

Performance Point

Pre-test Preparation

by Liz Johnson, Physiologist, Canadian Sport Centre Pacific

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Standardized pre-test preparation is important when evaluating elite athletes to generally improve the quality of testing and reduce the variability of the results. Many physiological characteristics commonly quantified during testing can be influenced by variables such as diet, fatigue, medications, illness, injury and environmental conditions. Because a primary objective in testing is to assess fitness in a controlled environment, a standardized pre-test protocol is strongly encouraged. To get the most out of testing you should be in a similar state with regard to nutrition and fatigue for every testing session. Think of preparing for testing the same as preparing for a competition; you want to be well rested, hydrated and properly fuelled so you can perform at your best.

The following checklist is intended to provide you with guidelines for preparing for testing. When it comes to exercise and food intake prior to the test, there are large amounts of individual variation in what is tolerable, so find out what works best for you.

Pre-test Checklist

- Avoid exercise on the day of the test and preferably the previous day; if that is not possible then avoid unaccustomed exercise on the previous day
- Avoid vigorous exercise within six hours of the test
- Increase your carbohydrate intake in the days prior to testing, particularly if you are being tested for blood lactate concentrations
- Avoid a heavy meal within three to four hours of a test (a light, low fat meal is fine)
- Do not eat for two hours prior to the test
- Avoid drinking alcohol, tea or coffee (or other caffeinated products) six hours prior to testing
- Wear light comfortable clothing
- Be in good health and fully recovered from previous injuries or illness
- Be free of any acute infections
- Be well hydrated and bring fluids to the testing session
- Get a good nights sleep before the test
- Ensure you understand the procedures and objectives of the test
- Confirm with your coach or tester if the warm-up is incorporated in the test protocol or if you should come warmed-up and ready to go
- Confirm what personal equipment is required for testing (ie. cycling shoes and pedals, bike measurements, etc.)

In addition it can be useful to keep a log of many of the variables that could potentially influence testing. Document your training history over the last week, meal composition for the previous 24 hours and any illness or sleep pattern anomalies over the last two weeks. Include any other information that you believe may influence your fitness test results. If you notice anything abnormal let your tester know so that they can take that into consideration when interpreting your results. This information can be particularly useful when your test performance is tracked over time and unique results arise. This will help the tester and your coach determine that the changes in your test results are due to your current training practices, and not some other external factors like lack of sleep.



Testing at the Canadian Sport Centre Pacific Performance Lab (Victoria)

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