

# Food for Victory

Local athletes reveal nutritional secrets for success

By Catherine Galioto

*The adage goes, you are what you eat. And for many athletes, everything from victory to personal best, to stamina and mobility could depend on the contents of one's stomach. HEALTH asked local athletes to recount their experiences with food, and how what they eat before, during and after a workout can affect their performances.*

*Is there a perfect meal to ready yourself for a 10K race, a triathlon, a roller derby bout, or a day of ocean swimming? Yes, and it's anything from energy bars to coffee to Cheetos, depending on whom you ask:*



**Bruckner Chase**, 43, Ocean City (at right with wife, Michelle) Marathon distance open-water swimmer, founder of Ocean City Swim Club, swim instructor

**Activity:** I am a marathon distance open-water swimmer. In season, I swim up to 50 miles per week, most of it in the ocean. In the winter I log 20-30 miles swimming in the pool with short ocean swims as long as the temperature is in the 40's. I supplement my swimming with running, dry land weight training and long distance paddle boarding.

**Goals:** I have two primary goals in 2010 – solo swims around Stone Harbor, Wildwood and Cape May in spring; a second attempt to swim 22 miles across Monterey Bay in September. In the last couple of years, I have completed swims around Atlantic City, Ocean City and Strathmere. I have fallen in love with the waters around here and intend to complete swims around these six islands to raise awareness of the ocean environment around us.

**Before workout:** Because my events can last entire days, nutrition is critical to success. My diet does not change too much before an event or in the heat of training other than an increase in calories. What works best for me is a reasonable balance of carbs, protein

and fat. I try to stay away from overly processed food and sugars to maintain a stable energy level.

**During workout:** In marathon swimming what one consumes during an event can be one of the most critical factors to success. In a hostile environment, dealing with wind, waves and salt water can often make keeping stuff down a challenge. During an event I consume an almost entirely liquid diet calculated to give me roughly 350 calories per hour. My "mix" is mostly carbohydrate with a little protein. I feed from a bottle tossed to me at the end of a rope every half-hour from my crew on the support boat. My wife, Michelle, monitors all my feedings as the swims progress.

**After workout:** After a day in the ocean, I tend to eat anything I can get my hands on. Think of it as a post swim treat for all the discomfort. During training I try to refuel the minute I get out of the water. Smoothies with protein and carbs are the first thing I reach for when I get home.

**Avoid:** For me, I avoid heavy, overly spiced or processed foods before long workouts or events. Swallowing a little salt water while battling wind and waves often means I may see an earlier meal again. Best to stick with stuff that is neutral and easily digested.

**Is there a nutrition regimen you swear by?** Other than what I have described above I would not say that I have a nutrition regimen. During an event my nutrition is very structured and closely monitored.

**In my experience:** In long events I always have a "get out food supply" on the boat. Basically, these are treats that are the one thing that may keep me in the water during a low point when otherwise I would be ready to get out. For me those treats are Red Bull and Oreos. The challenge we have learned is making sure that my boat crew does not consume my stuff. In 2006 I was in the last three miles of a swim around Absecon Island. I was hurting and called out to my wife, Michelle, for my Red Bull. A few frantic moments later I get her sheepish response, "We drank them all and we just have one diet Red Bull left." After eight hours I was not concerned about watching my weight and needed calories. The feeding took a bit longer than usual as I had to make up for the diet soda by inhaling eight Oreos. Ended up cruising the last few miles back to Gardner's Basin.

## William G. McArthur aka "Wild Bill,"

69, Cape May Beach  
Kayak, distance running  
and cycling

**Activity:** I enjoy long (four-five hour) kayak paddles, sometimes trolling for fish as I go; I like to walk and have a six mile loop in New Jersey and a seven mile loop to the beach in Naples, Fla. One of my favorite workouts I call a medley: 10K bike, 5K run, 10K bike, 5K run, 10K bike, 5K run, 10K bike, taking about 3.5 hours on a weekly basis. I have another version of the medley that I'm starting to use: 10K bike, 10K run, 10K bike, 10K run; I will ratchet this one up for longer training. My old legs won't allow me to run two days in a row, so the kayaking fits in to the overall training.

**Goals:** My answer to the question, "Why do you do that stuff?" is "So I can." I strive for endurance and capability.

**Before workout:** I drink a quart of Cytomax (energy drink) and eat two GU (energy) packs before any running race or medley workout.

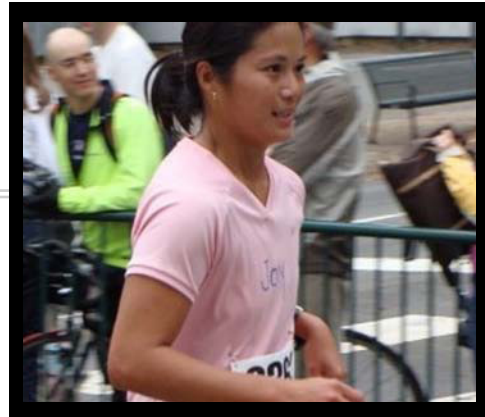
**During workout:** I drink about 10 ounces of Cytomax per hour during kayaking, biking, or running. I eat a GU pack per hour for long running races or training. I eat a couple of Power Bars for lunch on long kayak paddles.

**And after?** I drink about a quart of Cytomax after long training sessions. I try to eat fruit and yogurt for lunch every day and that often comes after workouts.

**Avoid:** I try to avoid very fatty or sugary foods or drink.

**Is there a nutrition regimen you swear by?** As a vegetarian (plus fish), I try to use the ideas in "The Thrive Diet." I eat oatmeal for breakfast every day and fruit and yogurt for lunch. I try to eat a simple pasta meal at least once a week and a special concoction of sweet onion, dates, and walnuts sautéed in coconut oil, mixed with quinoa.

**In my experience:** I used to spend the summers in the Boston area during the 70s/early 80s. At that time, I ran almost daily and played handball and racquetball several times a week. I had heard about a legendary ice cream shop, and I pigged out on a gigantic, evil creation. The next day I showed up on the handball court at lunchtime and literally couldn't move because of the sugar rebound. It was hilarious!



## Joy DiPilato, 35, Tuckahoe Half/full marathons, triathlon

**Activity:** Four to six times per week of swim/bike/run. I try to get in the pool two times a week for an hour and try to maintain about 20 miles a week running (more during marathon training). The bike gets squeezed in there some time.

**Goals:** My goals this year: Ocean Drive 10-miler, Broad Street 10-miler, another spring half marathon, one to two triathlons in the summer, one to two fall half marathons and a fall marathon.

**Before workout:** For workouts longer than an hour, plain oatmeal or toast with peanut butter/banana/honey. If shorter than that, I can get away with a sugary cereal.

**During workout:** For workouts longer than an hour, I go for the GU (brand of energy gel).

**And after?** Chocolate milk for workouts less than an hour. I'm experimenting with Myoplex recovery shakes for workouts longer than that. I try to get those in within an hour of the workout and try to get another protein in soon after.

**Avoid:** Heavy meals/protein beforehand – I feel sluggish with a rock in my gut.

**Is there a nutrition regimen you swear by?** Coffee before the workout. Otherwise nothing too regimented. I've had success in a workout/race with Cheetos, ice cream and beer the night before.

**In my experience:** At the Atlantic City Half Marathon 2008, I started to lag at mile eight and could see my pace starting to drop. I'd had a GU at mile three and tore another one open at that point. I felt a lot better after that and could pick up the pace again.

*Photos submitted by athletes*



**AJ Johnson**, 46, Ocean View  
Ultramarathon races

**Activity:** Recently, I have competed in 50k races, 50-milers and 100-mile races.

**Goals:** My goal race this year is the Massanutten Mountain 100 Miler, renowned as the hardest 100 miler east of the Rockies. I will be running to benefit the Beacon Animal Rescue Shelter in Upper Twp.

**Before workout:** I like to eat about 3 hours before the race, somewhere between 400 to 600 calories of easily digestible carbs, starches and some protein. You want to avoid anything high in fiber for obvious reasons. An example of a pre-race meal: a white bagel with some peanut butter & a little jelly, a banana and a big cup of hot tea.

**During workout:** I personally use a powder that I mix with water that provides a complex carb, maltodextrin, and whey protein. I will also snack on: boiled potatoes, oranges, watermelon, pretzels, PB&J at the aid stations.

**After workout:** To refuel I like to take in about 60 grams of carbs (in the simple sugar form) and about 25 grams of protein. After, I'll have something tasty like a hamburger, chocolate shake, some fries, some kind of cake. I think I've earned a treat so I will indulge a bit.

**Avoid:** A lot of runners like taking "Ensure" type products, but milk-type products will wreck me.

**Cori Totoro**, 28, Ventnor  
Roller derby skater

**Activity:** Three nights a week I practice roller derby for 2 hours with the Jersey Shore Roller Girls, I do land training one day a week for an hour (a circuit workout). Two nights a week it's fitness boxing class.

**Goals:** I personally just like to be physically fit. Also, to be able to compete in roller derby at my best personal level.

**Before workout:** I usually eat a late lunch. I drink water continuously through the day.

**During workout:** I drink water continuously throughout my workout. During roller derby, I will drink an energy drink.

**And after?** We have after-parties after games!

**Avoid:** I will not drink alcohol usually a week before any competition. I stay away from soda or anything heavy on my stomach.

**Is there a nutrition regimen you swear by?** I am really bad when it comes to things like this. Recently I have been eating more fruits, granola and yogurt.

**In my experience:** I seem to have a lot of energy regardless. However, when I do take something with added energy, those seem to be my best nights.



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