

Performance Tips

Life of an Athlete provides guidance concerning lifestyle choices to help student athletes achieve optimal performance. These lifestyle choices fall into three categories: nutrition, training and chemical health. Parents' encouragement is essential to their sons/daughters. Parents need to live by example and need to offer healthy food choices within the household, support the athlete's training schedule, and discourage drug use.

Nutrition

Athletes should refrain from binge eating habits. In order to perform at their best, athletes need to prim the body with the nutrients that it needs. Empty calories from junk food can easily take up most of the majority of a calorie budget without providing enough nutrition. Here are some strategies to help your son/daughter eat a nutritionally balanced diet.

- Carbo-load with caution. This technique benefits athletes who participate in endurance events that last 90 minutes or more.
- Pick appropriate proteins. Athletes should not guzzle protein shakes or consume massive amounts of protein powder in order to gain muscle. The average American diet includes sufficient protein.
- Get necessary fats. Bodies need a moderate amount of fat each day for long-lasting fuel and a fully functioning body.
- Load up on vitamins and minerals. Get enough iron to prevent fatigue and enough calcium to maintain strong bones and muscles.
- Stay hydrated.
- Avoid foods high in fat, protein or simple sugars right before a game. Digestion of these foods requires energy. Athletes should have a small meal two to four hours before their event.

Lifestyle & Chemical Health

Help your son/daughter commit to the following:

- Sleep 8 to 10 hours a day to improve performance in the game.
- Stay away from alcohol and illegal drugs. They have an adverse effect on training and performance. Let them know, one night of binge drinking equals two weeks of lost training. Student athletes who want optimum performance should not consume alcohol and illegal drugs.
- If your student athlete is at a party or gathering where alcohol or drugs are being illegally dispensed, they should leave. Let them know you will pick them up—no questions asked.
- Encourage your student athlete to cooperate with any investigation for Code of Conduct violations.