

Eat Well – Train – Compete

We now have masses of scientific information which tells us that athletic performance is closely linked to diet. In other words, the more healthily you eat, the better you are going to swim!

Drink – Drink – Drink

- ✓ Drink 2 cups of water or diluted squash 2 hours before training
- ✓ Bring a water bottle to training and competition filled with water or **VERY** dilute squash – think of it as being part of your gear, you wouldn't come without trunks or a swimsuit
- ✓ During the session **DRINK** the contents of your water bottle. Drink after each set in the session. If you are given 100m Front crawl to swim don't stop after 50m for a drink finish the 100m and drink in the rest time



Sleep

Sleep is important because it is the time when you grow and recovery from daily activity takes place.

Get a good night's sleep before a competition to enable you to swim fast



Eat Well

Your day should start with **Breakfast**

Eat a high carbohydrate breakfast accompanied by some fruit or fruit juice and maybe even a yogurt. Remember to have a drink



Mid Morning

Cereal bar and a drink, avoid fizzy drinks

Lunch

If you eat school lunch select the healthy option such as pasta, rice or baked potato plus some fruit and a drink
If you have a packed lunch eat all your sandwiches plus some fruit and a drink



Mid Afternoon

Banana or cereal bar plus a drink

Home from School

For example: Home by 4.00pm. Have a light meal or snack plus a drink

Training at 6.30pm don't eat after 5.30pm.



During Training/Time Trials

Drink the contents of your water bottle.

If taking part in time trials or club championships bring some digestive biscuits or a cereal bar to nibble on

After Training / On Journey Home

Drink a carton of fruit juice but no fizzy drinks. Have a snack in your bag ready to eat, a banana, cereal bar or digestive biscuits to build up your energy levels again. Try to eat within 30 minutes of the end of your session.

Supper

Have a high carbohydrate meal with some protein. Add to your meal by eating bread with it or drinking fruit juice. If you are really tired when you get home at least have a bowl of cereal with some semi-skimmed milk

High Carbohydrate Breakfasts

- ✓ Cereals – try some wholegrain varieties e.g. branflakes, shredded wheat, porridge, Weetabix or muesli. Add chopped banana or other fresh and dried fruits to increase the carbohydrate content. Use skimmed or semi-skimmed milk, or yogurt with the cereal. Don't choose the same cereal every day and don't go for the sweetened cereals e.g. Frosties
- ✓ Toast – use wholemeal or wholegrain bread. Always go for thick sliced bread. Try raisin bread for a change. Take care not to smother it in high fat spreads
- ✓ Porridge sweetened with honey, raisins and dried apricots
- ✓ Scotch pancakes with syrup
- ✓ Toasted crumpets/teacakes with a little butter
- ✓ English muffins and marmite
- ✓ Bagels with jam/honey
- ✓ Low fat milkshake with banana/fresh fruit/low fat yogurt
- ✓ Fresh fruit and yogurts
- ✓ Beans on toast
- ✓ Boiled egg and toast

Light Meals and Snacks

- ✓ Filled sandwiches (thick sliced), rolls, pitta breads. Choose fillings such as cottage cheese, peanut butter, banana, salad, honey, marmite, tuna, chicken, turkey, ham or combinations of these e.g. ham salad
- ✓ Thick vegetable/ pulse based (made with beans) soups and crackers
- ✓ Rice or pasta salad
- ✓ Beans or scrambled/poached eggs on toast
- ✓ Toasted sandwiches – thick sliced with one of the fillings listed above. If you want cheese go for a lower fat option such as Edam
- ✓ Jacket potato and filling – opt for low fat fillings such as tuna (no mayonnaise) and cottage cheese rather than cheese
- ✓ Risotto
- ✓ Tinned spaghetti in a tomato sauce
- ✓ Pasta with a light tomato based sauce

Snacks on the run

- ✓ Sandwiches as described above
- ✓ Low fat yogurts and fromage frais
- ✓ Fresh fruit – apples, bananas, nectarines, oranges, grapes etc
- ✓ English muffins, scones, crumpets
- ✓ Scotch pancakes – no butter or margarine
- ✓ Dried fruit – raisins, apricots etc
- ✓ Cereal bars
- ✓ Nuts and dried fruit combinations
- ✓ Rice cakes, crackers and dry breakfast cereal

Main Meals

- ✓ Spaghetti Bolognese
- ✓ Chili Con Carne
- ✓ Chicken with Potatoes
- ✓ Jacket potato with tuna
- ✓ Have fresh fruit, yogurt or jelly for desert

At competition

- ☺ Breakfast before you leave
- ☺ Arrive on time for warm up
- ☺ 30 mins warm up, or whatever your coach says
- ☺ Replace fluids
- ☺ Less than one hour before race just keep to fluid replacement
- ☺ More than one hour try to eat a little
- ☺ Best to eat little and often during the day to keep energy levels high
- ☺ Eating too much at once can make you feel heavy and tired
- ☺ Try to eat during the longer breaks
- ☺ Take your own food with you
- ☺ Take enough fluid to last the whole day
- ☺ Have something to eat and drink immediately after your last race
- ☺ Avoid Burger King/McDonalds on your way home – high fat foods delay recovery
- ☺ Have some high carbohydrate foods + protein prepared for you to eat as soon as you arrive home
- ☺ Have a good night's rest especially if you are competing over the whole weekend

Snacks to have between events (1-2 hour breaks)

- ✓ Small can fruit
- ✓ Bananas and other fruit
- ✓ Hot cross bun or raisin bread
- ✓ A small sandwich with a light filling. Try a banana sandwich
- ✓ Rice cakes you can top them with honey or jam
- ✓ Bagels
- ✓ Fruit scones
- ✓ Plain crackers with jam
- ✓ Jam or honey sandwiches
- ✓ Carton of rice pudding

In order to be able to train hard and swim fast at competition, you need to eat a well balanced diet consisting of 50-60% carbohydrate (e.g. pasta, potatoes, beans, cereals, bread, etc) 10-15% protein (meat, fish, eggs and soya substitutes, etc) and 25-30% fat (concentrating more on vegetable and fish oils rather than dairy produce - fish like salmon, tuna and mackerel are among the best oily fish to eat and things like olives, avocados and nuts provide useful fats). Also, guard against dehydration. Pre-hydrate before you come to training and drink the contents of your water bottle during the session and rehydrate afterwards. As a rough guide, you should be drinking 6-8 glasses of water (rather than fizzy drinks) a day. Not only will this help you train, it will also help you concentrate better at school and work.

Eat FIVE portions of fruit and/or vegetables a day. Remember that half a tin of baked beans counts as one portion. The vitamins contained in these foods not only help make and keep you healthy but assist your body in producing the energy you need for training and competition.

The most efficient source of energy comes from carbohydrate but needs to be eaten well in advance of training and competition to be effective. The easiest way of doing this is to eat regular meals and to plan your meals in such a way that you are not swimming on a full stomach. Imagine the sugar contained in sweets and fizzy drinks like a firework. There is a big bang (i.e. energy) and then nothing soon after. Carbohydrates are more like a lump of coal which burns more slowly (also providing energy) but does this over a longer period of time. In other words, a bowl of pasta eaten the evening before a gala will have a longer lasting effect than a chocolate bar in the morning.

Begin reloading your carbohydrate stores after training in preparation for the next session. Eating a tuna sandwich and an apple within fifteen minutes after your training session would be ideal and will be a lot better than a bar of chocolate. You need to plan your eating during a gala as getting it wrong could be costly in terms of your performance. Have something like a bowl of cereal and some fruit for breakfast. Make sure that you get up early enough to be able to eat breakfast and do not be tempted to eat nothing. For lunch some pasta and tinned fruit (preferably not at the same time!) is a good idea. Try to eat as soon as the lunch break starts rather than at the end just before the afternoon warm up. Most important, do not eat too much as this will leave you feeling sluggish. It is much better if you snack during the day between races (without overdoing it) rather than just the one meal at lunch time. For snacks, bananas and cashew nuts are an ideal and tasty combination and will do you a lot more good than chocolate bars!



Potassium

Potassium intake is important when competing. Potassium's task is a formidable one, primarily because of its role as an electrolyte, a mineral that takes on a positive or negative charge when dissolved in the watery medium of body fluids. (Sodium and chloride are other important electrolytes.) To regulate blood pressure and muscle contraction, and to keep nerves, kidneys, and a host of other body processes working properly, the body needs to maintain these electrolytes in a delicate balance. In addition, potassium aids in converting blood sugar (glucose, the body's foremost fuel), into glycogen, a form of energy that can be stored in the muscles and liver and released as needed.

What are the best food sources?

Bananas, oranges, watermelon, cantaloupe, vegetables, meats, milk, grains, and legumes all have plenty of potassium. To give you a sense of how easy it is to obtain from your daily diet, we've listed the milligram count in some foods, below:

- 1 medium baked potato: 844.4 mg
- 8 oz. prune juice: 706.6 mg
- 1 avocado: 602 mg
- 1 cup raisins: 575 mg
- 10 dried apricots: 482 mg
- 3 oz. salmon: 453.9 mg
- 1 medium banana: 451.4 mg
- 1 cup mushrooms: 277.7 mg

Refueling the Body After Workout

Without getting too scientific, our bodies – specifically our muscles – need fuel and the only energy source that can power them is ATP (adenosine triphosphate). Our muscles store enough ATP for just a very short time.

For back-up, our energy system is supplied by fat, carbohydrates and protein throughout the duration of aerobic exercise. As a swimmer's body struggles to keep up with the demand placed on it by its muscles, breakdown occurs.

Athletes can recover more effectively, work out harder more frequently, increase muscle mass and enhance physical adaptations by not only watching what they eat, but when they eat it.

Swimmers skipping breakfast because they are going straight from morning practice to school and don't have time to eat is not a good idea.

It's important to refuel your body after workout, and that window of opportunity is open for just 30 minutes after exercise.

Recipe for Low-fat Granola (Muesli). It's great tasting and extremely healthy.

It contains carbohydrates, protein, fibre and plenty of vitamins and minerals. The fats present are mono-unsaturated – the good kind. It can be made in large batches, stored for up to a month in the freezer, or a week at room temperature in an airtight container. It's a convenient snack for a swimmer on the run and is much healthier than many store-bought granolas, which are usually high in saturated fat and contain lots of preservatives.

4 Cups Oats

¼ Cup Honey

1 ½ Cups Sliced Almonds

¼ Cup Olive Oil

1 Cup Plain Shelled Pumpkin Seeds

1 tsp. Vanilla

½ Cup Light Brown Sugar

1 ½ Cup Dried Cranberries or Raisins

½ tsp. Cinnamon

1 Cup Chopped Dried Apricots (no need to soak)

½ tsp. Salt (optional)

* Preheat oven to 350F (175C) degrees. In a large bowl, mix together oats, almonds, pumpkin seeds, brown sugar, cinnamon and salt.

* In a small saucepan, warm honey and oil over low heat. Stir in vanilla.

* Pour honey mixture over oat mixture, and gently stir to combine.

* Spread granola out onto a large baking sheet and bake for 40 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes.

* Allow granola to cool completely. Stir in fruit and enjoy a healthy, well-balanced snack after workout.

To find out more about nutrition, visit the BBC website where you can learn how to avoid dehydration, what to eat and when to eat. It works for the top swimmers so why not give it a try yourself!