Sleep and Nutrition Interactions: Implications for Athletes


Post-exercise recovery is vital for all athletes

Protein, particularly dairy sources (with casein protein) may increase length of sleep and the overall intake of protein may improve sleep quality

Drinking alcohol has been associated with poorer sleep quality and quantity, reduced REM sleep and increased sleep disturbance in the second half of the night

Caffeine consumption can lead to poor sleep which, in turn, can lead to increased caffeine consumption

Timing and quantity of meals is important as large portions and/or meals later in the evening can negatively impact sleep potentially due to digestion

Consuming two kiwifruit one hour before bedtime improves sleep duration, time it takes to fall asleep and reduces waking time during the night

Consumption of tryptophan containing foods has been shown to improve sleep e.g. milk, turkey, chicken, fish, eggs, pumpkin seeds, beans, peanuts and leafy green vegetables

Tryptophan is a hormone which is crucial for sleep

Consumption of carbohydrates. 130g at least 45 min before bedtime improves sleep. High GI carbohydrate in the evening meal promotes sleep

Adequate sleep is crucial

Sleep is a crucial part of recovery for athletes