

HAPPY BODY HAPPY MIND



Congratulations on signing up for the Walk With Me 26-Mile Challenge!

You're taking on an incredible personal achievement while supporting well-deserving charities, a really inspiring commitment.

To help you **thrive** we've put together a few pages of up-to-date, evidence-based nutritional guidance designed to support your success. With the right nutrition, you can:

 **Maximise energy production**

 **Support digestion and nutrient absorption**

 **Strengthen immune function**


These systems are key for your **performance, recovery, and overall well-being**—before, during, and after the event.


Proper **preparation** in the lead-up to the walk will make a world of difference. Not only will it help you enjoy the experience more, but it will also support faster and smoother recovery afterward. Use your **training walks** as a chance to trial different nutrition strategies. This helps you find what works best for your body so you feel confident and strong on the big day. Let's get you nourished, prepared, and truly ready to walk this walk!


Walking 26 miles requires your body to constantly produce energy for 6-10 hours. Preparing your gut microbiome in the weeks before is a strategic approach to enhance your performance and overall well-being on the event day! A diverse and balanced gut plays a crucial role in digestion, immune function, and inflammation regulation, vital for endurance events like this improving:


- the breakdown of complex carbohydrates on the day, leading to more efficient energy extraction
- exercise induced inflammation and promoting faster recovery
- immune function reducing the risk of gastrointestinal issues during prolonged physical activity

To cultivate a diverse and resilient gut microbiome in the weeks leading up to your marathon walk:

 **Incorporate a Variety of Fiber-Rich Foods:** Aim to include different sources of dietary fibre in your meals, such as fruits, vegetables, legumes, whole grains, nuts, and seeds. This variety feeds different bacterial species, promoting microbial diversity.

 **Introduce Fermented Foods:** Live yogurt, kefir, sauerkraut, and kimchi contain probiotics that can enhance gut health by introducing beneficial bacteria.

 **Stay Hydrated:** Adequate hydration supports digestive health and aids in the effective processing of dietary fibre.

 **Gradually Increase Fiber Intake:** If you're not accustomed to a high-fibre diet, increase your intake gradually to allow your digestive system to adapt and minimise discomfort.



A well-balanced breakfast is crucial to fuel your body for the endurance ahead. It should be high in carbohydrates providing sustained energy, moderate in protein to aid muscle function, and low in fat and fibre to prevent digestive discomfort (and bathroom requirements!) during the walk . **Macronutrient Recommendations:**

Carbohydrates. To increase muscle glycogen as primary source of energy aim for 1–4 grams of carbohydrates per kilogram of body weight, consumed 1–2 hours before exercise The amount you choose is personal to you, how you digest carbohydrates and to support other activity in your life. Focus on complex carbohydrates like whole grains, fruits, and vegetables providing more nutrients than refined carbohydrates, If unsure about amounts, try 2.5g-3g on a training walk and see how you feel 2 hours into walking. Research shows that a high pre-exercise carb. meal provides better performance than a low-CHO meal or nothing. For a 70 kg individual, 3g of carbohydrates per kilogram, translates to 210grams of carbohydrates.

Protein: Include a moderate amount of protein to aid muscle function. Approximately 15–20 grams is sufficient.

Fat and Fiber: Keep these to a minimum to prevent digestive discomfort during the walk.

Vitamin and Mineral Considerations: Incorporate foods rich in B vitamins (for energy metabolism) and iron (for oxygen transport). Whole grains are good sources, as are vegetables like spinach which work well with eggs on wholegrain toast or in smoothies.

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High complex carbohydrate breakfast ideas

- ✓ Oats ~68 g CHO per 100 g. Mixed with other rich carbohydrate sources such as raw-honey, bananas (23g), raisins, milk (try a dairy alternative to support digestion), cherries and chia seeds can boost you up 200g of tasty carbs pre walk
- ✓ Studies have investigated the effects of pre-exercise meals showing that rice provides performance enhancement. Rice pudding is a great breakfast or snack alternative, Combine with yogurt and add fruit and seeds
- ✓ Overnight oats topped with berries, chopped nuts, almonds and seeds
- ✓ 2 slices whole grain toast with eggs, spinach, avocado. Or, toast with nut butter and a side of yogurt, fruit and seeds
- ✓ Smoothie made with berries, spinach, Greek yogurt, and a scoop of protein powder
- ✓ Pineapple and mango smoothie with coconut milk providing electrolytes and hydration
- ✓ 2 x Plain or almond flour pancakes (@ 85g carbs each) + Greek yogurt (4g), berries (30g) and seeds (2.5g/25g)

Vegan Breakfast Ideas:

- ✓ Power Porridge: Oats, tablespoon of peanut butter, coconut flakes, oat milk, berries
- ✓ Breakfast Hash: Combine cubed sweet potatoes, black beans, mixed herbs or a vegan sausage
- ✓ Tofu Scramble: Sauté crumbled tofu with nutritional yeast, turmeric, and assorted vegetables with wholegrain toast



Hydration is vital to maintain performance and prevent dehydration. **Fluid Intake Recommendations:**

Before Exercise: Consume 500–700 ml of water 2 hours prior to the walk.

During Exercise: Drink 120–240 ml of fluid every 15–20 minutes.

Electrolyte Importance. Electrolytes containing sodium, potassium, and magnesium are crucial for fluid balance and muscle function. For activities exceeding an hour, include drinks containing electrolytes.

Hot Weather Considerations: Increase fluid intake to match higher sweat rates. Monitor for signs of dehydration such as dizziness or dark urine.

Caffeine Intake: Caffeine can enhance endurance but may lead to dehydration in some individuals. If accustomed to caffeine, moderate consumption (e.g., a cup of coffee) before the walk may be beneficial.

Herbal Teas: Peppermint or ginger can aid digestion and provide a soothing effect.

Regular snacking helps maintain energy levels and prevents fatigue. Aim to consume 30–60 grams of **carbohydrates** per hour from easily digestible sources. Small amounts of **protein** can aid in muscle preservation. Limit **fat** intake to avoid digestive issues. Include snacks with **electrolytes** like sodium and potassium to replace losses through sweat.

Homemade Snack Ideas:

- ✓ Black bean brownies (see recipe www.hbhm.me)
- ✓ Energy balls made with oats, honey, dried fruits, and a hint of sea salt
- ✓ Trail mix combining almonds, walnuts, pumpkin seeds, dried fruit and dark chocolate pieces
- ✓ Oat / rice cakes with a layer of nut butter
- ✓ Fruit and Veggie Sticks: Sliced apples, carrots, or cucumber served + cottage cheese or hummus
- ✓ Cheese and Crackers/ Oat crackers : Pair mild cheeses with whole-grain crackers for a filling snack
- ✓ Greek yogurt or cottage cheese (with apricot is good, or dried cranberries / raisins, banana) or cubed cheese
- ✓ Mini quiches . Egg and roasted veg muffin shaped frittata style cooked in the oven
- ✓ Rice pudding or jelly pots

Shop-bought options:

- **Clif Bars:** These energy bars offer a good balance of carbohydrates and protein.
- Have a look at '**one good thing**'. Made for cyclists but great natural ingredients in sustainable packaging: <https://weareogt.com/collections/cycling-nutrition>



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Chicken/ avocado wrap

Gluten-free no seed wraps (BFree or Newburn Bakehouse)

1 Chicken breast (try cooking in herbs)

6 teaspoons mayonnaise

9 Cherry tomatoes

1 Avocado

Coriander leaves (optional)

Additional salad/sweetcorn



Lunch Ideas

Other ideas:

- ✓ **Mini sandwich / wraps** – egg / turkey/ chicken or another favourite protein with hummus and salad in a little pitta (*see recipe www.hbhm.me*)
- ✓ A little thermos of **soup or ramen**
- ✓ **Snack box:** baby bells, crackers with soft cheese
- ✓ **Carrots/cucumbers / peppers** with cream cheese or hummus (*see recipe, or check 3ingredients*)
- ✓ **Japanese sushi rolls, Vietnamese summer rolls** with rice paper
- ✓ **Tuna rice balls** – (*see recipe www.hbhm.me*)

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20 mins post walk recovery

Replenishing nutrients immediately after the walk will significantly aid recovery, **within 20 minutes:**

Carbohydrates: Consume 1.2 grams per kilogram of body weight to replenish glycogen stores.

Protein: Aim for 20–30 grams to support muscle repair.

Post-Workout Snack Ideas:

Smoothie: Blend almond milk, banana, a handful of spinach, a tablespoon of chia seeds, and a scoop of plant-based protein powder

