

Snack Attack!!

Many of us have seen the Snickers commercial with the signature phrase, “You aren’t you when you’re hungry... grab a Snickers”. Besides being a funny commercial, I think there is some truth to it. Who do we become when we are hungry? I become impatient, cranky and have trouble focusing, which is not productive. While grabbing a Snickers is not the best choice for a snack, it can be overwhelming to find the ideal snack with so many options available.

A snack is defined by the American Heart Association as something containing less than 210 calories. A lot of foods fit that criteria, but they still might not give you the sustenance you need to get you to your next meal. Imagine a snack as a bridge to get you from one meal to the next. Ideally, a snack should keep you satisfied for 1-2 hours. Satisfied, not full. We are looking for something to get us from one meal to the next without leaving us sluggish, groggy or tired. I would recommend keeping your snacks to 150-200 calories to help you stay within your daily calorie allowance.

There are a few things to look for when choosing your snack. First, select a snack with as few ingredients as possible. For example, an apple. Simple, just one ingredient. Second, choose something that has carbohydrates, protein, and fat. At a minimum, choose at least two of the three macronutrients for your snack. The optimal snack would include all three macronutrients for under 200 calories. This will insure your satiety for the 1-2-hour timeframe. A prime snack example would be an apple with peanut butter. The carbohydrates are contained in the apple, and the peanut butter contains protein and fat. Peanut butter is considered calorie dense, it has a lot of calories in a small quantity, so limiting your serving to 1 tablespoon is ideal. If you prefer, swap out the peanut butter for a cheese stick to obtain about the same macronutrient profile.

As with most things in life, it is best to plan ahead. If you will be out of the house for extended periods of time pack snacks to take with you to avoid grabbing a Snickers!