

Which Sports Bar is Right For You?

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In a nation full of dieters, we are always looking for that quick fix. But can that bar do everything that it claims – boost your energy levels, aid in weight loss, improve your workouts and recovery, taste a candy bar and all in one wrapper? All foods, including energy bars, provide your body with energy. That is the prime reason we should eat . . . for fuel. Food provides protein, fat and carbohydrates as fuel for your body. All three, sooner or later, metabolize into energy your body can use: blood glucose. Glucose flowing through the bloodstream is what provides energy to the body's cells.

Here is a look at the different types of sports bars to help you determine which one is best for you:

Energy Bar

- Typically contain more carbohydrates to provide a quick fuel for a workout.
- Contain greater than 60% of calories from carbohydrates (36-48 g)
- Low in fat to help with easy digestion
- Moderate protein - aid in repair, growth, and development of muscle
- Powerbar, Clif, Gatorade bar

40/30/30 Snack/ Recovery Bar

- Higher in protein, fiber, vitamins and minerals, contain a little fat and some carbs.
- Can be used for recovery – the protein (10-15 g per bar) in these bars combined with carbohydrates can help your body restock spent glycogen stores after a long or intense workout. Your body restores glycogen more efficiently if you eat this carbohydrate/ protein combination within the workout. This makes these bars a good choice.
- Convenient snack – portable and no preparation is required.
- Digestible – these bars and shakes go down easy if you have trouble eating after a workout.
- Can be used as a healthy snack – contain protein, vitamins and minerals, and less fat which makes them better options than chips, crackers and other snack foods we reach for in a hurry.
- In one study 40/30/30 bars glucose levels remained fairly steady for 2 hours after consumption compared to white bread, a candy bar and a high carbohydrate bar.
- Weight loss – the key to these bars is that they guarantee portion and calorie control.
 - 200-400 calories, which could be, considered a small meal.

- If 1-2 meals are replaced with a bar or shake total calories are close to 1200 calories. This could promote a weight loss of 1 pound per week.
- A recent study showed that regular use of meal-replacement products helped maintain weight loss over a 10-year period.
- Examples: Balance bar, Luna bar

Soy Bars

- Scientific studies show lower incidences of bone fractures, cardiovascular disease, certain types of cancer, and menopausal symptoms in Asia where soy is a large part of the diet.
- Consumption of a diet containing 25 grams of soy protein, as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol, may reduce the risk of heart disease, by lowering LDL cholesterol.
- If the idea of eating tofu or veggie burgers makes you turn up your nose, then these bars are a good option.
- Most are considered to be 40/30/30 bars and contain 8-15 g of soy protein.

High Protein Bars

- Originally designed for body builders these bars contain the largest amounts of calories and 30 + grams of protein.
- Meal replacement bar

Low Carb Bars

- These bars have become popular following the rise in number of people following the Atkins and South Beach Diet.
- Typically the same amounts of calories as a 40/30/30 bar, but typically considered high fat.

Tips for Choosing a Bar:

1. Calories – Choose a bar that has ~200 calories for a snack and 300-400 calories for a meal replacement. If you are not trying to lose weight, you may need to take in additional calories, such as a fruit, if you are trying to replace a meal.
2. Protein – Look for a bar that supplies 10-15 grams of protein per serving. This will help to promote fullness. Most adults require about 60-90 grams of protein daily.
3. Fiber – One of the nutrients that bars are lacking is fiber. Try to find a bar that contains 5 grams of fiber or more, this equals 20 percent of the Daily Value. Kashi Go Lean Crunchy, Kashi Go Lean, Clif, Verve, Zoe Flax and Soy bar.
4. Fat – Stick to bars that contain 6 grams of fat or less and 2 grams of saturated fat or less per serving.

What You Are Missing:

Real food still packs a more powerful nutritional punch than most bars.

1. Phytochemicals – Although many of these bars contain a large percentage of the Daily Value of vitamins and minerals, they are lacking in phytochemicals. These phytochemicals protect our body against diseases such as cancer, heart disease and

diabetes to name a few. You can obtain these phytochemicals by eating 5-10 servings of fruits and vegetables per day.

2. Good fats – There is not a bar that contain all the essential fats. These healthy fats, contained in foods such as avocados, salmon, nuts and flaxseed can also fight disease, enhance your immune system and ward off Alzheimer's.
3. Fiber – Eating a bowl of high fiber cereal, skim milk and blueberries in the morning could supply you 20-30 grams of fiber per day. This gets you close to meeting the 25-35 grams of fiber that are recommended daily. Fiber helps to make you feel full as well as lower your cholesterol and heart disease risk. Most of these bars because they are processed, contain very little fiber.

Other 200 Calorie Snack Ideas:

1. ½ c. low fat cottage cheese mixed with 1 c. of mixed berries
2. 6 oz of low fat lemon yogurt with 1 c. of blackberries
3. 2 light string cheese + pear
4. Apple topped with 1 Tbsp. of almond butter
5. Heat 1 Tbsp. of peanut butter in the microwave for 30 seconds, drizzle over 1 c. of Fiber One cereal.
6. ¼ c. of soy nuts mixed with ¼ c. dried fruit to make a homemade trail mix
7. Microwave 2 slices of Pepper Jack Veggie Cheese on 2 corn tortillas, roll up and dip in salsa.
8. 25 soy crisps topped with 2 Tbsp. of Guiltless Gourmet Black Bean Dip
9. Dip baby carrots, celery, or sliced peppers into ½ c. hummus.

Even though these bars may not do all the magical things that they claim and they may not be as nutritionally sound as real food, they can, when used correctly, offer nutritional benefits to Americans.

40/30/30 Snack bars

Balance Bar
Balance Gold Bar
Clif Luna Bar
365 Everyday Bar (WF)
Clif Mojo Bar
PR Bar
365 Ella Bar
Powerbar Sugar Free Protein Plus
Zone Bar
Kashi Go Lean Crunchy Bar
EAS AdvantEdge Carb Control Bar
Pure Protein Bar
Snickers Bar
Hershey's Milk Chocolate Bar

Energy Bars

PowerBar
Clif Bar
PowerBar Harvest
Gatorade Bar
365 Verve Bar
PowerBar Energy Bites
Kellogg's Nutri-grain Cereal Bar
Nature Valley Granola Bar
Milky Way Bar

Soy Bars

Genisoy Bar
Dr. Soy Bar
TruSoy Bar
Zoe Flax and Soy Bar

High Protein Bars

Lean Body Bar
Detour Bar
MetRx Bar
Odyssey Bar

Low Carb Bars

Myoplex Low Carb Bar
EAS Results for Women Bar
MetRx Low Carb Bar
Carb Solutions Bar
Think Thin Low Carb Bar
PowerBar Pria CarbSelect Bar

Atkins Diet Advantage Bar
CarbWise Bar

Please type a chart similar to this chart for the bars above. Include Energy, CHO, Cho %, Fat, Fat %, Protein, Protein %