

PRE-PRACTICE SNACK

PRE-PRACTICE POWER-UP

Give athletes something to run on between the last bell and the first interval.

 Applesauce pouch:
GoGo squeeZ applesauce
package

**Applesauce pouch: GoGo
squeeZ applesauce**

 String cheese: Sargento
Light String Cheese
package

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Light String Cheese**

 Granola bar: Nature
Valley granola bars
package

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granola bars**

 Peanut butter and jelly
sandwich: Uncrustables
PB&J package

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sandwich: Uncrustables PB&J**

 Pretzels: Snyder's Mini
Pretzels package

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 Drinkable Greek yogurt:
Chobani Greek Yogurt
Drink package

**Drinkable Greek yogurt:
Chobani Greek Yogurt Drink**

**ONE SMALL CARB SNACK 60 TO 90 MINUTES OUT CLOSES THE GAP. LUNCH AT NOON AND PRACTICE AFTER
THREE IS THREE TO FOUR HOURS ON NOTHING.**

***THE PRE-PRACTICE SNACK IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRAINING ON EMPTY
AND TRAINING WELL.**

@AspirePerformanceRD

Pre-Practice Power-Up: Closing the Lunch-to-Practice *Gap*

One small carb snack 60 to 90 minutes out closes the gap. Lunch at noon and practice after three is three to four hours on nothing.

REAL PRODUCT EXAMPLES

Familiar packages, easier choices

Start with the food category. Brands are recognizable examples, not required choices; swap within the category for access, tolerance, culture, budget, and allergens.

Packages are examples, not endorsements. [Image sources and rights notice.](#)

USE THIS WHEN

- 1 Athletes fading in the second half of practice on ordinary school days.
- 2 A runner who says they are never hungry after school and keeps training on empty.
- 3 Setting up backpack snack stashes with the team at the start of the season.

Target Snack Window
60-90 min

Typical Lunch-to-Practice Gap
3-4 Hours

Protein Is Secondary
Carbs First

► COACH PROMPT

Ask what athletes ate in the hour before practice today, and treat every empty answer as the first fix.

PRE-PRACTICE DECISION



IF LUNCH WAS LIGHT

Use an Easy Carb Plus a Little Protein

Banana with peanut butter, crackers with cheese, or yogurt with fruit · Keep fat and fiber moderate so it digests before practice



IF THE BUS WAS LATE

Go Smaller and Faster-Digesting, Not Empty

Applesauce, a banana, or a few crackers digest fast inside 30 minutes · Skip heavy fat or fiber this close; it will not clear in time



IF PRACTICE RUNS LONG

Pack a Second Snack for the Back Half

Two-a-days, lifting blocks, or 2+ hour sessions need mid-session fuel · Pack crackers, a granola bar, or fruit snacks with the bottle



MOST COMMON MISS

A Stash Beats a Perfect Snack Chosen Fresh

Keep two or three shelf-stable options in a backpack side pocket · Restock on Sundays so a rushed Tuesday never means an empty pocket

COACH TOOLKIT

DATA

Pick the Snack by the Clock

TIME TO PRACTICE	SNACK	KEEP IT
60-90 minutes	Granola bar and banana, half a PB sandwich	Easy carb plus a little protein
Under 30 minutes	Applesauce pouch, banana, a few crackers	Small, fast-digesting, low fat
Practice runs long	Crackers, a granola bar, fruit snacks	Packed with the water bottle
Lunch was light	Banana with peanut butter, cheese and crackers	Moderate fat and fiber

COACH

Use This with Athletes

UNDER 30 MIN OUT Applesauce pouch or banana · A few crackers or pretzels

60-90 MINUTES OUT Granola bar plus banana · Half a peanut butter sandwich

DO NOT DO THIS Nothing since the lunch bell · One giant meal minutes before warm-up

Pre-Practice Power-Up: Closing the Lunch-to-Practice Gap

FOR THE RUNNER

Pick your snack by the clock

- Lunch was at noon. Practice starts after three. Your legs feel that gap.
- A snack an hour before practice has time to turn into energy.
- Close to warm-up, small and quick wins. A big meal just sits there.

1 An hour out: granola bar and banana, or half a sandwich.

2 Under thirty minutes: applesauce, a banana, or a few crackers.

3 Keep two snacks in your backpack side pocket.

Try this week: Restock your side pocket on Sunday and see if you run out before Friday.

Not true: *no appetite after school means no snack. Your legs still need one.*

COACH: SAY THIS

- “What did you eat in the hour before practice today? If the answer is nothing, that is the first thing we fix.”
- “An hour out, a granola bar and a banana. Bus was late and you have twenty minutes? Applesauce or a few crackers, not nothing.”
- “Long practice today, past two hours. Second snack comes out with your bottle at the break, not when you feel the fade.”
- “Two snacks in the side pocket, restocked Sunday. The stash beats a perfect snack you have to remember to buy.”

WHY IT WORKS

Three to four hours after lunch, blood sugar and liver glycogen are drifting down, so the second half of practice runs on stress hormones and feels flat.

Timing sets the snack: an hour out leaves room for a little protein and fat; under thirty minutes, only small, low-fat, low-fiber carbohydrate clears the stomach before the warm-up.

Appetite after school is often a poor gauge of need; stress and a long day blunt hunger, which is why the habit is built on the clock, not on cravings.

DON'T SAY

- “If you are not hungry, do not force it.” After-school appetite is unreliable; the snack is a habit, not a hunger response.
- “Eat something big so you last.” A large meal minutes before warm-up sits in the stomach and cramps.
- “You fade because you are out of shape.” A runner who fades after a noon lunch is often empty, not unfit.

REFER WHEN

A runner who is never hungry after school and also skips lunch or dinner, fades most days despite a stocked pocket, or is dizzy in warm-ups needs a private family conversation and the athletic trainer, not another snack reminder. Fainting or chest pain is the emergency route.

FOR FAMILIES

Build the side-pocket stash, then restock it Sundays

- Two or three shelf-stable options live in the backpack side pocket: granola bars, applesauce pouches, crackers, pretzels, fruit snacks. Store brands are fine.
- On two-a-days, lifting days, or practices past two hours, pack a second snack with the water bottle: crackers, a granola bar, or fruit snacks.
- If lunch is usually light, add a little protein to the hour-out snack: banana with peanut butter, cheese and crackers, or yogurt with fruit.
- Restock Sunday night so a rushed Tuesday never means an empty pocket. A runner who is never hungry after school still needs the habit.

WATCH FOR · If the stash comes home untouched most days and your runner fades in the back half of practice, or says they are never hungry and skips dinner too, tell the coach and ask the pediatrician whether a check-in makes sense.