



Hello everyone, let me introduce myself. I'm Kate Percy, food for fitness writer and founder of [Kate Percy's](#). A keen runner and cyclist, whether it's my food products, cookbooks or educational resources, my mission is to help you discover what I call #Enerjoy! through what you eat; that's great taste, good energy, vitality and happiness.

In-house chef for 220 Triathlon, Women's Running Magazine and Abbot World Marathon Series, I'm passionate about helping active people eat good food and cook from scratch. I also have a healthy snack product, [Kate Percy's Go Bites](#), which I created to provide natural, sustaining energy for on-the-go, whether you're on the bike, at the desk or on your feet at work.

It's a great privilege to have been invited by Bluelight to inspire you with all things food and nutrition!

I hope you enjoy my tips and recipes over the coming year. And I hope they bring you #Enerjoy!

Eat better, feel better, perform better – an introduction

The following tips are intended to give you a framework for your everyday diet; a way of eating which will support your cycling but which will also fit in with your busy lives.

You'll get so much more out of any sporting activity if you support it with a good diet. Eating a wide variety of unprocessed and unrefined foods, at the right time, will strengthen the immune system, keep your muscles healthy, help you recover well and maintain your energy levels. This, in turn, will make you feel amazing, help you train and race better and reduce the risk of getting injured.

Just close your eyes and imagine you're a sleek, racing car, perhaps a red open top Ferrari! You need fuel and you need the right type of fuel to function at your best. And you won't get far running on empty! Your body works in the same way.

The better the fuel in your 'tank', the better you will feel, both mentally and physically, and the better you will perform.

1. Balance and variety

The ideal training diet should include a wide variety of foods. Your body needs balance, so it's important not to cut out one particular food group, such as carbohydrate, protein or fat. Most foods consist of a complex combination of nutrients, so the more variety you eat, the better variety of nutrients you'll get. Ideally around one third of your diet should come from foods rich in slow-release, unrefined foods which are rich in carbohydrate, such as wholegrain bread, wholewheat pasta, wholewheat cereal, oats and brown rice, around one third from fruit and vegetables, and the rest from foods rich in protein, such as beans, pulses, fish, eggs and meat and fat.

[Hey, it's so simple! Eat better in 5 easy bites – Kate Percy's \(katepercys.com\)](https://www.katepercys.com)

2. Listen to your body; eat when you're hungry

If you've just started cycling you might find your hunger increases. Rightly so, as you are burning more calories than your more sedentary self. It's important to listen to your body and eat when you are hungry to maintain your energy levels and keep your muscles healthy.

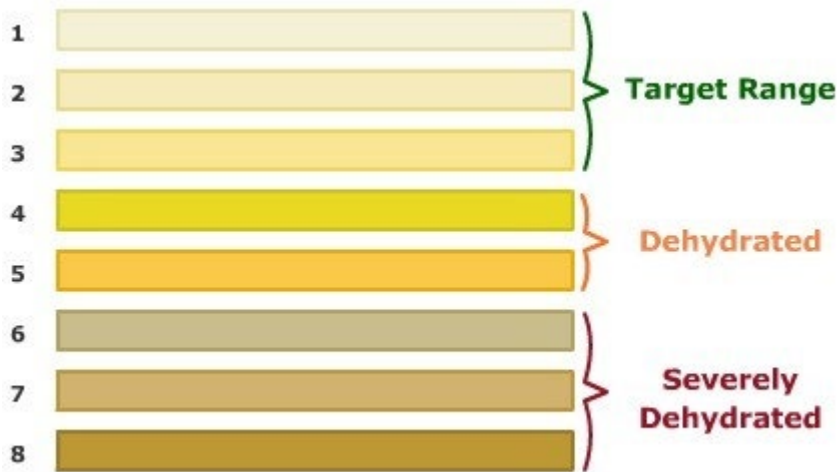
Caveat! Your body may need a few extra calories, but this doesn't mean that you should just grab the nearest supersize chocolate bar (you know, the ones they push at the counter of a well-known newsagents for just £1!) because you feel you've 'earned' it. Try your best to make sure each mouthful is nutritious – unprocessed, fresh, natural.

Of course, with our busy lifestyles processed foods are virtually impossible to avoid, and that's fine in moderation, but when you do eat them, check the label for hidden sugars and salt.

3. Mind your pees!

Good hydration doesn't just mean drinking before, during and after a training session. Keeping well-hydrated throughout the day will help you feel so much better. Don't wait until you're thirsty, try to sip water throughout the day. I find the best way to do this is to keep bottles of water with you, at your desk, in the car, on your bedside table. I keep a big bottle of water at my desk and make sure I finish it by the end of the day.

A great way to check you're drinking enough is to look at the colour of your pee! If it is a pale straw-like colour, then you are well-hydrated. A darker yellow is an indication that you need to drink.



4. What to eat before a ride?

Eating 1-2 hours in advance of your rides will give your body enough time to digest the important nutrients needed to fuel your muscles. You'll train stronger and feel better. Something easy to digest and rich in carbohydrate that will gradually release energy to your muscles will give you the best chance of a good run; a bowl of unrefined porridge ([Kate Percy's Apple & Cinnamon Porridge](#) is worth a try) a wholemeal peanut butter sandwich or even a handful of nuts and raisins and a banana.

If, like me, you are incapable of waking up early enough to eat breakfast before going out on the bike, try to boost your blood sugar with just half a banana or a couple of energy balls before you set off.

5. And after?

If you cycle several times a week, it really helps to get in the habit of refuelling immediately after each ride. This basically helps you recover better so you can continue training regularly. It can also reduce the risk of injury. Here's why: carbohydrate is stored in the muscles and liver as 'glycogen'. After longer rides of, say 60 minutes, glycogen levels become depleted. If you repeatedly fail to top up these glycogen levels you risk becoming increasingly lacking in energy. So it's important to top up after each run to boost your recovery so you are ready for the following day. A good combo of carbohydrate and protein (3:1 is a good ratio) within the 'magic window' of about 30 minutes after training is when your muscles are at their most receptive. Grab something as soon as you finish your workout like a slice of toast with scrambled egg, peanut butter or hummus, an energy bar or flapjack, a piece of fruit (melon is good) or a refreshing home-made smoothie made with milk or yoghurt.

You'll find my [Top Ten Post Workout Snacks](#) a useful resource.

6. **80:20 rules OK**

Enjoy your food! It's the stuff of life, so please don't get too hung up on your exact food intake; a relaxed attitude to eating will help you stay focussed, feel good, exercise better and enjoy your sport without starting to feel that it is a chore. Eating well for around 80% of the time means that you can afford to stray into the goodie cupboard every now and then...

For more information on Kate Percy's [cookbooks](#), [healthy snack products](#) (Kate Percy's Go Bites) and [free nutrition resources](#), check out katepercys.com or join [@katepercys](#) on Instagram, Twitter or Facebook.