

Product Reviews: Energy Bars

Running is performed at a high-energy cost and at times it can be difficult to consume enough energy and nutrition from a standard diet. So what is the answer? A possible solution is to use performance energy bars. In this review we have investigated and sampled six brands and a total of nine energy bars that are readily available.

Given that taste is a very individual concept, we have not given a lot of information about the specific flavour of each of the bars tested. Instead comments have been made on the presence or absence of taste or flavour. On thing that needs to be considered is that the absence of taste, or blandness in products such as energy bars can actually be a blessing, especially if the product is to be consumed prior to or during training or competition.

Commonly Used Terms

Value (energy per dollar) – This rating has been included, as some people like to know what is the best value for money. If you are purchasing an energy bar purely to consume more energy regardless of nutrition or taste, this should be your sole criterion. However, if this is the case you may want to purchase lollies (value rating of 1000+ kj/\$) or olive oil (value rating of 3300+ kj/\$). More likely people may want to use this index in association with information regarding the taste, nutrition and composition of each product.

Level of Added Nutrition – Loaded, Packed, or Minimal. Some modern day energy bars come with what is essentially a multi-vitamin tablet crushed into the bar, providing additional vitamin/mineral content. The category “Level of Added Nutrition” gives you with an indication of the additional vitamin/mineral content.

RDI - Recommended Dietary Intake.

Maltodextrin - a moderately sweet polysaccharide used as a food additive, unrelated to barley malt. It is produced from corn starch and is usually found as a creamy white hygroscopic powder. Maltodextrin is easily digestible, being absorbed as rapidly as glucose.

Most energy bars are not suitable for children under 15 years of age, not for pregnant women.

Megaburn
 Website: www.megaburn.com
 RRP: \$3.50
 Weight: 60 g
 Energy per bar: 960 kj
 Value (energy per dollar): 274 kj/\$
 Carbohydrate: 50 %
 Protein: 22 %
 Level of Added Nutrition: Packed
 Flavours Available: Choc Peppermint, Banana, Cherry Choc, Banana Choc, Strawberry, Spirulina/Barley & Wheat Grass, Apricot, Apricot Choc, and Ginger Choc



An Australia made energy bar, Megaburn bars come in more flavours than ice-cream and there is literally one to suit every person's taste. The composition of most bars is soft and chewy texture with chunks of raw nuts or seeds and some flavours come with exotic additional ingredients such as glucosamine. All bars are gluten free and packed with all natural ingredients. One of the most interesting aspects of Megaburn bars is that they contain live cultures more commonly found in yoghurt and thus the bars are best kept refrigerated or frozen. The absence of added nutrition is not necessarily a bad thing given the wide range of natural ingredients found in the bars and they are quite low in carbohydrate, yet still pack an energy punch.

High 5 Sports Bar
 Website: www.highfive.com.au
 RRP: \$3.40
 Weight: 55 g
 Energy per bar: 882 kj
 Value (energy per dollar): 259 kj/\$
 Carbohydrate: 72 %
 Protein: 5 %
 Level of Added Nutrition: Minimal
 Flavours Available: Caramel, Banana, Orange, Raisin, and Berry



The Hive 5 Sports Bar is marketed as “real food made from fruit and whole grains” and falls into the category of a chocolate coated muesli bar, but one that is low in fat (<10%). True to their marketing the main ingredients of the sports bar are cereal and fruit, but also with glucose syrup, rice crisps and maltodextrin. The bars are not overly sweet, sit quite nicely in the stomach, suitable for vegetarians and are GMO/nut free. As with any chocolate-coated product, they become quite messy when warm. The absence of a large range of added vitamins/minerals means the High 5 Sports Bar are minimal in their nutrition levels.

High 5 Energy Bar
 RRP: \$3.70
 Weight: 65 g
 Energy per bar: 896 kj
 Value (energy per dollar): 242 kj/\$
 Carbohydrate: 75 %
 Protein: 3.1 %
 Level of Added Nutrition: Minimal
 Flavours Available: Banana, Coconut, Citrus, and Berry



Similar to the Hive 5 Sports Bar, this is suitable for vegetarians, GMO/nut free and marketed as “real food”, but this time it is not a typical muesli bar as such. The main ingredient is mixed dried fruits and this actually makes up more than 55% of each bar, however you would not necessarily know this given the fine texture of the fruit. The other main ingredients are oats, maltodextrin and puffed rice. One characteristic of this bar some people may find pleasing is the low fat content, just 1.5%. The bar is fairly bland, but in a good way and does not stick to the wrapper even when left in the sun.

Evervit Energy Bar
 RRP: \$2.90
 Weight: 35 g
 Energy per bar: 485 kj
 Value (energy per dollar): 167 kj/\$
 Carbohydrate: 60 %
 Protein: 5.7 %
 Level of Added Nutrition: Packed
 Flavours Available: Fruit & Cereal and Muesli Chocolate Coated



The texture of the Evervit Energy Bar is soft and chewie with added pieces of puffed rice. It has more taste than the Evervit Power Sport Bar, but is still bland enough to consume before a training session without dire effects. The main ingredients of the Energy Bar are oat flakes, dried fruit, nuts and glucose syrup. There was minimal difference when consuming the bar warm and there was no sticking to the wrapper. The size of the Evervit bar was one its of distinguishing features, being nearly half the size of other bars available, great if you are just looking for a light snack.

Evervit Power Sport
 RRP: \$4.00
 Weight: 60 g
 Energy per bar: 942 kj
 Value (energy per dollar): 236 kj/\$
 Carbohydrate: 65 %
 Protein: 18 %
 Level of Added Nutrition: Packed
 Flavours Available: Apple and Cocoa



The Evervit Power Sport Bar is reminiscent of the 80's primary school snack, Space Food Sticks, just bigger and with more nutrition. Maltodextrin, glucose syrup, milk protein and fructose syrup load this bar with energy. It was the blandest bars that we tried, but as mentioned in the introduction this is not necessarily a bad thing. The Sports Bar has a low fat content of 5%, but a surprisingly high protein equal to 19% of its total energy. The bars are loaded with added nutrition providing a wide range of vitamins/minerals including 75% of RDI for Vitamin C and Niacin.

PowerBar Performance Bar
 RRP: \$3.80
 Weight: 65 g
 Energy per bar: 980 kj
 Value (energy per dollar): 258 kj/\$
 Carbohydrate: 65 %
 Protein: 15 %
 Level of Added Nutrition: Loaded
 Flavours Available: Chocolate, Raspberry & Cream, Cookies & Cream, and Vanilla Crisp.



As the wrapper quotes, PowerBar is the original performance energy bar, its longevity is a testament in itself. The thick, chewie consistency of the PowerBar comes from a combination of fructose and glucose syrup with maltodextrin and oat bran. Absolutely loaded with vitamins/minerals, just one PowerBar can provide more than 100% of the RDI for Vitamin C, Vitamin B12, Niacin, and Pantothenic Acid. Two unique additional ingredients of PowerBar's are a range of amino acids and caffeine (ActiCaf™ only in Raspberry & Cream flavour). They can be hard work to consume when too cold (jawbreakers) or too hot (sticky and soft), however have a good combination of flavour without a really strong taste.

Product Reviews

PowerBar Pria Bar
 Website: www.powerbar.com.au
 RRP: \$1.95
 Weight: 28 g
 Energy per bar: 487 kJ
 Value (energy per dollar): 249 kJ/\$
 Carbohydrate: 55 %
 Protein: 18 %
 Level of Added Nutrition: Loaded
 Flavours Available: Mint Chocolate, Creme Caramel Crisp, Chocolate Cookie, and French Vanilla Crisp.



Because they are designed specifically for women, does not mean that they are not suitable for men as well. Featuring a thick chocolate coating that is not heat friendly, the Pria is best described as a rice crisp bar and uses soy flour in combination with 'soy protein nuggets'. The size of the bar, 28 grams, makes it the smallest that we tested, but it is still packed with energy, has a long list of added vitamins/minerals and provides good value. It is a very tasty bar and more suited to a snack, rather than a pre or during competition/training.

Endura Energy Bar
 RRP: \$4.50
 Weight: 60 g
 Energy per bar: 1022 kJ
 Value (energy per dollar): 227 kJ/\$
 Carbohydrate: 63.6 %
 Protein: 13.5 %
 Level of Added Nutrition: Loaded
 Flavours Available: Chocolate



This is a pretty sweet bar. The main constituents of this bar are fructose, rice flour and corn maltodextrin. The chocolate coating is nice for an energy bar and the texture of the bar itself is like a high density Milky Way bar. Beware if the bar gets too hot, it can become quite messy. And when they say it is chocolate flavoured, they are not joking, it is definitely chocolate flavoured! R4YL has given the bar a 'loaded' status for Level of Added Nutrition and that is because it is just that, loaded. Endura include their trade-marked Meta Mag™ (magnesium supplement) amongst an extensive list of nutrients, all providing between 10-50% of the RDI.

Musashi Growling Dog Bar
 RRP: \$2.75
 Weight: 65 g
 Energy per bar: 990 kJ
 Value (energy per dollar): 360 kJ/\$
 Carbohydrate: 53 %
 Protein: 22 %
 Level of Added Nutrition: Packed
 Flavours Available: Chocolate and Berry



The chewy texture of the Growling Dog bar is reminiscent of a PowerBar and they suffer from the same issues when cold, i.e. they become jawbreakers. However, out of all of the bars tested in this review, the Growling Dog bar led the way for many of the categories. It provided the best value when looking purely at energy per dollar and it had the highest protein content. It also contains seven different amino acids and creatine to provide immediate energy prior, during or following training/competition. The milder chocolate flavoured bar was a strong favourite over the strong Berry flavoured bar.

Sports Bras

Written By Heather Logie

Sports bras aren't for everyone: certainly, most of our elite female runners tend to be crop-top wearers. Unfortunately, crop tops just don't seem to provide the support that most normal people need; at least, not on their own. As much as I would like to be a size 10A who bounces out the door without having to consider the pros and cons of motion control, I am a realist who has been on the hunt for the perfect "kit" since puberty.

For some, it is not an either/or decision; they wear both. For others, the sports bra is a step on the path to being a crop top wearer. For others still, a sports bra is essential to feeling adequately supported during activity – a crop top just isn't

enough. The choice is certainly very personal and possibly one that is only answered through trial and error. In an attempt to reduce the confusion, the R4YL crew thought we'd try to deal with the two breeds separately. In this issue, we're looking specifically at sports bras. Who do they suit and what are the important things to consider when looking for one? In the next issue, we will try to untangle the world of crop tops. For all you crop top wearers out there, watch this space.

So, why a sports bra? Generally speaking, sports bras are designed to provide the necessary additional support, firmness and limited

range of movement that the well-endowed outdoor enthusiast wants and needs. This is not a universal principle; some sports bras are quite simple but these verge into territory shared with the crop top. In this review, we wanted to focus on the more traditional sports bras designed for all those fantastically curvaceous figures out there pounding along the pavement. These bras typically come in cup sizes B – DD and chest sizes 10 – 18: most have underwires and offer different special features. We've sampled a few brands and models and come up with some suggestions and comments that we hope will help you to find the right sports bra for you. *Happy hunting!*

Getting the right fit

Every girl recognises the importance of "good fit" when it comes to her bra. A bra that fits well adds shape and support but moves with your body. Well, the same principles are even more important when it comes to choosing the right support for sporting activities, particularly running.

The most important advice I can offer here is "Don't be embarrassed; ask for help". Having worked in the *Ladies Intimate Apparel* section of Myer, I can tell you that bra-fitting is common practice and involves the application of a lot more science than you might expect to the art of getting a "good fit". Ask yourself these simple questions in the fitting room:

Can I jump up and down without feeling the bra moving against my skin?

Take particular note of where the underwires come together against your chest – if they press too tight or move against the skin, you can anticipate some unbearable rubbing from about 5km into a run.

Can I adjust the back straps so that the bra doesn't move but I can still breathe?

Remember that the intensity of your breathing whilst standing in the fitting rooms of a Department store is quite different to the chest cavity expansion you can expect to do during a run. While we might all like to think that we are a size 10, the reality is that rib cages come in different sizes: be sure to consider yours and buy something that doesn't restrict your breathing at all.

Can I adjust the shoulder straps to minimize bouncing?

Unnecessary bouncing can be really uncomfortable and is the main cause of chaffing. Be sure to adjust the shoulder straps so that the bra feels very firm. It can also be worth trying one with convertible straps that allow you to make a cross-over (or racer) back. A racer back can give a better fit with the added benefit that the straps absolutely cannot fall off your shoulders.

Do I feel comfortable?

This is an obvious question but sometimes it is really hard to tell how comfortable a sports bra is going to be in real activity when you are standing in the fitting room. The best suggestion I can make is this: just buy one to start with, try it out, and come back later to stock up if all goes well.

Bendon Max Out
 www.bendon.com.au
 Available in sizes: 10 - 18 B, C, D, DD
 Colours: pink, pink/grey
 RRP \$69.95

Specially designed for high impact sports such as jogging and netball, this is definitely a serious sports bra. This bra goes almost so far as to cross over into the realm of crop tops. Of the bras trialled in this review, this is the only one that had a fixed racer back blended with a traditional back clasp. This makes for a very solid construction with the downside being that the bra can be quite difficult to get in and out of: be prepared to set aside 10mins in the fitting room, although once on, this bra isn't going anywhere. The higher positioning of the front of the bra and the silicon underwires make this one really comfortable on the front and reduces the potential for painful rubbing on the chest.



Triumph Power Sport
www.triumphinternational.com.au
Available in sizes: 10-18, B, C, D, DD
Colours: white
RRP \$54.95

This bra is made with a very solid and firm cup fabric ensuring that everything feels very secure. It also has really nice thick padded shoulder straps which don't cut into your shoulders at all. Although this wasn't a problem with any of the bras tested in this review, it is certainly something to consider when choosing a bra. This one is also convertible so you can use as a standard or racer back bra. One tester did get some chaffing from where the underwire ends rest against the sternum, but this is more likely an issue of personal fit. Just be careful that the wire ends aren't putting unnecessary pressure against the skin when you try it on.



Triumph Action Moulded Underwire
www.triumphinternational.com.au
Available in sizes: 10-18, B, C, D, DD
Colours: white
RRP \$49.95

The fabric used in this bra is really soft with an almost silk lining in the cups. If you like soft, breathable fabrics, this one will impress. The panels in the cup are really flattering and comfortable as well; this was certainly the softest bra reviewed. Having said that, the support was also still there and the wires were quite noticeable relative to the softness of the materials used. Again, be certain that it sits well against your chest. This bra is convertible to a racer back.



Triumph Everyday Sports
www.triumphinternational.com.au
Available in sizes: 10-18, B, C, D, DD
Colours: white, black, body beige
RRP \$42.95

This bra has a number of mesh inserts with a mesh gap along the underwire of each cup. This can be really nice if you are prone to sweating a lot under the breasts during a run. The simplicity of the design also resulted in the bra sitting in a very neutral position on the chest. Of the standard style bras tested for this review, this was the only one which did not have moveable straps and so could not be converted into a racer back bra.



Loveable Action Comfort
http://www.lovable.com.au/
Available in sizes: 10-16B, 10-18C, D, DD
Colours: rose, café, white
RRP \$39.95

This is a really simple entry-level sports bra. If you haven't used one before, this might be a good one to try before committing financially to a more expensive model/style. The cup size on this bra also seemed to be slightly bigger than other equivalent brands. If you are normally a 12C, you may be a 12B in this bra. Similar to the Triumph Power Sport, this bra has a smoothline rigid moulded cup, which feels very secure and leaves no line or pattern visible under a t-shirt.



In summary, all bras are designed with similar principles of good support and comfort in mind. Again, I can't emphasise enough how important it is to try it on properly in the store before you buy and to only buy one at first. A good sports bra can be the difference between a great morning run along the Yarra and the agonising pain of hot water running over raw chaffing in the shower. As a last thought, if you are someone who really has problems with chaffing, I can't recommend a better solution than Bodyglide (www.bodyglide.com). Rub on a little of this under your bra and you'll never look back.

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