

Get up and go

Landscape photography doesn't just mean being skilled with the camera - it can also mean strenuous activity. For this your body needs energy, and Judy Armstrong has been looking into what can provide it

FUELING YOUR BODY is an essential part of outdoor activity. There's no point being inspired to climb, walk, cycle or paddle to a remote place to shoot that prizewinning image, if your body conks out through lack of energy.

It's a problem that's easily solved, once you understand the basics of body fuel. Sports nutrition is a complex field, with different athletes having different demands depending on their spore and activity levels. At the non-competitive end of the scale, though, it can be simplified.

The most efficient way to get energy on the move is from specialist energy bars, gels or powders. Powders are a superb way of taking in a calculated quantify of energy fuel and are commonly used by competition athletes. We're only looking at bars and gels, which are easy to carry and use - and make a lot less mess than jam sandwiches.

Bars tend to be sized between 50g and 70g and range from lean, *chewy* sticks of

carbohydrate to chocolate-covered muesli snacks. They are convenient, easy to cam and usually combine both slow and fast burning carbohydrates.

Gels are basically liquid, fat-free carbohydrates which are absorbed faster and so release energy sooner. They range from thin liquids to thick, gooey sludges, usually packaged in foil envelopes. Most must be taken with plenty of water, although isotonic versions (eg SiS Go-Gel) have water already added.

The body gets energy from carbohydrates, fats and proteins, but of these three, carbohydrates are the most important. They are provided in most bars and gels through a base of high fructose corn syrup or brown rice syrup (simple carbohydrates, easily digested and put to use) and maltodextrin (complex carbohydrates, which take longer to digest and provide a slow, steady dose of

Proteins are important in small quantities to help the body process the sugar, and fat (which should be unsaturated) adds texture to a bar and minimises the feeling of hunger.

Because bars and gels tend to be highly concentrated, it is essential to drink plenty of water. In fact, water is a vital pan of keeping the body going: losing as little as 2% in body weight through dehydration can reduce performance by around 25%. Once carbohydrate energy is used up, performance decreases by around 50%. That's when you feel like you're running on empty - and you are.

□ Nutrition details are per 100g (not per bar): kCalories/ Carbohydrate/ Fat. Nutrition details can vary slightly between bars from one brand, depending on flavour. □ Scores were given based on nutritional breakdown, taste and texture, hunger satisfaction, packing (size and ease of use) and price/value.

sugar to the body's energy system).

SCIENCE IN SPORT

SS is the acknowledged leader in sports nutrition, and work with some of the world's best athletes and most extreme expeditions. It has developed an enormous range of products, from slow-release protein complexes for night-time recovery to hyp tonic energy powders for fast rehydration during exercise.

Go-Bars have a chewy texture, without being gluey or sticking in the mouth. They tread a useful line in being pleasant to eat, with a slight tang, and delivering a powerful energy punch. They don't react to heat or cold, so are the bar of choice for many expeditions.

Drinking Go-Gel is rather like slurping in a mouthful of partly set jelly. The fact that it has water already added makes it more refreshing than the thicker gels, but you get a correspondingly lower carbo kick.

Packaging is messy - there is no drinking spout on the foil pouch, so you need to take huge mouthfuls or risk spilling half the pack.

SiS energy powder: PSP22



Go-Bar
Weight 65g
Flavours Chocolate orange, apple & blackcurrant, chewy banana, cherry & vanilla
Nutrition 319kcal/66.8g/2g
Price 99p
Rating 

Go-Gel
Weight 70ml (water included)
Flavours Orange, tropical, blackcurrant
Nutrition 143kcal/36g/0g
Price 99p
Rating 

SQUEEZY

Squeezy was launched more than 15 years ago as the world's first carbohydrate gel. It is based on medium and long chain carbohydrate polymers, which are absorbed immediately to give long lasting energy.

The pack size is based on research which shows that 25g is the ideal quantity of energy to be absorbed at one time (its recommended use during strenuous exercise is one sachet every 30 minutes).

Squeezy gel is dispensed in a long, slim pack with a twist-off end. This makes it neater to suck in than the tear-off type, with a smaller spout to squirt through.

The gel tastes light, rather than sticky or sweet, with a slight tang. The amount is just right for a single energy dose; any more would be too much of a mouthful. Squeezy recommends that 250ml of water should be consumed with each sachet.

Squeezy Trainer Gel, a concentrate in a 500ml pack which must be diluted before serving, is also available.