

Pre-Workout Carb Timing

Mini Guide



What's Inside:

- How to personalize portions
- Why pre-workout carbs matter
- The core timing rule
- Carb targets by timing window
- Food examples and meal ideas
- Common mistakes to avoid

Why Pre-Workout Carbs Matter

Carbs are your body's preferred fuel during training. Eating the right amount at the right time helps:

Top up muscle glycogen (stored energy)

Stabilize blood sugar

Improve performance + intensity

Support better workouts (which supports better physique changes)

The Core Rule (Keep It Simple)

The closer you get to training, the more you want:



Higher carbs



Lower fat



Lower fiber

Reason: fat + fiber slow digestion and can make you feel heavy, bloated, or sluggish mid-workout.

Timing & Carb Targets (Use This Every Time)



3–4 hours before training

Carb target: 1–2 g/kg bodyweight

Goal: Full glycogen top-up + balanced digestion



1–2 hours before training

Carb target: 0.5–1 g/kg bodyweight

Goal: Lighter fuel, low–moderate fiber/fat



30–60 minutes before training

Carb target: 20–30g quick carbs

Goal: Rapid energy, minimal fat + fiber

Adjust up/down based on session length and intensity.

Carb Power List (So You Can Estimate Fast)

Here are easy carb "building blocks":

- **Rolled oats:** ~27g carbs per **½ cup dry**
- **Brown rice:** ~45g carbs per **1 cup cooked**
- **Banana:** ~27g carbs per **1 medium**
- **Medjool dates:** ~18g carbs per **1 date**
- **Honey:** ~17g carbs per **1 tbsp**
- **Rice cakes:** ~7g carbs per **1 cake**
- **Pretzels:** ~22g carbs per **1 oz**



3–4 Hours Out Meal Ideas (50–80g carbs)

These are "slow-release" + more complete meals:

Chicken burrito bowl

brown rice + grilled chicken + salsa +
veggies (around ~60g carbs)

Turkey & hummus wrap

(whole grain) + **fruit** (around ~55g
carbs)

Teriyaki chicken rice bowl

jasmine rice + chicken + stir-fry
veggies + orange (around ~70g carbs)

1–2 Hours Out Meal Ideas (30–50g carbs)

Lighter options that still fuel a strong session:



Power oatmeal

½ cup oats + 1 banana + cinnamon (around ~45g carbs)



Rice cakes + PB&J style

rice cakes + a little PB + a little jam (around ~38g carbs)

- Keep PB modest if your stomach is sensitive (fat slows digestion)



30–60 Minutes Out (Quick Carbs Only)

If you're close to training, keep it simple:

- **Banana**
- **Dates**
- **Honey**
- **Rice cakes**
- **Pretzels**
- **Banana + honey** (fast energy)

Rule: quick carbs, **minimal fat/fiber**, easy on the stomach.

If You Already Ate Recently...

If you had a solid meal **1–2 hours before lifting**, you usually don't need to force another snack. Instead:



Hydrate



Start your warm-up



**Use a small quick-carb
option only if you feel low
energy**

"Do This, Not That" (Avoid These Mistakes)

Don't make your pre-workout snack super high-fat (digests slow)

Don't load up on fiber right before lifting (can wreck your stomach)

Don't try a "new" food before a hard session

- Test new foods on lighter training days first

Personalize Portions (So It Actually Works For You)

Your ideal carb amount depends on:



Bodyweight



**Workout demands (heavy
legs vs light upper)**



**Your overall
calories/macros**

Use this guide as your **higher-carb window** around training, and adjust based on your goal and plan.