

by a "good, large, balanced meal with lots of fluids." Benincasa also makes it a point to eat within the 30-minute recovery window, usually a protein smoothie or protein bar, and follows up with a balanced meal. After a major adventure race she and her teammates set a goal of ice cream at least twice a day for a few days.

"THE FOUR BASIC RACE FOOD GROUPS ARE SUGAR, SALT, FAT AND CAFFEINE."

-ROBYN BENINCASA

What they eat during races depends on the event and how long it is, but all these athletes eat and drink something during races lasting two hours or more. Each has found through trial and error what they can tolerate and how much they need.

Simple carbohydrate sources such as gels and sports drinks are the foods of choice in the "shorter" trail races. During training runs and races over 10 miles, Dunham eats a PowerGel every half-hour. Ballengee eats gels and also drinks a bottle of Low-Oz sports drink every hour.

Ensure Plus works well for Horton during his ultra-marathons while the adventure racers said they eat what ever they can: powdered doughnuts, gummy bears, turkey jerky, Hostess apple pies, chocolate and coffee. They need the fuel.

Find the Best Diet for You These athletes are among the best because they are committed to excellence. There is no such thing as a "perfect" diet, sports food or supplement that will ensure someone will reach their optimal performance level. These athletes train hard and listen to their bodies. They know to do the necessary training, they need to eat enough of the right things. And, perhaps a bit of chocolate thrown in for good measure. 🍫

Sports nutritionist Deborah Shulman, P.h.D., lives, works and trains near Fort Collins, Colorado, but witnessed the plastic spaghetti presentation in Vail where she used to count Matt Carpenter among her training partners.