

# Nutrition for the Recovering Athlete

## Goals

- Be consistent! Eating and drinking regularly throughout the day aids in tissue repair, bone health, and immune function.
- Consume 20-30g lean protein every 3-4 hours at each meal and before bed for optimal healing. Whole foods are encouraged over supplements.
- Consume a recovery meal/snack containing whole grains and protein within 30 minutes after physical therapy and training sessions.

## Calorie Balance

- Don't stop eating for fear of weight gain. Consuming too little energy will delay the healing process and lengthen the time it takes to return to your sport or prior activity level. Athletes should understand that some weight gain may be preferable to support a full recovery.
- Make your calories count to prevent unwanted weight gain. Limit empty calories such as fried foods and sugary drinks during the recovery period.

## Nutrients that Heal

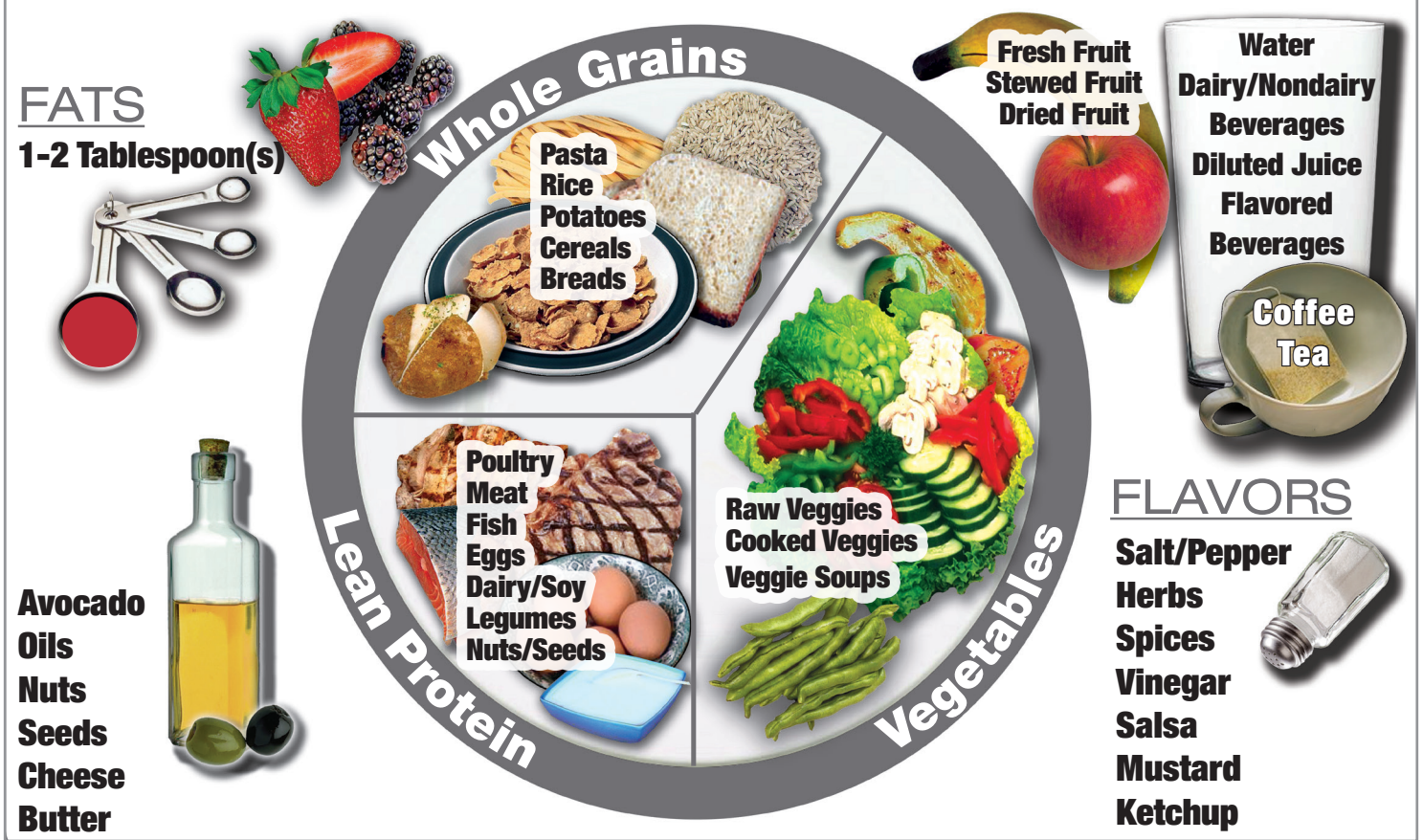
- **Protein promotes healing.**  
Low-fat dairy, beans, fish, chicken, lean meats, & eggs
- **Omega-3 fatty acids may reduce inflammation and swelling to speed up recovery.**  
Salmon, mackerel, and sardines
- **Vitamin C promotes immune function and supports collagen synthesis, aiding in tissue repair and wound healing.**  
Citrus fruits, pineapple, strawberries, tomatoes
- **Zinc is involved in wound healing and immune function.**  
Almonds, sunflower seeds, beef, seafood, and pork
- **Calcium and Vitamin D are essential for bone development and repair.**  
High-calcium foods include dairy products, leafy greens, and sardines.  
Vitamin D foods include salmon, egg yolks, and dairy products.



## Protein per serving

6 oz salmon	40g
4 oz chicken breast/lean beef	27g
1 cup Greek yogurt	21g
1/2 cup Legumes (beans, peas, lentils)	7g
1 veggie burger	6-16g
1 cup Greek yogurt	21g
1 cup 1% milk	8g
1 cup soy milk	7g
1 large egg	6g

# MODERATE TRAINING:



## Sample meal plan

8am	Breakfast	Oatmeal with peanut butter, berries, chia seeds, milk
9:30am	Rehab	Water
11am	Post Rehab Fuel	High protein milk
12pm	Lunch	Turkey sandwich on wheat w/ spinach, tomato, sliced avocado; Greek yogurt with berries; water
3pm	Snack	Smoothie made with milk, mango, pineapple, spinach
6pm	Dinner	Grilled chicken, zucchini & squash, brown rice, water

Consult with our sports dietitian to address individual goals and adjusted needs when recovering from an injury.  
Call 936-267-7300

Handout adapted from Sports, Cardiovascular, and Wellness Nutrition (SCAN)

References: Tipton, Kevin D. "Nutritional Support for Exercise-Induced Injuries." Sports Medicine, vol. 45, no. S1, 2015, pp. 93–104., doi:10.1007/ s40279-015-0398-4.