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# What is the Purpose of a Recovery Drink?

While the list of health benefits exercise provides is lengthy, exercise also depletes your body of important nutrients and energy. Consuming a recovery drink that contains the right types of nutrients at the right times following your workouts can make a considerable difference in your exercise results and overall health. Always consult a qualified health professional for guidance when making changes to your diet or exercise routine.

### Timing

Recovery drinks help replenish fluids and energy lost during your workout and prepare you for your next workout. For the first two hours after exercise your liver produces glycogen, the short-term storage form of glucose, at one-and-a-half times the normal rate. This is the best time to have a high-carbohydrate recovery drink. Consuming carbohydrates immediately after exercise also stimulates your pancreas to release insulin, which tells your cells to absorb glucose. During the next four hours glycogen production remains elevated, but gradually slows.

### Fatigue

If you exercise twice a day, consuming a carbohydrate-based recovery drink will ensure sufficient energy to fuel you through your second workout. It will also help you avoid potential injury and progress more rapidly toward your exercise goals. With time and regular training, your glycogen storage capacity increases by up to 20 percent. This translates to greater endurance and better performance in your chosen sport. Aim for 1-5 grams of carbohydrate for every kilogram of your



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*NOTE: Some sentiments contained within "What We're Reading" articles may not strictly conform with PROJECT: PFC's nutritional outlook. We read articles containing opposing information all the time and derive our nutritional philosophies from the latest science, the opinions of experts worldwide and our anecdotal experiences in the field. We keep an open mind and a strong affinity for fact-based evidence to help make the world of nutrition "Simple Again" for you.*

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### Aerobic Capacity

Your recovery drink can satisfy both your glucose requirements and your chocolate cravings. According to the University of Texas at Austin Department of Kinesiology and Health Education, low-fat chocolate milk is an ideal post-workout recovery drink for promoting more lean muscle mass and less fat. Protein in chocolate milk makes it a superior recovery drink to those with carbohydrates alone. It can also increase your strength, speed and aerobic capacity -- a measure of your body's ability to use oxygen -- by as much as two times.



## Body Composition

A study published in the June 2012 issue of the "Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research" found that a recovery drink containing carbohydrate, protein and ribose -- one of the building blocks of ATP, an important energy-carrying molecule -- may improve body composition in endurance athletes. Participants, all males in their mid 20s, consumed the test drink immediately after exercising five days per week for eight weeks. Results showed reduced body fat percentage within the first three to six weeks. Body weight, aerobic capacity and endurance did not change significantly in response to the recovery drink in this study.

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