal as a function to aid training performance and outcomes rather than food for pleasure or to fill up.

What does skipping breakfast mean for the rest of the day?

When the body feels it has been starved of adequate energy for a period of time it drives appetite and hunger to encourage the replacement of that load that was missed. When you do start to eat later in the day it may lead to consuming larger meals than required and irregular snacking to build energy stores for the next long fasting period. This energy imbalance can have a negative impact on blood glucose levels, appetite, performance and potentially weight gain.

### Pre early training breakfast

A small, low fibre, high carbohydrate snack will be adequate to get the body using fuel more effectively and kick start the metabolism, including

- A banana, or fruit
- Toast with jam or honey
- Rice cakes
- Glass light milk or juice
- Low fat yoghurt

### Regular daily / post training breakfast

Follow training or just to start the day with an adequate, high fibre and balanced breakfast, choices could include:

- A bowl of wholegrain cereal or porridge and low fat milk or yoghurt
- A low fat milk and yoghurt smoothie with fresh fruit blended
- Grains toast with a protein source like egg or low fat cheese.
- Toast with spreads + protein shake

PRINCIPAL PARTNER