

Midnight Mini Meals & Afternoon Power Snacks To Beat Grazing

Active college students need to refuel every 3-5 hours. Nutritious snacks or mini meals throughout the day (and night) provide a steady supply of energy to your brain and muscles, keep your metabolism revved up, and prevent over-hungriness and over-eating later. However, it's important to pay attention to your snack choices and portion sizes to avoid unwanted weight gain and sluggishness.

- To avoid overeating and gaining weight, always pre-portion your study snacks onto a plate, bowl, napkin, or small plastic bag. Don't snack directly from the bag or box.
- Try to separate eating from studying, working at your computer, or watching TV. Instead eat at a table in a relaxed environment
- For lasting energy and satiety, choose snacks that have some protein. Protein contributes to feelings of fullness and increases levels of brain chemicals that make you more alert. By contrast carbohydrate (when eaten alone), increases levels of brain chemicals that make you more sleepy.

Try one of these protein-packed power snacks to help you stay awake and alert during your afternoon classes and late-night study sessions. You might also find that these snacks help curb constant carbohydrate or sugar cravings during the day, since protein (as well as fat) helps stabilize blood sugar levels and promotes satiety after eating.

- One small box of whole grain cereal with fat free or 1% low fat milk
- One carton of low fat yogurt sprinkled with high fiber cereal
- A small dish of low fat cottage cheese and canned or fresh fruit
- One string cheese and a piece of fresh fruit
- A small cup of edamame (boiled soybeans)
- One handful of your favorite nuts (peanuts, almonds, cashews, pistachios...)
- A small whole wheat pita spread with hummus
- ½ of a turkey sandwich
- A small 3oz can of tuna with 4-6 low fat crackers
- 2 rice cakes spread with peanut butter
- Sports bar with 10+ grams of protein (avoid ones with high amounts of saturated fat or hydrogenated vegetable oils)
- English muffin pizza with canned tomato sauce and low fat mozzarella cheese
- Low fat frozen dinner (<300 calories)
- Canned tomato or broth based soup. Dehydrated bean soup
- A small tortilla filled with salsa and a little low fat grated cheese or mashed beans