

# NUTRITION FOR DANCERS

Fuel Your Body | Perform Your Best | Prevent Injuries

Dancers need food to fuel their bodies for energy to perform and brainpower to remember choreography and to succeed in school! Most dancers need to eat every 3-4 hours to help keep them energized and prepared for practices and performances.

## Protein

Examples include fish, poultry, meat, eggs, nuts, beans, Greek yogurt, soy and tofu

## Grains & Starchy Veggies

Examples include rice, pasta, bread, oats, quinoa, potatoes, corn, beans and legumes

## Non-Starchy Veggies

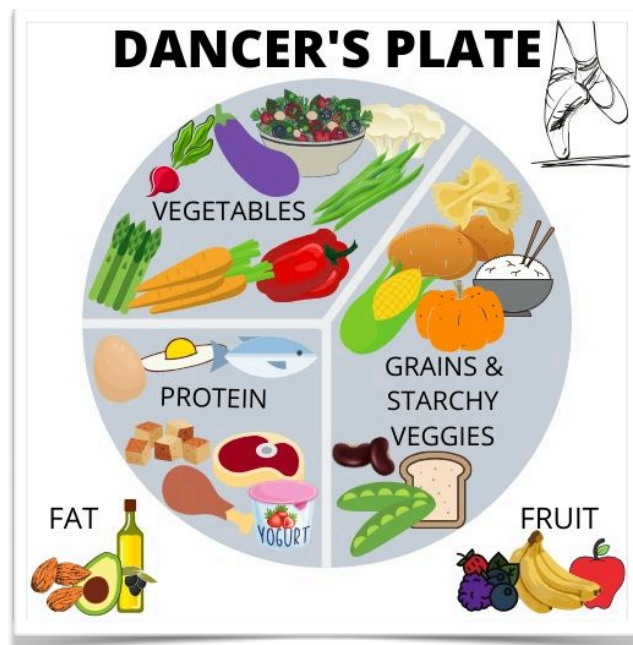
Examples include carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, radishes, leafy greens, eggplant, peppers, asparagus, summer squash, cucumbers and green beans

## Fruit

Examples include apples, berries, oranges, bananas and kiwi

## Healthy Fats

Examples include nuts, butter, oils, seeds and avocados



## Build Your Plate

The dancer's plate is a great example of important nutrients that help dancer's meal plan and meet their needs at breakfast, lunch and dinner. This plate can also be used as a guide for recovery.

- ◆ Make 1/4 of the plate protein
- ◆ Divide the rest of the plate between grains/starchy veggies & non-starchy veggies
- ◆ Include fruit on the side, for dessert and snacks
- ◆ Include healthy fats with meals
- ◆ Add a cup of milk or water on the side

## Carbohydrates ⚡

Starchy vegetables, grains, and fruit provide carbohydrates for energy that is needed to help dancers remember choreography and perform at their best. **Carbs are the main source of fuel for dancers!**

## Protein 💪

Protein supports recovery, muscle growth, muscle repair, and supports the immune system!

## Healthy Fats 🥑

Healthy fats promote recovery, protect organs and may help reduce inflammation!

## Hydration 💧

Aim for 8-12 cups of fluids/day to stay well-hydrated. Drink at least 2-3 cups of water 2-3 hours before dance. Continue drinking during breaks and after dance to stay hydrated. Meet with a dietitian to see if you should be adding an electrolyte-enhanced beverage.

### Symptoms of dehydration:

- Difficulty concentrating and fatigue
- Nausea, headache or dizziness
- Muscle weakness
- Poor balance and performance

Look at the color of your urine in the morning to see if you are drinking enough water. If it's dark like apple juice or iced tea, you need to drink more water! Aim for light like lemonade.



## Fuel for Success

A dancer's body is their engine for performance.  
**Remember: Food is fuel, avoid training on empty!**

### Before Dance

#### **Eat a meal 3-4 hours before dancing that has fiber, carbs and protein**

Try overnight oats with fruit & yogurt; or turkey & cheese sandwich on whole wheat bread with baked chips & grapes; or peanut butter & jelly sandwich with fruit & a cup of milk!

#### **Eat a pre-dance snack 1-2 hours before dancing for an energy boost**

Try fresh fruit, fruit squeezes, granola bars, bread with nut butter & drizzle of honey, pretzels, goldfish or performance chews!

### During Dance

#### **Eat a snack and hydrate during breaks to maintain energy**

Try fresh fruit, diced fruit, granola bars, honey sticks, performance chews or a sports drink.

### After Dance

#### **Eat a meal with carbohydrates, protein, healthy fats, and colorful fruits & veggies like the dancer's plate**

Try a lean protein burger with avocado, side salad, & fruit; Burrito bowl with black beans, rice, peppers & onions, & avocado; grilled chicken or cheese quesadilla with a spinach salad & cup of milk.

#### **Grab a snack if not eating a meal within 2 hours after dance performance**

Try a protein shake with fruit, Greek yogurt with granola and fruit or a nut butter sandwich with a cup of milk.