

Nutrition Tips for Pickleball Players



Content provided by **Amy Goodson, MS, RD, CSSD, LD**
on behalf of The Quaker Oats Company

Fueling for pickleball can help your play, but the amount of extra nutrition and hydration you need is determined by your intensity of play. On average, an individual burns approximately 350 calories per hour of moderate pickleball play. Pick up the pace and you might burn a little more, slow it down and just have fun and you might burn a little less. Either way, your goal should be to come to your pickleball game adequately fueled and hydrated.

Everyday Nutrition Tips for Recreational Pickleball

Fuel Consistently



Consuming small, frequent meals and snacks throughout the day can help keep your blood sugar and your energy levels stable. Focus on eating balanced, nutrient-rich meals with a good mix of carbohydrates, protein and healthy fats. Whole grains like oats, lean protein sources like lean meat and low or nonfat dairy and colorful produce should be the foundation.

Meet Daily Hydration Needs



No matter your intensity of pickleball, proper hydration is essential. Drink water throughout the day and bring a water bottle to the court. Everyone's needs are different based on a variety of factors, but a general rule of thumb for every day hydration is to take your body weight and divide it in half. That number is your goal in fluid ounces (75 fluid ounces for a 150 lb. person) throughout the day.

Enjoy a Pre-Pickleball Snack



Try to eat a pre-game meal 2-4 hours before play. This meal should be a balanced plate of carbohydrates and protein, plus include 0.07 to 0.10 fluid ounces per pound of body weight (roughly 10-15 total ounces of fluid for a 150 lb. person). Then, if you feel like you want to top off your energy tank, consume a small snack containing carbohydrates 30-60 minutes before playing.

Hydrate While Playing

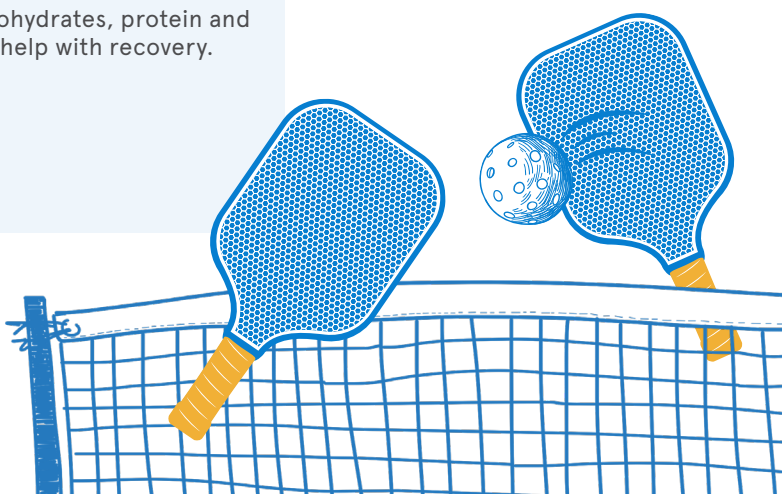


In addition to your daily hydration, consume 5-10 ounces of fluid for every 20 minutes of exercise. If your game will be 90 minutes or less, stick with water or water with added electrolytes, especially if it's hot and humid outside.

Recover After Playing



Within 45 minutes of playing, replenish with a combination of carbohydrates, protein and fluid to help with recovery.



Nutrition Tips for Intense Pickleball

Create a Fuel Plan



If you are preparing for a pickleball tournament where you could play for hours at a time on repeat, you must have a fuel plan! Fill your bag full of nutrient-rich, shelf stable snacks to help fuel your games. Schedule phone/watch reminders or set an alarm to fuel and hydrate throughout the day so you don't get caught up in the excitement and end up under-fueled and dehydrated.

Load Up with Complex Carbs



For more intense sessions or a full day of tournament play, increase your intake of complex carbohydrates (whole grains like oats and fruit) at each meal and snack the day leading up to play. This will help ensure you have adequate glycogen (carbohydrate) stores to provide energy to hit the court strong.

Replenish Fluids



Maintain a hydration strategy that includes both water and electrolytes, consuming 5-10 ounces every 20 minutes. During intense play, especially in hot and/or humid weather, consider an electrolyte or sports drink to replace sodium. Weighing yourself before and after play can help estimate how much fluid you've lost and need to replace. Rehydrate with 20-24 ounces per pound lost within 3-6 hours following the event.

Snack Between Sessions

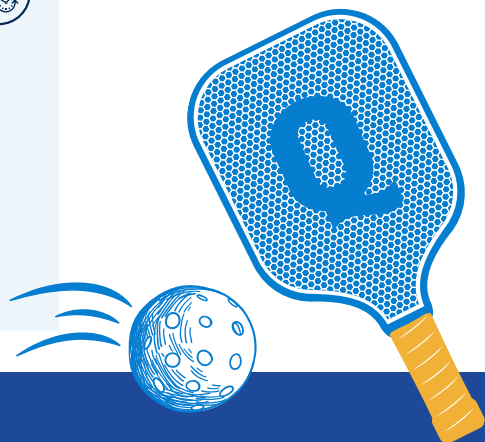


For sessions lasting well over 60-90 minutes, bring quick-digesting carbs that can come from foods such as Quaker Chewy Granola Bars, bananas, carbohydrate chews/gels and/or sports drinks to help maintain play.

Prioritize Protein for Recovery



After intense play, consume 15-25 grams of high-quality protein within 45 minutes to an hour to aid in muscle recovery. Then, finish off recovery within two hours with a meal containing a 3:1 or 4:1 carb-to-protein ratio for optimal recovery.



How Oats Can Help Fuel Your Pickleball Game

Pickleball Pre-Game Snack Examples:

Oat Energy Bites

Combine rolled oats, peanut butter, honey and protein powder. Form into small balls for a quick, pick-me-up snack.

Overnight Oats with Banana and Almond Butter

Mix oats with milk, sliced banana and a spoonful of almond butter. Let it sit overnight for a quick and filling pre-game snack.

Oatmeal with Berries and Honey

Cook oats and top with fresh berries and a drizzle of honey. This provides a good balance of carbs for energy to help fuel your game.

During Pickleball Tournament Snack Examples:

Oat Granola

Made with oats, honey and dried fruit to help fuel your body while you're playing.

Hydration

Pair all snacks with fluids like water or sports drinks.

Pickleball Post-Game Snack Examples:

Protein-Packed Oatmeal

Prepare oats with milk, then stir in a scoop of protein powder and top with fruit for a carb-protein recovery blend or try a ready-made version with Quaker Oats Instant Oatmeal Protein.

Oat Smoothie

Blend oats with Greek yogurt, milk, a banana and frozen berries for a nutritious recovery smoothie.

Oat and Yogurt Parfait

Layer cooked oats or Quaker Protein Granola with Greek yogurt, a handful of nuts and a drizzle of maple syrup or honey. This provides both protein and carbs for recovery.