



Performance Nutrition for Judokas

General Topics:

What are the physical demands of competitive judo?

Judo is mainly anaerobic, with elements of aerobic activity. One particular study shows that the body switches between both aerobic and anaerobic pathways during a match depending on the need.

(<http://www.jssm.org/combat/2/3/v6combat2-3.pdf>)

Nutritionally speaking, this means eating to support the body's recovery from anaerobic exercise so that symptoms like muscle soreness and lactic acid build-up are minimal.

What difference does quality nutrition make?

- reduces stress (physical and psychological)
- speeding up recovery time
- reduces lactic acid build-up
- increases mental ability
- gives your body quality building blocks it needs to regenerate

Identifying sport specific demands of judo: making weight and proper hydration

Making Weight:

- the key is to identify whether a lower weight category is feasible performance-wise
- allow sufficient time to get down to your weight category
- weight loss through dehydration or starvation will affect performance, strength, endurance, even mental clarity: this will not help win a match!
- Eat nutrient dense foods. Everything you eat needs to have a purpose.
 - Whole foods: Seeds, nuts, leafy greens, beans, essential fatty acids, lean meats, fish, fruits, whole grains (quinoa, brown rice...)
 - try a whole grain product like Ruth's "Chia Goodness". It is nutritionally dense and very filling.
- avoid "fillers" such as refined sugar, processed/packaged foods, white breads, processed

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meats, transfats

- EFA's are essential to proper weight levels as well as optimal performance. Include flaxseed oil, hemp oil, codliver oil, salmon even if you are eating to cut weight.

Proper Hydration:

- hydration is critical for athletic performance: water is needed for energy, digestion and toxin elimination
- dropping weight through sweat kits or other methods of dehydration is not recommended and counterproductive to performance
- dehydration could put your body in survival mode and fat will accumulate while protein gets burned for energy
- coconut water is excellent as a natural sports drink

Foods to include: pre-workout, during, post-workout, competition

- eating certain foods for certain activities can give you that edge to win

Foods to avoid

- as an athlete, everything you eat has an effect. It's up to you whether it will have a positive or negative impact
- read ingredient labels!
- avoid foods that require unnecessary energy to digest.
- foods to avoid: processed/packaged foods; refined sugars, luncheon meats, transfats (including canola oil), all margarine, white bread, coffee, tea, chocolate, soft drinks, alcohol, artificial sweeteners

Vitamins and Supplements for athletic performance

- vitamin B complex is extremely important
- always check with Canadian Anti-Doping Program, even for natural supplements

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Let's look at what to eat when training:

Pre-Workout:

- fruits (eg dates, bananas, papayas, mangos), coconut oil, energy puddings
- simple carbohydrate
- easily digestible
- if you have food cravings a couple of hours before the start of exercise, it's a sign that the body is fatigued because it's nutritional requirements have not been met in the days prior
- complex carbohydrates require energy to break down (energy that can be used for training)
- too much protein may result in muscle cramping (protein needs fluid in order to be metabolized). Protein is for building muscle not for fueling. If protein is burned for fuel, the result is acidic which ends up with a decline in endurance

During workout:

- keeping well hydrated and consuming easily digestible nutrients is key
- sport drinks and sport gels: they contain electrolytes and simple carbohydrates
- stay away from commercial sport drinks: they contain refined sugar, artificial colors/flavors

Immediately after workout:

- the 45 minutes following the work out is the fuel window; this is the best time to consume high quality food. Muscles will be better able to absorb the carbs in food and speeding recovery
- a simple carbohydrate is best and easily digestible
- if you don't "fuel" up, your body may perceive this as stress and retain fat while burning muscle
- the ideal food will contain very little fat, no fiber (both of them slow the rate at which carbs enter the bloodstream)
- 4:1 carb to protein ratio. Alkaline source protein. A small amount of protein helps speed glycogen synthesis but too much protein will slow recovery
- try a recovery pudding. A pudding is easier to digest than a solid food.

Post-workout (an hour after your post-workout snack):

- time for a complete nutrient rich meal
- high quality protein, omega 3 fatty acids
- if after a really draining workout, a smoothie would be best

Alkalizing your diet:

Why?

- Alkalizing foods are important for the body's post-exercise repair process
- lactic acid build up, general stress and acid forming foods will lead to muscular stiffness

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