

FOOD FOR RUGBY

TRAVELLING NUTRITION

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Rugby players who travel for tournaments or competitions face unique nutrition challenges that can affect their performance and recovery.

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01. OVERVEIW

Rugby players who travel for tournaments or competitions face unique nutrition challenges that can affect their performance and recovery.











Here are some important nutrition considerations to keep in mind when travelling:

- 1 Plan Ahead:** It is important that you plan ahead to ensure you have access to the foods and supplements needed to support your training and competition demands. A SENr nutritionist can help you tailor nutrition strategies based on the destination and your competition needs.
- 2 Stay Hydrated:** Travel and changes in routine and environment can increase the risk of dehydration, which can negatively impact athletic performance. Drinking plenty of water throughout the day or using hydration tablets can help minimise the risk of dehydration.
- 3 Be Mindful of Timing and Keep a Consistent Diet:** Travel can disrupt normal meal timing, which can impact energy levels and performance. Sticking to usual meal and snack schedules as much as possible, can help minimise this disruption. This might mean carrying some snacks with you during long travel days.
- 4 Consider Supplements:** In some cases, supplements can help ensure adequate nutrient intake while travelling, when eating foods is not practical, convenient or safe.



02. JET LAG

These circadian rhythms, which help regulate sleep, hunger and other physiological functions, become misaligned with the external environment usually when a person travels across time zones, and causes the typical jet lag symptoms:

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  Fatigue |  Mood changes |
|  Disturbed sleep |  Decreased motivation and performance |
|  Difficulty sleeping or Insomnia |  Appetite loss |
|  Daytime sleepiness or lethargy |  Gastrointestinal distress |
|  Headaches |  Decreased alertness |

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CAFFEINE

This is one of the most common strategies to improve alertness, attenuate fatigue and reduce the feeling of sleepiness but it is important to use it at the right times. For optimal results, use it ideally in the mornings and avoid it during the evenings or close to bedtime.



EAT AT USUAL MEAL TIMES






Long-haul travel and change in schedule has the potential to disrupt your hunger cues. Try to stick to your usual meal time routine as much as possible, even if you are not hungry.



03. TRAVEL HYGIENE

Travelling increases the risk of catching a respiratory or gastrointestinal illness. The further and longer the travel is, the higher the risk, so players who travel frequently for competition should take precautions to maintain good travel hygiene. This can help prevent the risk of illness and avoid a drop in performance, especially when you are travelling to compete and win!

Here are some recommendations to keep in mind:

- 1 Practise good personal hygiene:** keep hands away from the face, and wash your hands frequently with soap or hand sanitizers.
- 2 Carry hand sanitizer:** it is always helpful to carry a small bottle of hand sanitizer with you in case washing your hands is not possible.
- 3 Use a face mask:** these are helpful when travelling or while in a crowded area.
- 4 Drink safe water:** use sealed bottled water if there are any doubts and DO NOT USE ICE unless it is from a safe source.
- 5 Avoid high-risk foods:** if you are travelling to countries with different standards around food/hygiene practices, avoid:
 -  Street food
 -  Tap water
 -  Undercooked or raw meat
 -  Raw eggs
 -  Raw vegetables and fruits that cannot be peeled.



04. REFERENCES & ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Halson, SL., Burke, LM., Pearce, J. (2019). Nutrition for Travel: From Jet lag to Catering. International Journal of Sport Nutrition and Exercise Metabolism, 29, 228-235.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Travelling Nutrition is published by England Rugby.

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