



What is post workout re-fuelling (PWO)? Who should do it? How do you customise it to your needs and goals?

For years I've seen athletes and gym goers gulp down all sorts of concoctions claiming to improve recovery, body mass etc etc la la de da. But is just buying an over the counter, ready-to-go mix of fluoro green goodness knows what going to get you to where you want to go?

I first started asking this when I was making the transition from endurance athlete/junkie to CrossFitter. I was so weak from long slow training and CrossFit workouts were handing me my arse on a chalked up sweaty platter. I wanted to recover faster. Recovery allows you to actually absorb the training you're doing rather than just beat you down. The athlete who recovers fastest can and will out train all others over time. I'm convinced of this.

When looking at PWO there are many factors that come into play. Everyone has different goals, different reactions to foods and lifestyle factors that all contribute to determining what works for them. So essentially it's up to YOU figure out what works.

@ B32 the first rule of thumb is food quality on a daily basis. Training is just the icing on the cake. Nutrition and lifestyle are 80-90% of the health, fitness, performance and look-good-naked equation. You can't come through the gym door, tick only the training box and expect to maximize that equation while you let all else fall by the wayside. It's all gotta come together. On this point, when you walk into B32, there's an expectation that you want to get the most out of your equation, and, as a bare minimum, are willing to eat clean. We can help you with this, but you have to be willing to *do* it.

If you haven't been eating clean for at least 1-3 months I'd recommend focusing entirely on that aspect of your life first, before you try and tackle anything more complicated like timing of foods and tricky PWO strategies. Too many folks get caught up in fancy 'I'm on a winner' concoctions before they have the basics dialed. If you need to get reacquainted with the butcher and farmers' markets [read this](#) and get your arse into gear. Also [read this](#) to help you understand digestion and [this](#) to help you see how foods, sleep and lifestyle factors have to be considered when making your nutritional choices.

If you eat pretty clean, and have that dialed in, consider the following when planning your PWO-

Generally there are 3 different options. Don't just default to the same PWO. There is a big difference from workout to workout, especially in the sport of CrossFit. Here are some options based on workout stimulus, recovery, performance and body composition:

- CNS strength based workouts (e.g. deadlift x3x5, skill work etc):
20-60g protein and 5-10g fat and/or 10-30g carbohydrate. Whole food options work best.
- Cellular circuit based workouts (CrossFit metcons and workouts that are sweaty and leave you trashed fall into this camp):
20-60g protein and 20-100g carbohydrate. Liquid options work best.

- Recovery and skill based training (easy aerobic, technique work and/or workouts that don't trash you):
Either just wait till your next meal or select a similar option to CNS strength-based workouts.

Simple right? Got that box ticked? Here is some more sophisticated stuff for those of you that want to get to the next level with this:

- The leaner you are the more carbohydrates you can safely absorb PWO.
- If you are an older athlete (training age) the more carbohydrate-sensitive you might be. Only load up on liquid options when you NEED to recover quickly, otherwise you may increase some insulin fat storage sites over time (more on that one in another article).
- Consider how you feel after consuming your PWO meal 60-90min later. Are you hungry, hazy or feeling recharged? If you're not reacting in a positive way (i.e. recharged) you need to tweak what you're eating and then look at the macronutrient ratios (this means pro:carb:fat). Everyone is different so don't just default to a one size fits all scenario. Consider how YOU react and find what works for YOU.

PWO can be a real rabbit warren, but it doesn't have to be if you educate yourself a little. Look at the resources I mentioned above and then follow the guidelines.

Remember:

- Food quality always wins.
- Nutritional strategies can and will evolve over time as your body changes and you figure out what makes you tick.
- If it's fluoro it's probably not good for you.

Still got questions? There are some highly excitable nutrition geeks at B32 that are always happy to help you out. You just have to ask...

Eat right, train smart.

Ross Blake
Strength and conditioning coach