

The Express Glycogen Loading Guide

How to optimise your glycogen stores
in the six days before an endurance event.

*It's rarely a problem with your legs. More often,
it's a matter of fuel reserves and digestive comfort.*

01

Understand how glycogen
can influence your race.

02

Structure a nutrition plan for the six
days leading up to an event.

03

Identify the two pitfalls that can
derail your preparation.

BOOK A CONSULTATION



THE STARTING POINT

The day your preparation falls short

30th kilometre of a trail race.

The final station of a Hyrox.

The last metres of a triathlon.

You've done the training, the simulations.

And yet, something gives.

Almost never the legs.

The tank.

Your muscle glycogen stores, the main fuel source for prolonged exercise, are running low.

The good news?

You can build up that tank in the days leading up to your event.

Here's what this guide will help you do:



- 1 UNDERSTAND how glycogen can influence your race.
- 2 STRUCTURE a nutrition plan for the six days leading up to an event.
- 3 IDENTIFY the two pitfalls that can derail your preparation.

*This guide is for educational purposes only,
and does not replace personalised nutritional support or medical advice.*

Glycogen: your race-day fuel tank

90
MINUTES

A useful reference point, not a hard boundary:

The longer the effort lasts, the more glycogen availability becomes an important factor in performance.

This is often when the question arises:

Are your legs really giving up, or is your fuel tank running empty?

Glycogen is how your body stores glucose in your muscles and liver. It becomes a key fuel source as exercise moves beyond moderate intensity and continues over time. As early as the 19th century, French physiologist Auguste Chauveau was already observing the link between carbohydrate stores and the capacity for muscular work. Since then, the strategy has evolved: gone are the extreme protocols of the 1960s (complete depletion followed by massive carbohydrate loading, placing considerable stress on the body).

Today, the focus is on a more moderate approach, aiming for the same supercompensation without the extremes.



Your fuel tank, quite literally: two hydration flasks within easy reach.

D-6 to D-4

Professional teams have a nutrition plan mapped out for the week leading up to an important event. Here is what yours could look like, starting six days before.

TRANSITION PHASE

approximately 3 g/kg/day • low to moderate glycaemic index

MEAL	WHAT TO PRIORITISE
07:30 Breakfast	Oat porridge or wholegrain sourdough bread, eggs, plain dairy, a small handful of nuts, one whole fruit depending on appetite.
10:00 Snack	Whole fresh fruit and a small handful of almonds, hazelnuts or walnuts.
12:30 Lunch	Wholegrain or semi-refined grains (rice, quinoa, pasta), a source of lean protein, cooked vegetables, a drizzle of olive oil.
16:00 Snack	Plain Greek yoghurt or fromage frais, with honey.
19:30 Dinner	Legumes or wholegrain cereals, fish or poultry or eggs, vegetables, good-quality oil.
21:30 Evening snack	A light dairy serving or herbal tea, depending on appetite.

KEY POINTS

- Gradually increase your carbohydrate intake without overhauling your usual meals.
- Stay well hydrated throughout the day.
- Keep your diet varied: reducing fibre is not yet necessary at this stage.

THE RIGHT APPROACH IS BUILT AROUND YOU

This 3 g/kg/day reference remains general and is provided as an example.

Your individual needs, and the foods that work best for you in practical, digestive and taste terms, are best calibrated through personalised support.



Training is also about learning how your body responds, including which foods it digests best.

D-3 to D-1

Three days before your event, the focus shifts: **more carbohydrates, spread more evenly throughout the day, with particular attention to digestive comfort.**

Even at the same carbohydrate intake, tolerance can vary considerably from one athlete to another. As the event approaches, choose familiar foods that you have already tested.

LOADING PHASE approximately 6 to 8 g/kg/day · spread across several meals

MEAL	WHAT TO PRIORITISE
07:30 Breakfast	Toasted white or spelt bread with a little honey, one egg, plain dairy, warm stewed fruit with cinnamon or a ripe banana, a sweetened herbal tea.
10:00 Morning snack	A well-diluted protein drink with stewed peeled fruit.
12:30 Lunch	White rice, gently cooked poultry or eggs, a purée of peeled well-cooked carrots, olive oil, stewed fruit.
16:00 Afternoon snack	Homemade honey, water and salt drink, or oat cream with a ripe banana.
19:30 Dinner	Steamed peeled sweet potato, steamed white fish, a little white or spelt bread, a drizzle of raw rapeseed oil, stewed fruit.
21:30 Evening snack	A final warm honey-water drink, sipped before bed.

KEY POINTS

- Always spread your intake across several smaller meals, never in one large meal.
- Reduce fibre and prioritise easy-to-digest carbohydrates, especially on D-1.
- Don't overlook hydration: each gram of stored glycogen is accompanied by approximately three times as much water (around 2.5 to 3 L spread throughout the day).

THE RIGHT APPROACH IS BUILT AROUND YOU

This carbohydrate target and menu remain general guidelines, designed as an example for a 70 kg athlete. Your own needs should be calibrated and tested through personalised support.

IN PRACTICE

Two pitfalls to know (and avoid)

Does either scenario sound familiar?

PITFALL N°1 — THE SCALES CREEPING UP

Each gram of stored glycogen is accompanied by approximately **3 g of water**.

The resulting temporary weight gain is physiological: it is a sign that **the protocol is working**.

PITFALL N°2 — THE NIGHT-BEFORE “PASTA PARTY”

On paper, aiming for **6 to 8 g/kg of carbohydrates in a single day** may seem equivalent to one giant pasta party.

The difference lies in **how you spread it out**, as we have just seen: distributing this intake across several lighter meals rather than concentrating it all into one huge meal the night before.

It is mainly this last-minute push that can contribute to bloating, digestive discomfort and poor tolerance during the event.

Pitfall-proof checklist

Tick what is already true for you, and work on the rest before your next event.

☐

I have tested my nutrition strategy and digestive tolerance during training.

☐

I spread my carbohydrate loading across several meals and snacks, rather than one large meal.

☐

I prioritise easy-to-digest carbohydrates (lower in fibre) on the day before the event.

☐

I pay attention to hydration alongside my carbohydrate intake.

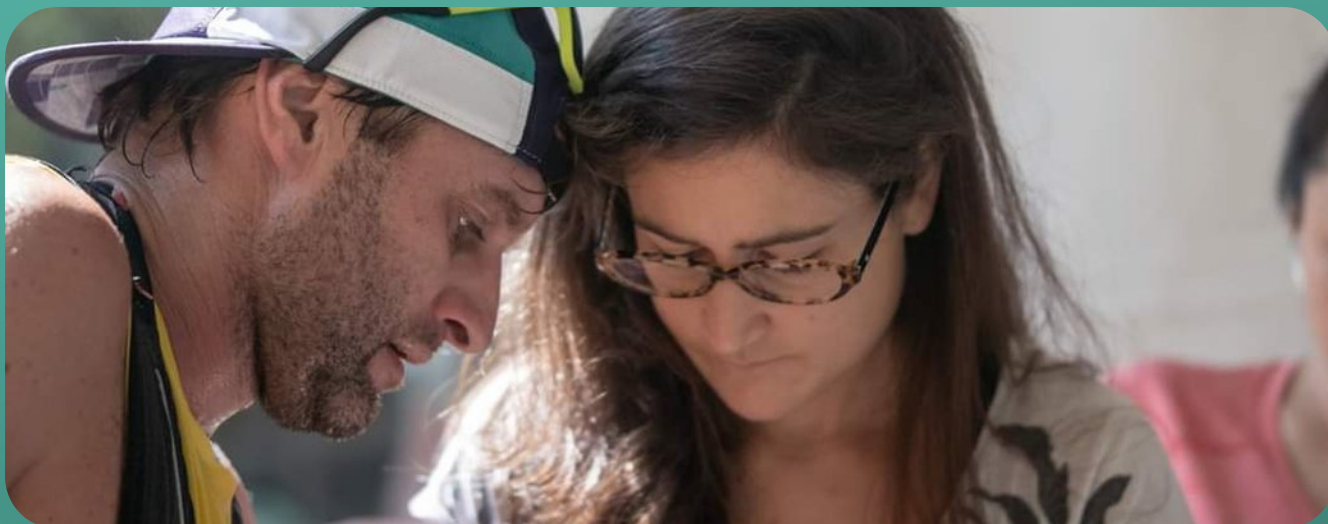
☐

I understand that water-related weight gain is normal and physiological.

☐

I don't improvise on race day: I have a clear eating routine that I have already tested in training.

Print this page or keep it within reach during the days leading up to your next event.



A personalised approach, built around you.

This guide gives you the framework. Your strategy is built around you.

You now know why glycogen supercompensation matters, and what a nutrition plan can look like in the six days leading up to your event.

As with many sports nutrition strategies, individual responses can vary.

Training is therefore the ideal opportunity to test your strategy, fine-tune your approach and see what works best for you before race day.

Want to build your own strategy?

BOOK A CONSULTATION



Book your initial consultation at nutribyclaire.com,
or email claire@nutribyclaire.com.

Together, we'll calibrate your nutrition plan, race after race.

Scientific sources — this guide draws on my certified training in nutrithérapie and functional nutrition (module on sports nutrition and supplementation), and on the following references from the scientific and physiological literature on sport. 1. Boisseau N. *Nutrition et bioénergétique du sportif*. Paris: Éditions Masson; 2005. — 2. Hulton AT, Malone JJ, Clarke ND, MacLaren DPM. *Energy Requirements and Nutritional Strategies for Male Soccer Players: A Review and Suggestions for Practice*. *Nutrients*. 2022;14(3):657. doi:10.3390/nu14030657. — 3. Willett WC. *Manger, boire et vivre en bonne santé*. Montréal: Les Éditions de l'Homme; 2004.

