

PRE-SEASON NUTRITION



**PRECISION
ATHLETICA**

Pre-season training for winter team sports often lasts ~3-4 months and runs prior to the start of the season (depending on the level you're playing). This provides a great block of time to focus on your nutrition habits so that you're ready when the season starts, at which time you can turn your focus to performance.

Our Sports Dietitian focuses on **4 key factors** for athletes during pre-season: developing healthy **Nutrition Habits** that will support performance and recovery, developing **Hydration Plans** especially in the hot pre-season weather, manipulating **Body Composition** so players can focus on maintaining their body composition when the season starts, and developing **Individual Supplement Plans** (if appropriate) so that players can ensure supplements taken are well-tolerated and taken in correct doses.

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DEVELOP HABITS

Focus on what nutrition habits you'd like to focus on so you're ready when season starts



BODY COMPOSITION

Focus on body composition changes (if needed) during pre-season



HYDRATION

Develop an understanding of your individual sweat rate and develop your hydration plan



SUPPLEMENT PLAN

Use this time to develop your supplement plan with a Sports Dietitian

Developing Habits

Use this time to focus on developing nutrition habits. It is difficult to completely overhaul your diet and be able to stick to those changes, however it's much more realistic to focus on 1-2 habits that you'd like to change at a time.

Pre-season allows you to achieve a number of changes over the period of 3-4 months so that when the season starts you can focus on maintaining those habits and ensure that your eating patterns support performance, recovery and immunity in-season. This also encompasses practicing your game day nutrition plan in training so that you know you can tolerate your planned meals on game day.

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Pre-season energy requirements can also be high depending on the training you are doing, so make sure your nutrition plan meets your requirements to help prevent fatigue, tiredness, lowered immunity and injuries as a result of poor fuelling. It's really helpful to speak with a Sports Dietitian to discuss changes you'd like to make to your diet and how to implement the strategies needed to make those changes in a realistic and sustainable way.

Body Composition

Changing your body composition, whether the goal is to reduce body fat, increase muscle mass, or “bulk up”, can be difficult and time consuming because it requires focus to change your habits and achieve a goal.

Pre-season is the best time to focus on this so that you have achieved your goals before the season starts, and can then focus on maintaining your optimal body composition throughout the season. This is particularly important if your goal is to reduce body fat, as reducing your energy intake to achieve this can impair concentration which would affect your performance in-season.

Discuss this with a Sports Dietitian so that your plan is tailored to your individual needs, and is safely supporting your energy requirements around training sessions as well. Assessing body composition through skinfold measurements is also helpful in guiding you in the right direction; look for a Sports Dietitian with ISAK accreditation (skinfolds).

Hydration

Pre-season for winter team sports is during the hottest months of the year, so focusing on your hydration is essential. Dehydration can impair concentration and coordination, and severe dehydration can result in heat illness.

During the pre-season period focus on developing your understanding of your body's individual sweat rate, and what the best rehydration options are for you.

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A Sports Dietitian can assist you with assessing sweat rates and developing your plan. When the season starts, the weather will start to cool down but by focusing on hydration habits during pre-season, you will be ahead of the pack in-season when it comes to keeping your body hydrated throughout training and game days.

Supplements

It's never a good idea to try something new on game day, and this applies to supplement use as well!

If you plan to use any supplements, first these need to be safe for your sport (no banned substances), have proven efficacy, and be taken in the correct doses. A Sports Dietitian is your best source of information to educate you on supplements, and then develop an individualised plan suited to your requirements.

It's important to trial your supplement use in pre-season first, before the playing season starts, so you can ensure your body will tolerate the supplements and they provide benefit to you. Supplements aren't for everyone, especially for anyone younger than 18 years old, and should only be considered for use if you have consulted with a Sports Dietitian first.

Are you focusing on these four key pillars during pre-season?

If you aren't, make sure to contact the **Precision Athletica Sports Dietitian - Kelsey Hutton** for more information and individualised advice! Nutrition requirements change with the different stages of the sport season so remember that one nutrition plan won't last you a lifetime! It will need to be adapted on an ongoing basis to suit different energy demands at different times.