



Nourishing Choices for Overtime Workers

When your team is working overtime on a project or responding to unusually high workload, you need your staff energized and in peak mental condition to do the job well. You may provide food to fuel your employees when they work long hours, but are the meal and drink options you offer helping or hurting their performance? Typical fast foods zap workers' energy and decrease their productivity. Fuel your employees with the smart nutrition they need to stay focused and efficient when working long hours.

The Fast Track to Low Energy

Pizza, subs, cookies, brownies and soda pop are the go-to foods for many companies looking to fuel their overtime workers. What managers do not realize is that these foods actually make employees less efficient, drain them of energy and fog their mental clarity. Typical fast foods are loaded with added sugars, refined carbohydrates, excess sodium and trans fats, which cause a sharp spike in blood sugar, followed by a crash, sending workers on an energy roller coaster, zapping their mental clarity, and increasing stress and irritability. In trying to energize their workforce, these companies are unwittingly decreasing employees' efficiency and effectiveness.

Increase Productivity with Smart Nutrition

The demands of working long hours make good nutrition even more essential for employee productivity. Nourishing your workforce with foods that support mental clarity and consistent energy helps employees produce higher quality work and keeps them buoyant until the job is done. Maximize your employees' productivity, efficiency and mental focus by feeding them slow carbs, limiting added sugar and sodium, and steering clear of trans fats. Slow carbs are foods like vegetables and whole grains, which naturally contain fiber that helps stabilize blood sugar levels and provide sustained energy.

Nourishing Food, Fast

Time is of the essence when your team is working in a high-pressure situation. Our curated list of more nourishing fast food options will keep your workforce feeling and producing their best when they are working long hours. Your employees will appreciate you serving delicious, nutritious food, and you will appreciate the added productivity of a well-nourished workforce. The slow carbohydrates, quality protein and good fats are what make these good choices. Sodium and fat are high for some of these items, but many employees would typically eat a half portion. For fueling staff during high-pressure events, the benefits outweigh the disadvantages.

Smart Beverage Choices

Plain water is the best beverage choice, or flavored waters that don't contain added sugar or artificial sweeteners. Steer clear of soda, juices, energy drinks and sports drinks. These sugar-sweetened beverages provide a temporary energy boost but the subsequent energy crash will leave staff feeling drowsy and sluggish.

Foods to Avoid

These foods have added sugars, refined carbs and bad fats that put employees on an unproductive energy roller coaster.

- Donuts
- Bagels
- Energy drinks
- Fast food burgers
- French fries
- Fruit juice
- Pasta
- Pizza
- Submarine sandwiches
- Soda pop
- Sports drinks

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Smart Eating for Well-Being

Coffee - Too much caffeinated coffee or soda will also leave most employees jittery in what is already a highly stressed environment.

Good Take-Out Options

Chipotle

Chipotle's catering spreads include platters of brown rice, proteins like chicken, steak, carnitas and barbacoa, black and pinto beans, fajita vegetables, a variety of fresh salsas, guacamole, cheese and romaine lettuce, allowing employees to create their own salads, tacos and bowls. As an added bonus, Chipotle sources responsibly raised meats and supports organic farming and pasture-raised dairy.

Chef Marshall's choice:

Chicken Burrito Bowl with brown rice, pinto beans, fajita vegetables and romaine lettuce, with roasted chili-corn salsa or tomatillo green-chili salsa.

Panera

Panera's commitment to 'clean food' means none of their menu items contain artificial preservatives, sweeteners, flavors or colors from artificial sources. They offer a catering menu, online ordering and catering rewards dollars, making it easy for you to feed your staff.

Chef Marshall's choices:

- Modern Greek Salad with Quinoa
- Chinese Citrus Cashew Salad with Chicken
- Spicy Thai Salad with Chicken
- Seasonal Greens Salad
- Turkey Breast Sandwich on Whole Grain
- Mediterranean Veggie Sandwich
- Roasted Turkey & Caramelized Kale Panini
- Turkey Chili
- Low-Fat Vegetarian Black Bean Soup

Subway

Order an assortment of Subway's Fresh Fit Choices on 9-grain wheat bread and ask them to load up on the veggies! Be sure to include apple slices on the side.

Chef Marshall's choices:

- Black Forest Ham
- Oven-Roasted Chicken
- Rotisserie-Style Chicken
- Turkey Breast
- Veggie Delite – add cheese for more protein



Taco Bell

Keep it simple when ordering from Taco Bell and steer clear of specialty menu items that can skyrocket in calories and sodium. Taco Bell's Fresco items replace sour cream and cheese with pico de gallo.

Chef Marshall's choices:

- Fresco Bean Burrito
- Fresco Burrito Supreme - Chicken
- Fresco Burrito Supreme - Steak

Wendy's

There is more to Wendy's than burgers. Order these sandwiches, wraps, salads and more with sides of apple slices for each of your employees.

Chef Marshall's choices:

- Grilled Chicken Sandwich
- Grilled Chicken Wrap
- Apple Pecan Chicken Salad
- Power Mediterranean Chicken Salad
- Broccoli-Cheese Baked Potato
- Chili

Conclusion

Fueling your employees with smart food choices during high pressure situations is key to maximizing their performance, energy and moods. Don't make the mistake of providing the usual pizza and soda or fast food that leads to an energy roller coaster, increasing tension and decreasing productivity.