



Hunting Fitness & Nutrition

Exclusive Huntin' Fool Article By Mark Paulsen

The Importance of Nutrient Timing

Timing is critical when it comes to providing the body with proper fuel to recover from physically demanding hunts. I'm talking about those hunts that often last anywhere from 3-10 days and just beat you up! In the athletic world this critical period, which specifically addresses physical recovery, is called "Nutrient Timing."

In previous articles I have covered what to eat, but I now want to impress upon you the importance of when to eat. In fact, if two hunters ate the exact same diet, the hunter who times their eating correctly will feel and perform much better. The edge that you can get from nutrient timing can make all the difference in the success of those highly anticipated hunts. My understanding of the importance of nutrient timing has led me to a very simple equation, $N=P+E$, "The Nutritional affects the Physical which affects the Emotional." I can't tell you how many adrenaline charged hunters I see come out West all fired up to shoot a trophy animal only to get so exhausted on the first day that they mentally throw in the towel. You can see it on their faces and it's depressing to witness. The quote often used in athletics which states that "Fatigue makes cowards of us all" is very appropriate. I hope the following information will open some eyes as to the role of proper nutrition in the overall scheme of things so as to steer clear of this totally avoidable situation.

To understand the basic dynamics behind what I'm talking about here, let me first explain the two primary ongoing states of your muscle, one being catabolism (muscle breakdown) which occurs during and after exercise while step two is anabolism (rebuilding) which your body is preparing for after exercise, provided you feed it the right nutrients. If you do provide the right nutrients immediately following activity, you can change this from a highly catabolic state to a highly anabolic state, thus promoting full recovery. The kicker here is that if you delay the nutrients, even if you provide them later on, you'll never get the same effect. In other words, there is a window of opportunity, and once you miss it, it's gone! There is an ongoing debate as to how long this window stays open but I am a firm believer in using "within 30 minutes" as the optimum time to stop the breakdown and reverse the engines toward recovery. In fact, the sooner the better. I generally ask my athletes to consume a post-workout shake immediately when walking off the field or out of the weightroom.

Now that you understand the timing issue let's turn our attention to what exactly this post-recovery nutrition should be comprised of. The foods that you consume during this period should be 75% carbohydrate and 25% protein. Try to minimize any fats as this would slow down the absorption of the carbs and proteins. Eating a lean meat sandwich,

pasta, or rice with tuna, a protein-containing energy bar or a liquid based meal replacement would work well (this is what I take since it is light and I can pack it in and just add it to water). Be creative but try to hit the proper carb/protein ratio.

It is also suggested that you focus on replacing the fluids that were lost during the activity with a sports drink mixture that contains not only electrolytes but carbohydrates and amino acids similar to those found in Wilderness Athlete Hydrate and Recover product.

Where most of us fall short in implementing this strategy is when we get back from a hard morning or evening hunt and we are tired and just want to sit down for a while around the fire. Often stories of exciting opportunities missed abound and it's easy to let the window of recovery close on you. And let's be honest, exhaustion and appetite don't exactly go hand in hand! This is where the mistake is made. This routine of replenishment needs to become a discipline or you will physically pay the price and begin to wear down. Once you have consumed these initial calories to start the recovery process you are free to relax and take a couple hours before eating a larger more substantive meal. Once you feel the effects of incorporating a nutritional recovery approach when hunting, there will be no turning back.

Hunt Long- Hunt Strong. —Coach P



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

"Coach P" is one of the premier strength, conditioning, and nutrition experts in the country. Mark has been the Director of Athletic Performance for over 22 years at the University of New Mexico and is widely regarded as one of the best in the business. Mark is also the founder of Wilderness Athlete.

(*Disclaimer: Consult a physician before starting any fitness or nutrition program, participate in any physical activity at your own risk)