

Nutrition for the Freshman: Your First Year of High School Track

A friendly, direct guide for 14-year-old freshman athletes navigating nutrition during their first year of high school XC or Track, covering school day fueling, first meet prep, and day-in-the-life meal templates for different event groups.

ACCESS

Free resource

AUDIENCE

athlete / parent

READ TIME

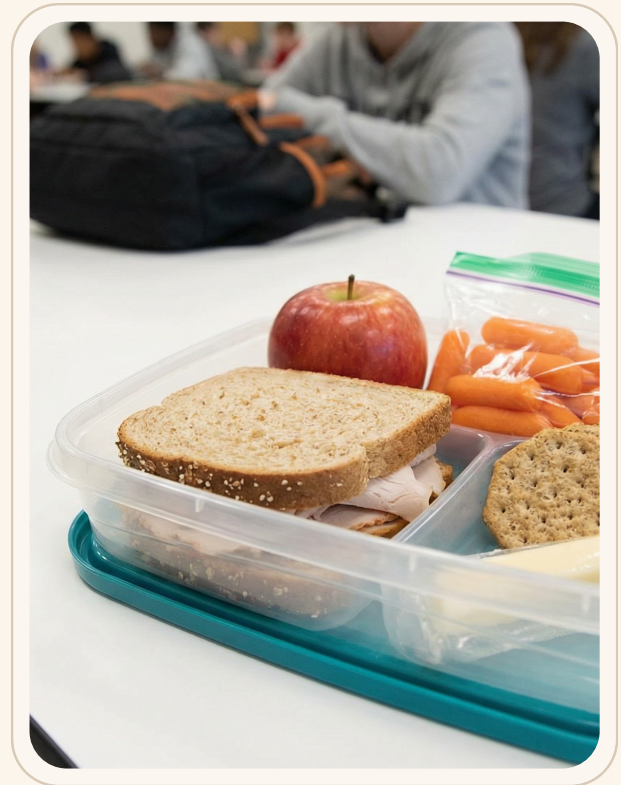
9 min

AUDIENCE

Athlete + Parent

WHY THIS MATTERS

Hey.

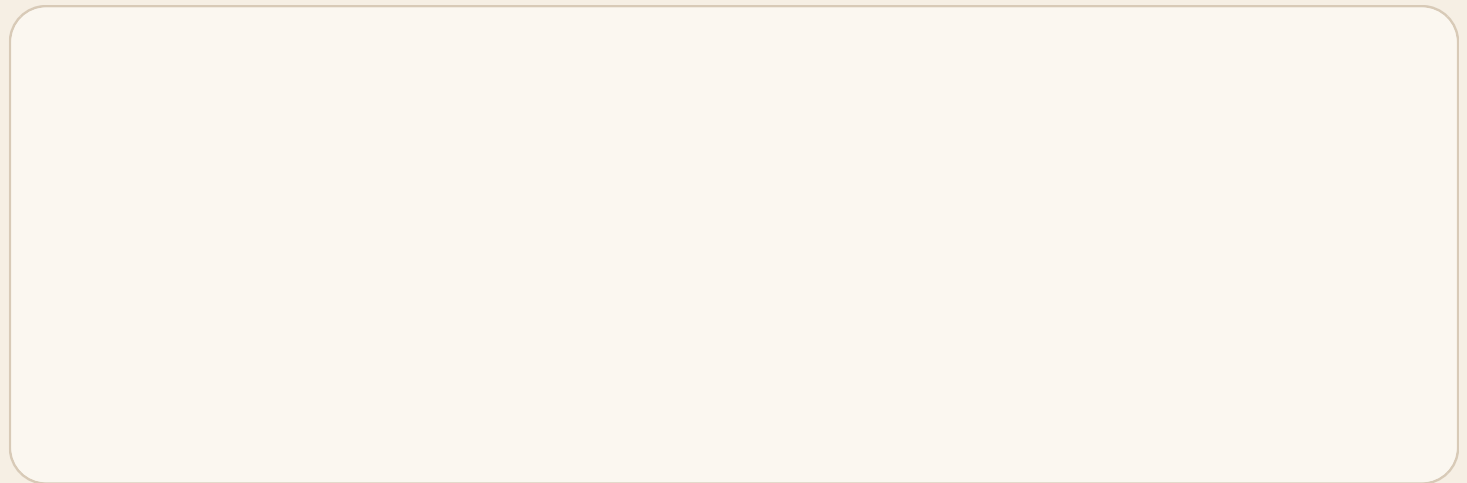


Nutrition for the Freshman: Your First Year of High School Track

QUICK START

Start here

A friendly, direct guide for 14-year-old freshman athletes navigating nutrition during their first year of high school XC or Track, covering school day...



KEY POINTS

Hey. This one's for you — not your parents, not your coach. You.

- You just started high school track or cross country, which means two things are happening simultaneously: you're...
- This guide will tell you exactly what to eat, when to eat it, and why it matters — in plain language, without making...

YOUR BODY IS DOING TWO THINGS AT ONCE

Here's something that might surprise you: right now, at 14, 15, or 16, your body is...

- **Project 1: Growing.** Your skeleton is adding bone density. Your muscles are developing. Your organs are growing...
- **Project 2: Training.** You're running or throwing or jumping, sometimes twice a day, and your body is adapting to...

WHY YOU NEED MORE FOOD THAN YOUR NON-ATHLETE FRIENDS

If you're eating lunch with non-athlete friends who have one slice of pizza and call it...

- Your friends who don't have daily practice are burning maybe 1,600 to 2,000 calories a day on growth and basic...
- Don't apologize for being hungry. Don't eat less because someone comments on how much you're eating. Don't compare...

CONTEXT

Why You Need More Food Than Your Non-Athlete Friends

If you're eating lunch with non-athlete friends who have one slice of pizza and call it done, and you finish three slices and still feel a little hungry — that's not weird.

If you're eating lunch with non-athlete friends who have one slice of pizza and call it done, and you finish three slices and still feel a little hungry — that's not weird. That's physics.

Your friends who don't have daily practice are burning maybe 1,600 to 2,000 calories a day on growth and basic movement. You're burning 2,500 to 3,500 or more. The gap is real.

Don't apologize for being hungry. Don't eat less because someone comments on how much you're eating. Don't compare your appetite to people who aren't doing what you're doing.

What to Eat Before Morning Practice

Morning practice is rough.

A banana + a handful of crackers or a granola bar

A glass of milk or non-dairy milk + a piece of toast (Note: full chocolate milk this close to...)

A small bowl of cereal with milk

A yogurt cup with a piece of fruit

Your First Track Meet: What to Bring, What to Eat, What to Expect

Your first high school track meet will probably be a little chaotic.

Water bottle (at least 20–24 oz, refillable)

2 OR 3 SNACKS

banana, granola bars, peanut butter crackers, or sports chews

Sports drink (Gatorade, Powerade) for during/after events

A small, easy recovery snack for after your event

When to Talk to Your Coach About Nutrition Concerns

Your coach wants you to perform well and stay healthy.

You're frequently exhausted in a way that doesn't improve with rest

You're getting injured more than seems normal

You're losing weight when you don't intend to

You feel dizzy, lightheaded, or weak during or after practice regularly

You have questions about supplements, weight, or eating that feel awkward to ask a parent

Action Item (For This Week)

Pick two non-negotiables and do them every school day:

Eat breakfast before first class.

Pack one pre-practice snack in your bag.

The Upperclassmen Do It Differently — And That's Okay

You may notice that the seniors on your team eat differently, train differently, and handle competition differently than you do.

You may notice that the seniors on your team eat differently, train differently, and handle competition differently than you do. Some of this is experience. A lot of it is biology.

A 17-year-old who has been training seriously for two or three years has a more developed aerobic system, more muscle mass, and a body that has adapted to athletic stress in ways yours hasn't yet. That means they can run farther, lift heavier, and recover faster — and their nutritional needs are calibrated to that.

Don't try to eat exactly what a senior eats if it doesn't match your training load. Don't try to train at a senior's volume in your first year. Development takes time. Your job in year one is to train consistently, stay healthy, and build habits that will serve you for four years.

QUICK REFERENCE

Key targets to keep in view

Use these as planning anchors when you turn the manual into weekly actions.

KEY POINTS

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Treat this as a decision anchor, not a trivia stat.

YOUR BODY IS DOING TWO THINGS AT ONCE

Here's something that might surprise you: right now, at 14, 15, or 16, your body is using energy for two different...

Treat this as a decision anchor, not a trivia stat.

WHY YOU NEED MORE FOOD THAN YOUR NON-ATHLETE FRIENDS

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COACH TAKEAWAYS

Quick guide

These are the cues worth repeating before the week gets busy.

Your First Track Meet: What to Bring, What to Eat, What to Expect: Your first high school track meet will probably be a little chaotic. You'll be warming up, then waiting, then warming...

The night before:

The Upperclassmen Do It Differently — And That's Okay: You may notice that the seniors on your team eat differently, train differently, and handle competition differently...

A 17-year-old who has been training seriously for two or three years has a more developed aerobic system, more muscle...

When to Talk to Your Coach About Nutrition Concerns: Your coach wants you to perform well and stay healthy. Most coaches are genuinely open to nutrition conversations,...

Talk to your coach if:

WHAT TO DO NEXT

Use it this week

Use "Nutrition for the Freshman: Your First Year of High School Track" as the one-page recap for this topic.

BOTTOM LINE

A friendly, direct guide for 14-year-old freshman athletes navigating nutrition during their first year of high school XC or Track, covering school day fueling, first...

Source topics: freshman track nutrition • high school athlete nutrition beginner • 14 year old athlete diet • first year track • high school cross country nutrition • teen athlete meal plan