SOUL SISTER Health

Fuel Your Training.

Feel Your Best.

Your complete guide to pre and post workout nutrition, built for busy midlife women who want to train smarter, recover faster, and actually see results.

Let's Talk About Fuelling Your Training

Here's something we see time and time again with our clients: they're training consistently, eating well, and yet they're running on empty, struggling to recover, and wondering why their results feel slow.

Nine times out of ten, the missing piece is workout nutrition. Not magic supplements. Not complicated timing protocols. Just eating the right things at the right time around your sessions.

After 40, this matters more than ever. Your muscle protein synthesis (the process that builds and repairs muscle after training) is less efficient than it was in your 20s and 30s. What you eat around your sessions has a direct impact on how well your body recovers, adapts, and changes.

The good news?

You don't need to overhaul your whole life. You just need a simple, consistent strategy that works with your busy schedule. That's exactly what this guide gives you.

PART ONE Pre-Workout Nutrition

Why pre-workout nutrition matters

Think of food before training like putting petrol in the car before a long drive. Without it, you're asking your body to perform on an empty tank. Training in an under-fuelled state can lead to reduced performance, increased muscle breakdown, and slower recovery, none of which serve the goals you're working towards.

It also affects how you feel in the session. Lightheaded, flat, or struggling to push through your last few reps? That's often a fuelling issue, not a fitness one.

Timing: when should you eat?

How far out you eat matters as much as what you eat. Here's how to think about it:

2–3 hours before training

This is ideal if you can plan ahead. A full balanced meal gives your body time to digest properly and ensures carbohydrate is available as a fuel primer, without spiking your blood sugar too close to training. This is your best-case scenario for a mid-morning or afternoon session.

30–60 minutes before training

Something smaller and more easily digestible: predominantly carbohydrate-led, with a little protein. Minimal fat and fibre here, as both slow digestion and can cause discomfort mid-session.

Within 30 minutes of training

Keep it light and simple: easy-to-digest carbohydrates only. This provides a quick fuel hit without leaving you feeling heavy or uncomfortable during your session.

Does session type change what you need?

Yes, and this is where generic advice falls short for women over 40. Your pre-workout needs depend on how long and how hard you're training.

Session Type	Examples	Pre-Workout Approach
Short / Low intensity (<30 min)	Walk, yoga, light Pilates	Your regular meal is enough
Moderate intensity (30+ min)	Strength session, steady jog, bodyweight class	Small carbohydrate snack 30–60 min before
Longer / Higher intensity (45+ min)	HIIT, longer run, heavy compound lifting	Proper meal 1–2 hours before, or protein + easy carbs if morning

What to eat: pre-workout food ideas

Keep it practical. Here are options that work for real life. No meal prep marathons required.

Quick grab (within 30 min)	30–60 minutes before
• Banana	• Banana + boiled egg or 3 tbsp yoghurt
• 2 rice cakes with jam or honey	• Greek yoghurt + teaspoon of honey
• 1–2 dates or dried apricots	• Small bowl of oats with almond milk + honey
• Small handful of dried mango or raisins	• Rice cakes with cream cheese, cinnamon + banana
• Piece toast with jam or honey	• Small fruit smoothie with yoghurt and oats
Macros : ~10–15g carbs / minimal protein and fat	*Macros : ~20–30g carbs / 5–12g protein / minimal fat*

Full meal 2–3 hours before

• Grilled chicken, roasted sweet potato + steamed greens

• Salmon with brown rice and peas

• Chicken, hummus + roasted vegetable wholegran wrap

• Egg and vegetable frittata with a side of sourdough

• Greek yoghurt bowl with berries, granola + a drizzle of honey

Macros: ~35–45g carbs / 25–35g protein / 10–15g fat

PART TWO Post-Workout Nutrition

Why post-workout nutrition is non-negotiable

Training creates micro-damage in muscle tissue. That's actually how you get stronger. But the adaptation only happens during recovery, and recovery requires the right raw materials.

For women over 40, this is especially important. Muscle protein synthesis, your body's ability to repair and build muscle, becomes less efficient as oestrogen declines. That means the window after training is genuinely one of the most important nutritional moments of your day.

Skipping your post-workout meal, or grabbing something that's mostly carbs with no protein, is one of the most common ways women unknowingly slow down their results.

Timing: when should you eat after training?

Aim to eat within 45–60 minutes of finishing your session.

You don't need to be chugging a shake the second you leave the gym, but you don't want to leave it for 3 hours either. Aim to have something substantial within that window.

If you've trained fasted (something we generally don't recommend): prioritise a protein-rich snack immediately post-session, then follow with a proper meal within 90 minutes.

Note on the luteal phase: in the second half of your menstrual cycle, muscle protein synthesis is already less efficient, so getting protein in promptly after training matters even more during this time. This is one area where the 'it doesn't really matter' advice just doesn't hold up for women.

Protein + carbs: why you need both

For shorter, lower-intensity sessions, the priority post-workout is protein. Carbohydrate is less urgent because you haven't significantly depleted glycogen stores.

For longer or higher-intensity sessions (anything over 45 minutes, HIIT, or heavy compound lifting), both protein and carbohydrate matter. Glycogen needs restoring, and protein is simultaneously needed for muscle repair. The two together improve recovery more effectively than protein alone.

A note on carbs post-workout:

Carbohydrates help drive protein into your muscles after training. This is not the time to go low carb. A protein source paired with a quality carbohydrate is the combination that drives real recovery and results.

What to eat: post-workout food ideas

After a shorter or lower intensity session (protein focus)

• Cottage cheese with cucumber, cherry tomatoes + oatcakes

• Two boiled eggs with a slice of sourdough + smoked salmon

• Yoghurt with mixed berries and pumpkin seeds

• Protein smoothie: whey or plant protein, almond milk, banana, spinach

• Tinned tuna with wholegrain crackers + cherry tomatoes

• A two-egg omelette with feta + veggies

Macros : ~20–30g protein / 15–25g carbs / minimal fat

After a longer or higher intensity session (protein + carbs)

• Chicken and rice bowl with roasted vegetables + tahini

• Baked salmon with sweet potato + steamed broccoli

• Chicken and avocado wrap in a wholegrain tortilla

• Scrambled eggs on sourdough with roasted mushrooms + spinach

• Prawns and brown rice stir fry with mixed vegetables + tamari

• Greek yoghurt, berry + granola bowl with a boiled egg on the side

Macros : ~30–38g protein / 40–55g carbs / 10–15g fat

Fasted training (if pre-nutrition wasn't acheived): immediate post-workout (fast-digesting protein + carbs)

• Protein shake with a banana

• Greek yoghurt with honey, berries + a small handful of granola

• Rice cakes with cottage cheese, honey + boiled egg

• A boiled egg with a banana + a small handful of dates

• Then: a full balanced meal within 90 minutes

Macros : ~20–25g protein / 25–30g carbs / minimal fat

Quick Reference: Your Training Nutrition at a Glance

Timing	Pre-Workout	Post-Workout
2–3 hrs before	Full balanced meal: protein + carbs + healthy fats	N/A
30–60 min before	Carb-led snack + small amount of protein, low fat + fibre	N/A
Within 30 min before	Simple carbs only (banana, rice cakes, dates)	N/A
0–60 min after	N/A	Protein-focused (shorter sessions) or protein + carbs (longer/intense sessions)

A Note From Anna & Em

We want to leave you with this: fuelling your training well isn't a 'nice to have'. It's a fundamental part of getting results, especially after 40, when your body needs more support, not less.

You don't need to be perfect. You don't need to meal prep elaborate post-workout bowls every day. You just need a consistent approach: the right foods, at roughly the right time, most of the time.

Start simple. Pick one thing from this guide to apply to your next training session. Notice how you feel. Build from there.

And if nutrition is a real sticking point for you when it comes to your overall health - whether you are overwhelmed, inconsistent or just want a plan that works for you - we have you covered.

Get in touch at hello@soulsisterhealth.com.au and enquire about our nutrition plans today.

You've got this. And we've got you.

Anna & Em x

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