

FUEL THE CLIMB

Real-World Nutrition for Tree Workers



Meal ideas, hydration tips, and recovery fuel for the people who keep our trees—and cities—alive.



www.EnjoytheKitchen.com

Why This Booklet?

Let's be real—tree climbers and workers are some of the hardest-working, toughest people out there. You're out there in the elements, moving fast, lifting heavy, and staying focused—because there's not a lot of room for mistakes in this job.

I used to climb trees for a living. I know what it's like to be running on empty, skipping meals, chugging gas station energy drinks, or grabbing whatever was quick and cheap. I also know the difference it makes when you fuel your body right.

This isn't some complicated nutrition textbook. This is a real-world guide, built for you—the climber, the grounds crew, the operator, the truck driver, the foreman—anyone out there doing the work.

Inside, you'll find:

- ▶ Easy meal ideas that work in the field
- ▶ DIY hydration and recovery tips
- ▶ Snack hacks that actually hold up in your gear bag
- ▶ Ways to stay sharp and strong throughout your day

You've already got the grit. This is just a little fuel to help you go further, recover faster, and keep doing what you do—safely and strong.



The Fuel Plan – Your One-Minute Daily Checklist

A quick daily checklist to keep you fueled, focused, and ready to climb.

- ▶ Eat before you leave: Fuel early to prevent bonking later
- ▶ Hydrate first thing (12–16 oz): Replaces water lost overnight
- ▶ Pack a real lunch: Include protein, carbs, and produce
- ▶ Bring 2 snacks: For mid-morning and afternoon energy
- ▶ Pack or prep hydration tools: Skip energy drinks—bring electrolytes
- ▶ Plan post-work fuel: Recovery starts before you're home



Bonus Tips:

- ▷ Use a small cooler or insulated bag—it's your fuel tank.
- ▷ Rotate snack and meal ideas for variety.
- ▷ Eat something every 3–4 hours, even small portions.
- ▷ Hydrate every 20–30 minutes, even in cold weather.

**“It doesn’t have to be perfect. It just has to be something.
One smart step can change how you feel on the job.”**

Fueling for the Climb – Real Breakfast Ideas

Start strong. Fuel early. Don't wait to bonk.

Why Breakfast Matters

Tree work burns serious energy—even before lunch. Starting your day with the right fuel keeps your body sharp, your focus locked in, and helps prevent that mid-morning crash.

You don't need anything fancy. Just real food that gives you steady energy and stays with you on the climb.



Fast, Field-Tested Breakfasts

► Overnight Oats:

Rolled oats + milk, banana, nuts, berries, or peanut butter.

Make it in a jar and grab on your way out

Climber Tip: Make 2-3 ahead for the week.

► Nut Butter Toast + Banana:

Whole grain toast with peanut or almond butter. Add banana slices or a drizzle of honey

Wrap in foil for grab-and-go.

► Eggs + Tortilla Wrap:

Scrambled eggs, beans, avocado.

Wrap it up, toss it in foil, and it's ready when you are.

► High-Calorie Smoothie:

Milk, yogurt, banana, oats, nut butter, berries.

Great option if you don't like eating solid food early.

No Time? No Excuse.

Try: Banana + handful of nuts, String cheese + granola bar, Leftover rice + eggs in tortilla

“You wouldn't start a climb on an empty gas tank—don't start your day on one.”

Hydration Helpers – Smarter Ways to Stay Sharp

Because thirst is a warning light—not a starting point.

Why It Matters

When you're climbing, chipping, dragging brush, or even just standing in the heat, your body is constantly losing fluid through sweat—even if you don't feel it. Waiting until you're thirsty is like waiting for your saw to stall before refueling.

Avoid the Traps

Gas station drinks can backfire. Most energy drinks are loaded with caffeine and sugar. They spike your energy, then crash it (and your focus). They dehydrate you more over time.

“That 3pm crash? It's not just tired—it's dehydration and low blood sugar teaming up.”

Smart Hydration Tips:

- ▶ Start your day with 12–16 oz water
- ▶ Sip every 20–30 minutes
- ▶ Alternate water and electrolytes
- ▶ Keep an extra jug in your truck

DIY Electrolyte Mix (32 oz bottle):

- ▶ 1/4 tsp salt
- ▶ 1/4 tsp baking soda
- ▶ 1–2 tbsp lemon/lime juice
- ▶ 1 tbsp honey/sugar
- ▶ Fill with cold water
Keep Chilled
- ▶ Optional: Add a splash of
100% orange juice for
flavor + potassium.



Safety: Excessive electrolyte intake can be harmful. Always consult your doctor or registered dietitian before regularly consuming homemade electrolyte drinks, especially if you have health conditions or take medications.

Smart Snacks That Keep You Going

The right bite at the right time can change everything.

Why Snacks Matter

Climbing trees, dragging brush, running ropes—this kind of work burns fuel fast. And if you don’t refill the tank, you’ll feel it in your grip, your focus, and your mood.

Skipping snacks? That’s like expecting your saw to run without gas.

Top Field-Friendly Snacks

Snack	Why It Works
Banana + PB packet	Fast fuel + lasting energy
Trail mix	Salty, sweet, protein-rich, and pocket-sized
Granola bar + cheese stick	Quick carbs + protein
Tortilla with hummus or nut butter	Rolls up easy, fills you up
Jerky + apple	Long-lasting protein + fiber
Hard-boiled eggs + crackers	Classic combo, cooler-safe
Leftover rice + beans in a thermos	Mini meal = real staying power

Snack Timing Tips

- ▶ Don’t wait until you’re starving.
- ▶ Keep snacks where you can see them.
- ▶ Pair carbs + protein whenever possible.
- ▶ Rotate for flavor and variety and to avoid burnout.



“You don’t need a gourmet kitchen—you just need a plan and a cooler.”

Recovery Fuel – Refill Your Tank the Right Way

What you eat after the job is just as important as what you eat before.

Why Recovery Matters

Tree work breaks down muscle, drains energy stores, and creates inflammation—just like any intense athletic event. But unlike pro athletes, most tree workers don't have a recovery plan.

**Let's
Change
That.**

Fueling after the job helps your body repair, rebuild, and get ready for tomorrow.

What Makes a Great Recovery Meal?

Look for:

- ▶ Carbs to refill your energy tank
- ▶ Protein to repair muscles
- ▶ Fluids + electrolytes to rehydrate
- ▶ Antioxidants + fiber to reduce inflammation

Easy Recovery Meal Ideas

Beans, Rice, Salsa + Avocado

- ▶ Add cheese, veggies, or meat if you want more bulk
- ▶ Portable and affordable — even better in a thermos

Baked Potato + Canned Chili

- ▶ Keep a few potatoes cooked and ready in your fridge
- ▶ Bonus: top with shredded cheese and greens

Leftover Steak + Tortilla + Veggies

- ▶ A simple wrap with power
- ▶ Add a squeeze of lime for flavor and vitamin C

Recovery Smoothie

- ▶ Milk or plant milk + protein powder or yogurt
- ▶ Add banana, berries, peanut butter, and oats

Pro Tips for After Work

- ▶ Keep a cooler in your truck with post-work fuel
- ▶ Eat within 60 minutes of finishing the job
- ▶ Hydrate with your leftover electrolyte drink or plain water

“Beer might sound good, but food + fluids should come first.”

“You earned a solid recovery—don’t waste your climb.”



Build Your Field Kit – Tools to Keep You Fueled

You don’t need a fancy setup. You just need the right tools in your truck.

Why a Field Kit Helps

When time’s tight and work is nonstop, a little planning goes a long way. Having a field kit means you’re never stuck hungry, dehydrated, or grabbing junk from the nearest gas station.

Think of it like your climbing gear—only for food and hydration.

Essentials for Your Cooler or Bag

Item	Why It Helps
Small cooler or insulated lunch bag	Keeps food safe and fresh
Ice packs or frozen water bottles	Dual-purpose: cool your food & hydrate later
Reusable water bottle + backup jug	Stay hydrated all day
Thermos	Hot or cold meals ready to go
Zip-top bags or small containers	Easy to pack snacks or leftovers
Electrolyte packets or DIY mix	Quick hydration boost
Spoon, fork, and napkins	Don’t rely on plastic at the jobsite

Quick-Grab Grocery List (for the week)

Post this on your fridge or screenshot it for shopping:

- ▶ Bananas, apples, oranges
- ▶ Tortillas, whole grain bread
- ▶ Nut butter, hummus, string cheese
- ▶ Canned beans, rice, salsa
- ▶ Trail mix, jerky, granola bars
- ▶ Greek yogurt, eggs
- ▶ Lemon or lime juice, salt, honey (for hydration mix)

“This isn’t about being perfect—it’s about being prepared.”

“You already have what it takes. Let’s give your body the tools to keep up.”

Final Word

Tree Climbers Are Badass. Period.

Let's Be Real

This work is not for the weak. It's physically demanding, mentally intense, and straight-up dangerous. It takes strength, skill, and guts just to show up. And if you climb trees for a living? That's next level.

Why Nutrition Matters

Tree workers are athletes—whether the world sees it or not. Your gear has evolved. Your techniques have evolved. Now it's time to upgrade your fuel. Better food means better focus. Smarter hydration means fewer mistakes. Recovery means you get to do this work for the long haul—not burn out early.

Nutrition isn't a luxury. It's a lifeline.

You Deserve to Feel Good

- ▶ You don't need to count calories.
- ▶ You don't need a nutritionist on payroll.

What you do need is:

- ▶ A plan that works in the real world
- ▶ Foods that help you stay sharp and strong.
- ▶ A reminder that your health matters, too.

Because the work you do?

It matters.



“Fuel the climb. Respect the work. Take care of you.”



Created by Vincent Alvarez, MA, RDN, CNSC, NSCA-CPT
Former Tree Climber. Arborist-in-Training. Nutritionist.

www.enjoythekitchen.com

© 2025

Appendix: Build a Better Plate - Every Meal, Every Day

