

NUTRITION GUIDE

The Carbohydrate Guide

Why carbs aren't the enemy and how to use them properly

Carbs get demonised more than any other macronutrient, usually by people who've never actually needed to fuel a training session or a busy day with two kids. This guide covers the honest picture.

8 Best Sources

Daily Application

Common Myths

Do's & Don'ts

BILLY BUTLER

PT · Dad of 2

WHY CARBS MATTER

Carbohydrates are your body's preferred fuel source for training and daily activity. They replenish muscle glycogen, support brain function, and directly affect training performance and energy levels throughout the day.

THE NUMBERS



GENERAL GUIDE

45-55% of total daily calories for most active dads, adjusted based on goals.



AROUND TRAINING

Prioritise carbs before and after training sessions for energy and recovery.



SIMPLE RULE

Base meals around protein first, fill remaining calories with carbs and fats based on your goal.

THE FOUNDATION RULE

Don't confuse 'carbs' with 'junk food'. A baked potato and a packet of biscuits are both carbohydrates, but they behave completely differently in your body.

8 BEST CARBOHYDRATE SOURCES

Rice

STARCHY

28g/100g

Reliable, versatile, easy to prepare in bulk for the week ahead.

Potatoes

STARCHY

17g/100g

Genuinely underrated, high in potassium and very filling for the calories.

Oats

STARCHY

58g/100g

A great slow-releasing breakfast option with added fibre benefits.

Wholegrain Bread

STARCHY

40g/100g

More fibre and nutrients than refined white versions, similar convenience.

Pasta

STARCHY

25g/100g
cooked

An easy, family-friendly carb source that works well around training.

Fruit

WHOLE FOOD

Varies

An easy, convenient carb source with added vitamins and fibre.

Vegetables

FIBROUS

Low calorie

Technically a carb source too and the most overlooked one in most diets.

Quinoa

WHOLE FOOD

21g/100g

A complete protein and carb source together, useful for variety.

HOW TO APPLY THIS DAILY

How you time and choose your carbs depends on your training and activity level that day.

Time more carbs around training

If performance and recovery matter to you, prioritise a bigger carb portion before and after your session.

Choose whole food sources most of the time

They keep you fuller for longer and come packaged with fibre, vitamins and minerals refined carbs lack.

Adjust based on activity level

A heavy training day warrants more carbs than a rest day, this doesn't need to be complicated, just proportional.

EXAMPLE TRAINING DAY CARB TIMING

Pre-training: Oats or banana — moderate portion

Post-training: Rice or potatoes — larger portion

Rest of day: Vegetables and fruit — smaller portions

COMMON MISTAKES & MYTHS

These misconceptions cause more unnecessary restriction than any other area of nutrition.

1

Cutting carbs completely for fat loss

This usually tanks energy, mood and training quality without any extra fat loss benefit over a moderate approach.

2

Fearing carbs in the evening

Total daily intake matters far more than timing for most people.

3

Confusing carbs with junk food

A potato and a packet of biscuits are nutritionally worlds apart despite both being 'carbs'.

4

Ignoring carbs around training

Under-fuelling training sessions hurts performance and recovery more than most people realise.

5

Believing low-carb is inherently healthier

For an active person, moderate carb intake usually supports better training, mood and adherence.

CARB NEEDS BY ACTIVITY LEVEL

Activity Level	Daily Guide
Rest day	Lower carb, higher fat/protein ratio
Moderate training	Balanced across all three macros
Heavy training day	Higher carb, timed around the session

DO

- ✓ Time more of your carbs around training sessions if performance and recovery matter to you.
- ✓ Choose whole food carb sources most of the time, they keep you fuller for longer.
- ✓ Adjust carb intake based on activity level, not a fixed number that never changes.

DON'T

- ✗ Don't cut carbs completely thinking it'll speed up fat loss, it usually just tanks your energy and training quality.
- ✗ Don't fear carbs in the evening, total daily intake matters far more than timing for most people.
- ✗ Don't confuse 'carbs' with 'junk food'. A potato and a packet of biscuits are not the same thing.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Carbs are fuel, not the enemy. Match your intake to your activity level and prioritise whole food sources, and they'll support your goals rather than work against them.

WANT THE FULL SYSTEM, NOT JUST ONE PIECE?

This guide is one piece of the puzzle. The Fit Dad Challenge brings training, nutrition and mindset together into one 6-week programme built around a dad's actual life.

[Join the Fit Dad Challenge — £99](#)