

Created by Kelly Drager Performance Dietitian

MANAGING THE ENERGY EQUATION

The ins and outs

ENERGY EQUATION

The energy equation involves your energy needs and the fuel required to meet those needs

Daily energy needs are primarily made up of:

1. **Resting metabolic rate** (the greatest contributor to daily energy needs, accounting for 60-70%).
2. The energy required for **processing and storing energy nutrients** (~10%)
3. **Activity** which includes **both prescribed and unprescribed activity** throughout the day.

For athletes, there will be a changes in activity energy needs as sport and training programming change throughout the phases of a season. Modifications to fueling should reflect these changes to ensure optimal adaptations, recovery, health and performance.

In times of active rest or when daily activity is reduced it can be difficult to modify eating to account for these lower energy needs. We don't make food choices just to satisfy our energy needs. People's food choices are influenced by lifestyle, psychological factors, social environment, physical environment, economic status, and sensory input. Awareness of how your energy needs are changing and what influences your own food choices, are the first steps in creating an effective energy plan.

ROUTINE

Create an eating schedule

Go through the process of actually writing out your new eating schedule that will reflect your current situation. A few tips include ensuring to eat every 3-4 hours and keeping your main meals. Usually they contain a high portion of micronutrients (vitamins / minerals / fibre) and tend to offer a blend of whole food options of carbohydrate, protein and fat.

CHECKING IN

Commit to monitoring that maintains a sense of wellness

This could be checking in around how your body is responding to your new energy equation. Some athletes monitor mass, strength, fitness and their overall feelings of well being . Having a combination of check in tools is important and not to only focus on weight changes. Discuss with your IST members appropriate options for you.

COPING STRATEGIES

Dealing with boredom, stress and emotions

Include other positive coping strategies that don't always involve food. Seek out tasks that engage your brain in a new way, require focus, are time consuming, and tactile. Connect with others, get outside for fresh air and nature, listen to music, watch a movie, have a hot bath or even let yourself have a good cry

LIMIT EXTREMES

Stay steady

Avoid taking extreme measures on either side of the energy equation. The adjustments the body makes to account for these extreme measures can have negative health and performance consequences. Making rash decisions about activity and food choices can lead to more stress and anxiety. Seek support if you find you're struggling to find balance.