



# *Fuelling Fitness for Netball*

Netball is one of the most popular participation sports in Australia, played by over one million people nation wide. Netball games are played in 4 x 15 minute quarters with 7 players on the court at one time. Aerobic and anaerobic energy systems used with competitive and elite players requiring a combination of endurance, strength, speed, agility and skill. Training sessions may range from 1 session/week to 1-2 sessions/day for elite competitors! These training sessions may cover individual ball skills and shooting, team strategies, weights, running/sprints. No matter what level you play, providing your body with the right fuel is essential to get the best out of your game.



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## NUTRITION FOR NETBALL

A healthy balanced diet will help to keep you firing both on and off the court. Include plenty of fresh fruits, vegetables, wholegrain breads and cereals, legumes, almonds, lean meat/chicken/fish and dairy foods. Try not to over-do it with foods that are high in fat/sugar or overly processed, as these can leave you feeling flat and fatigued.

## ALMONDS FOR NETBALL

Almonds provide a wide range of nutrients that help to keep your body healthy for netball. Just a handful per day will help meet your needs. Almonds provide protein, which is good for recovery, as well as the antioxidant vitamin E. Almonds contain healthy monounsaturated fats and fibre, making them good for your heart. Almonds also contains other important vitamins and minerals such as potassium, magnesium, iron, phosphorous and riboflavin (vitamin B2).

## FLUID NEEDS

Good hydration is essential for sustained performance. Players should start training/games hydrated and replace their losses by drinking at each break time and in the hours after exercise. As a general guide, at least 2-3 liters per day should be consumed. On hot days, players will need to drink more.

## WHAT SHOULD I EAT PRE-EVENT?

A low-fat, carbohydrate based meal 2-4 hours before start of game is ideal e.g. pasta/rice/noodles plus plenty of fluid. This should be followed by a snack such as a muesli bar/yoghurt & almonds /sandwich/fruit in the hour or so before the start of the game.

## EXAMPLES OF PRE EVENT MEALS:

- Breakfast cereal with chopped almonds and low fat milk
- Chicken, almond and vegetable stir-fry with noodles
- Pasta with tomato-based sauce
- Liquid nutrition supplement

## WHAT SHOULD I EAT/DRINK DURING COMPETITION?

Plenty of fluid should be consumed during netball - water and sports drinks are good options. Some players may need extra carbohydrate, such as carbohydrate gels (taken with plenty of water), fruit or a muesli bar at half-time.

## WHAT ABOUT RECOVERY?

In the first hour after the game or training you should aim to consume both carbohydrates and protein. Suitable fluid options include water, & sports drinks. Great recovery snacks include fresh fruit, yoghurt with chopped almonds, a muesli bar, low-fat apple & almond muffin, dried fruit and almonds or a sandwich. This should be followed up by a more substantial meal/snack within a couple of hours following exercise.

## OTHER NUTRITION TIPS

- Players need to be organized and carry snacks and fluids with them at all times as food available at training/playing venues may not always be appropriate for recovery/tournaments. Almonds are a perfect choice! Try mixed with dried fruit, added to fruit muffins, or simply on their own with a piece of fruit.
- Leading up to and during tournaments ensure a high carbohydrate intake is maintained throughout to maintain body glycogen (glucose) stores. This is most important for centre court and running players.
- Game times may vary greatly in some cases and may finish late in the evening - so planning for adequate meals and snacks before and after is essential. Sometimes it may be that the main meal is better at lunchtime or mid-afternoon.

## HOW TO GET INVOLVED

As Netball is such a popular sport there are competitions for people of all ages and standards. For more information go to Netball Australia <http://www.netball.asn.au/>.

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