

6 Fuel Essentials for Marathon Day

Don't leave home without them.

By [Liz Applegate, Ph.D.](#) FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2016, 9:37 AM



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Your marathon race day checklist undoubtedly has your pace bracelet, bib number (and pins!), watch, singlet, shorts, socks, sneakers, and anti-chafe glide. But you also need to thoughtfully plan out your fuel bag. Before your next race, make sure you have these six essential items.

PACK YOUR BAG



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Water

While the course will be well-stocked with water at every aid station, you'll want fluids before the gun goes off. Bring a 16 to 20-ounce bottle of water to consume two hours before the start time. (Bigger races like Boston and New York have you sitting in

athlete's village for several hours.) This timing will allow you to make a few port-o-potty visits before heading to the start line.

Sports Drinks



2/6 MITCH MANDEL

Sports Drinks

It's important to top off your glycogen stores to keep you running stronger for longer. Sipping on one to two cups of sports drinks an hour before gun time is an easy way to get extra carbs (and to hydrate).

Prerun Snack



3/6 MITCH MANDEL

Prerun Snack

Unless you're running within an hour or so of your breakfast, you'll want a snack about an hour before the start. Aim for a high-carb meal with about 50 to 150 grams of carbohydrate that's easily digested and low in protein and fat. Bananas, energy bars, or eight ounces of sports drink are portable options that will give you a little kick once it's go time.

Chews or Gels



4/6 AMAZON

Chews or Gels

Stick these runner staples go in your waistband pocket, and toss them back around miles six to eight, 13, 18, 22 for a hit of carbs to keep your legs moving. You want to fuel with about 30 grams of carb per hour (up to 60 or even 90 grams for larger or speedier runners). But make sure to practice this type of fueling during training. Most gels and chews have about 25 grams of carbs per package.

Caffeinated Gel



5/6 GARY WANG

Caffeinated Gel

This secret weapon for mile 23 will not only energize your muscles and brain with carbs, but its caffeine (30 to 50 mg) will help you feel better. Studies show that a small dose of caffeine during your run will lower sense of perceived exertion, making the effort feel easier.

Electrolyte Tabs



6/6 AMAZON

Electrolyte Tabs

Runners who are heavy or salty sweaters, might benefit from a dose of electrolytes like Nuun, consumed with water. They're generally lower in calories than sports drinks, but help replenish lost electrolytes.