PERFORMANCE NUTRITION FOR THE TACTICAL ATHLETE

“No man has the right to be an amateur in the matter of physical training. It is a shame for a man to grow old without seeing the beauty and strength of which his body is capable.” -Socrates
Disclaimer

We are not registered dietitians, but we can arm you with basic knowledge to take ownership over fueling your body for optimal performance.
Outline

- Instill new mentality: fueling vs feeding
- Learn how to build the tactical athlete's (AKA You!) plate
- Fueling on and off shift
- Caffeine, Supplements, Alcohol
- Provide solutions for simple meal prepping and easy snacks
Food for thought

You are a paid, trained professional whose strength, endurance, mental toughness, technical skills, and tactical proficiency influence the success of your team....

.......sounds a whole lot like...

Professional athletes!!
What is a tactical athlete?

- Tactical athletes are the professionally trained personnel responding to emergencies.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tactical Athlete</th>
<th>Typical Athlete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Competition” is sometimes life or death</td>
<td>Competition is Win/Loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Competition” dates are not certain</td>
<td>Competition dates are known months sometimes years in advance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat specialized, but must be jack of all trades</td>
<td>Specialized for their sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recovery schedule (sleep, fueling, environment) is often times compromised due to demands of the job</td>
<td>Recovery schedule (sleep, fueling, environment) is often times controllable for optimizing performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Feeding versus Fueling

- Feeding is eating with no inherent purpose behind our fuel source

- Fueling is eating with the purpose of maximizing physical and mental performance

- Low grade fuel = low grade performance
Fueling is NOT...

Boring and Rigid

Dry

Tasteless
Fueling IS...

Tasty

Balanced

Room to indulge *within reason*
Why should fueling matter to me?

As a high performance vehicle, how do you want to run???

Low grade fuel = low grade performance

• Short-term: Improve body composition, helps me through my shift
• Long-term: Build healthy habits now for a long, fulfilling career AND life afterward
• BOTTOM LINE: Lives may depend on your ability to perform.
The Tactical Athlete’s Plate
Components of the Tactical Athlete’s Plate

- Carbohydrates = Energy
- Lean Protein = Recovery and Rebuilding
- Veggies = Vitamins and Minerals
- Fats = Vitamin Absorption, Taste, and Satiety
- Water = Hydration
• This template is ideal for tactical athletes looking to maintain their current body composition or lean up
• This template is also a great guide on an easy training day or recovery day (< 30 min cardio, light circuits, easy total body strength training)
The Tactical Athlete’s Plate-Moderate Training

- This template is ideal for tactical athletes that are fairly active and want to maintain their current body composition or increase their muscle mass at a steady rate.
- This template is also a great guide on moderate training days (circuits > 30 min, high intensity intervals, 30m+ of cardio, moderate total body strength training)
• This template is ideal for tactical athletes that are very active and need the additional carbohydrates to restore glycogen stores for the next training session.
• This template is also a great guide on hard training days (high intensity circuits > 30 min, >60m cardio, hard total body strength training)
Example Day of Fueling On-Shift (High Call Volume Shift)*

*Amount of food is dependent on the individual, this is simply an example*

Medic Shift

- **1000**: Eat snack after equipment check
  - 2 hard boiled eggs, handful of baby carrots, 8 oz water

- **1100-1400**: 2-4 calls (routine)
  - 20-40 oz water
  - Piece of fruit from EMS break room in hospital

- **1400**: Packed lunch from home
  - Grilled chicken breast, quinoa, steamed broccoli
  - 8 oz water

- **1400-1930**: 2-5 calls (1 very rough call)
  - Beef jerky stick from your cooler
  - 20-40 oz of water

- **2000**: Tired, but need to fuel, not just feed
  - Call ahead to Chipotle for bowl with greens, black beans, steak, pico, corn relish, tomatoes, your choice of guac or cheese
  - 8 oz water

- **2100-2300**: 2 calls
  - Optional Dessert: piece of fruit with cottage cheese or Greek yogurt

- **2300-0600**: Sleep, 2-6 calls
  - 6-8oz water every wake up

- **0730**: Breakfast
  - Oatmeal, cottage cheese or Greek yogurt, 8 oz water

- **0800-1000**: 2-3 calls (routine)
  - A couple of clementines
  - 20 oz water
Example Day of Fueling On-Shift (High Call Volume Shift)*

*Amount of food is dependent on the individual, this is simply an example*

**Firefighter Shift**

- **1230-Eat lunch after equipment check**
  - Grilled salmon, frozen broccoli, sweet potato fries, small drizzle of olive oil, 20 oz water
- **1400-Just finished workout**
  - 8 oz chocolate milk
- **1600-Snack between calls**
  - Beef jerky, apple, small handful of almonds, 10 oz water
- **1900-Dinner**
  - Rice, crockpot Mexican beef, mixed frozen veggies, ½ avocado
  - 20 oz of water
- **2100-Dessert (optional)**
  - Your choice of Greek yogurt, cottage cheese, or a piece of fruit
  - 8 oz water
- **1230-0300: 3 calls**
  - 8 oz water every wake up, dried fruits and nuts between calls
- **0430-0830: Sleep**
- **0830-Breakfast**
  - Oatmeal, bacon, cottage cheese or Greek yogurt, 20 oz water
- **0900-1145: 3 calls**
  - A couple of clementines
  - 12 oz water
Example Day of Fueling On-Shift (Lower Call Volume Shift)*

*Amount of food is dependent on the individual, this is simply an example*

Firefighter Shift

- 1230-Eat lunch after equipment check
  - Grilled salmon, more frozen broccoli, small drizzle of olive oil, 20 oz water
- 1500-Just finished workout
  - 8 oz chocolate milk
- 1630-Snack
  - Beef jerky, apple, small handful of almonds, 10 oz water (if no calls, reduce portion sizes except for water)
- 1645-1830-2 calls
  - 8-20 oz water after calls
- 1900-Dinner
  - Smaller portion of white rice, crockpot Mexican beef, mixed frozen veggies, ½ avocado
  - 20 oz of water
- 2100-Optional Dessert
  - Your choice of Greek yogurt, cottage cheese or a piece of fruit
  - 8 oz of water
- 0230-1 call
  - 8 oz water. If truly hungry after water, have a piece of fruit
- 0430-0830: Sleep
- 0830-Breakfast
  - Oatmeal, turkey bacon, cottage cheese or Greek yogurt, 20 oz water
Example Day of Fueling Off-Shift (Training Day)*

*Amount of food is dependent on the individual, this is simply an example*

- **0800-Wake up**
  - Banana with peanut butter and 12 oz of water
- **0830-0915: Rowing, Pushup, KB Swing Circuit**
  - 20 oz water throughout workout
  - 8 oz chocolate milk
- **1000-1200: Son’s/daughter’s sporting event**
  - 20 oz water
  - Baby carrots
- **1230-On the go healthy lunch**
  - Chick-Fil-A sandwich (skip the bun, substitute with lettuce), fruit cup or side salad, 12 oz water
- **1330-1430: Nap**
  - 12 oz of water
- **1430-1730: Quality time with family (outside)**
  - 1 hard boiled egg, small fruit salad
- **1830-Dinner**
  - Greek salad, grilled steak, baked potato
  - 12 oz water
- **2100-Optional Dessert**
  - Your choice of Greek yogurt, cottage cheese, or a piece of fruit
  - 8 oz water

The images show a chart titled "Moderate Training" and another chart titled "Easy Training/Weight Management."
Example Day of Fueling Off-Shift (Recovery Day)*

*Amount of food is dependent on the individual, this is simply an example*

- **0700:** Wake up
  - 8-12 oz water upon waking up
  - Get kiddos ready for school

- **0730-0745:** Walk the kiddos to school
  - Low intensity movement (blood flow) on a recovery day is crucial!

- **0800:** Make breakfast
  - Egg, spinach, cheese, Canadian bacon omelet

- **0900-1200:** Side-gig, hobby, house work, or study time
  - Optional snack: piece of fruit
  - 20 oz of water

- **1230:** Lunch
  - Rotisserie chicken, frozen mixed veggies, strawberries
  - 20 oz of water

- **1300-1530:** Errands, Nap, Free time
  - A couple of clementines
  - 20 oz water

- **1600-1630:** Walk to pick up kiddo from school
- **1630-1730:** Mow the lawn
  - 20 oz water

- **1800:** Dinner
  - Grilled fish, veggie kabobs, side salad
  - 20 oz water

- **2100:** Optional Dessert
  - Your choice of Greek Yogurt, cottage cheese, or a piece of fruit
Daily Hydration and Fueling Goals

- **Hydration Goal**: Urine should be light lemonade color to clear to ensure proper hydration.

- **Daily Fueling Goal**: take in a combination of carbohydrates, lean protein, and vegetables every 2-3 hours.
  - **Meal Goals**
    - 3-4 meals/day that use one of the Tactical Athlete Plate Templates depending on activity level.
  - **Snack Goals**
    - Between meals, your snacks should be a combination of both carbohydrates and protein. Below are examples:
      - A smaller version of what you prepared for breakfast or lunch
      - 8-12oz of chocolate milk
      - Beef Jerky and some fruit
      - Hard-boiled eggs and a granola bar
      - Greek Yogurt with fruit and/or honey
Pre-Workout Fueling

• Meal 3-4 hours prior to exercise or any physically taxing evolution

• If feeling low on fuel within an hour or less of exercise, eat a combination of carbohydrates and a small amount of protein

• Always include 8-20oz of water with it
  o Piece of fruit and Greek Yogurt
  o ½ Peanut butter sandwich
  o Piece of Toast and cottage cheese
  o ½ hard boiled egg and ½ English muffin
  o Small bowl of oatmeal
  o ½ Protein shake (with fruit or other carbohydrate)

• If trying to manage weight, skip it (unless you’re training first thing in the morning) OR make portion size smaller
Post-Workout Fueling

• 15 min-30 min after training or any physically taxing evolution

• Always include 8-20oz of water with it
  o 8-12 oz chocolate milk
  o Milk and a peanut butter and jelly/honey sandwich
  o Protein shake (with fruit or other carbohydrate)
  o Hard boiled egg and a granola bar
  o Protein bar (with some carbohydrates)
  o Frozen breakfast sandwich
  o Instant oatmeal flavored with protein powder

• If trying to manage weight, skip it OR make portion size smaller
Time

• Our most valuable, yet misused resource.
  o “I don’t know how to cook.”
  o “I have too much to study to cook.”
  o “I don’t know what to get at the grocery store.”

• Look at how you actually spend your free time.
  o If it’s important to you, make it happen!

• Bottom Line: It doesn’t have to be time-consuming!
Meal Prep Hacks

- Crockpot Recipes
  - Set it and forget it!
  - Time effective, tasty, nutritious
- Cook in bulk
  - 1 cup rice/pasta or several potatoes will last you about a week
  - Freeze what you don’t eat and save it for weeks when time is short
- Freeze food for busy weeks
  - Grab and go when time is short
- Prepared foods at the grocery store
  - Rotisserie chicken, premade salad
  - Find the prepared meals that fit The Tactical Athlete’s Plate
- Frozen veggies
  - Eliminates cutting and washing
  - Microwave or oven
- Recruit a significant other or buddy for help
  - Teamwork makes the dream work!
Caffeine on performance

- Has been shown to improve mental acuity and nervous system sharpness in moderate doses
- Consume 60-90 minutes before prior to desired impact
- 3mg/kg bodyweight daily max (Ex. 90kg (198lb) individual’s daily max would be 270mg)
- 80-150 mg in 1 cup of coffee
- NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR QUALITY SLEEP
- Energy Drinks are not recommended because of high sugar content and lack of regulation on ingredients contained within the drink
- Caffeine is a diuretic, so make sure you are taking in enough water to stay hydrated.
Supplements

• The term defines itself; they simply *supplement* tactical athlete nutrition.

• Food first, and *only after consulting with a professional*, should supplements be considered.

• BOTTOM LINE: Eat real food! No amount of supplements can outperform a feeding vs fueling mentality.
Alcohol

- Will **NEGATIVELY** affect your performance in 3 ways:
  - Alcohol will dehydrate you
  - Upon consumption, your body stops other functions *just to break down alcohol*.
  - Alcohol negatively affects your sleep (it may help you fall asleep faster, but the quality will not be as deep and restorative)
Striking a Balance

- **It is possible to eat foods you enjoy AND reach your performance nutrition goals! (make Win/Win Choices)**

- Portion control is key

- **90%/10% Rule**
  - 3 meals/day = 21 meals/week
  - 10% of 21 = 2 meals a week that you can “cheat” within reason (aka watch your portions and slooooooooow down to truly enjoy!)

- Ice Cream? Treat yourself once in a while! Limit your serving by using a small bowl and slowly savor every bite.

- Drinking at a friend’s party? Do it! But go in with a game plan so it doesn’t turn into a 20 beer night.

- Diets and meal plans are okay for the short-term, but are not realistic for the long-term.

- **Long-term change comes when you create behaviors and habits that are repeatable, sustainable, and allow the freedom for balance when life happens**
Building Habits

• Try to slow down at meal time! This is difficult on shift, but when you can, aim for 25 minutes to finish your food. Treat each meal as a celebration.

• Stay hydrated to help prevent overeating

• Model your plate after one of the Tactical Athlete’s Plate depending on activity level

• Less processed foods satiate hunger more effectively (You’ll feel more full after eating baked potato than some potato chips)

• Consistent quality sleep (7-9 hours, dark) helps prevent cravings

• Include healthy fats and lean protein into meals and snacks to feel full
Take Home Points

• Fuel, don’t feed!
  o Purposeful, mindful eating
  o Your performance depends on it!

• Hydrate
  o Pee should be clear to LIGHT lemonade color

• Eat real food!
  o The closer it looks to when it was alive = more REAL (aka nutrient dense) food
  o Generally, the longer the ingredient list, the more processed it is
  o Stick to shopping the perimeter of the grocery store (Fresh food!)

• Put the Tactical Athlete’s Plate into practice.
Nutrition Resources

Wellness Website Nutrition Page

• https://atxpublicsafetywellness.com/fitness/nutrition