



## Nutrition Tips for Swimmers

### Training Days

Swimming is both a physically and mentally demanding sport. Your diet is a vitally important, but often neglected, part of your regime. Getting it right will enable you to train and compete at your best. Below are some ideas to help you on your way to a better diet. The focus is on the critical areas of pre training, during training and post training. There are also some tips for race-day nutrition.

#### Pre-training

You are about to put your body through 1-2hours of intense exercise so it makes sense to fuel it accordingly.

Ideally, consume a large meal containing good amounts of protein and carbohydrates 2-4 hours before training to provide adequate energy. For an afternoon training, this meal would be your lunch. For a morning session, this is the probably the meal you have the night before! A smaller snack can be consumed closer to training for a top-up.

Try the following meal ideas:

- Baked Beans with grated cheese on toast
- Pasta spirals with pasta sauce and grated cheese (can be eaten cold or hot).
- Eggs (cooked any way) on toast
- Wholegrain sandwiches with chicken/fish/ham/red meat and salad
- Lasagna or spaghetti bolognaise
- Homemade pizza
- Other 'leftovers' from dinner – things like roast vegetables and meat can be eaten cold too.



A smaller meal can be consumed closer (30min-1hr) to training:

- Honey, peanut butter or jam on toast
- Yogurt and fruit
- Smoothie with fruit and protein powder
- Muesli bars
- Protein drink and fruit
- Creamed rice
- “Primo Extremo”, “Up & Go” or similar.



### **During training**

If you are training for longer than 1 hour, it can be a good idea to start consuming some carbohydrate rich energy sources while you are still training. Sports drinks, gels or light foods are ideal for this. Remember to drink plenty of water while you are training so you stay hydrated!

Try the following during training to keep you going right till the last set:

- Homemade sports drink 1: for a standard 700ml drink bottle, mix 1 part pure fruit juice (from concentrate is ok), 1 part water and add a pinch of salt.
- Homemade sports drink 2: Mix 1 sachet of Vita Fresh in 1L of water. Make 1 L of tea using 5 tea bags of your choice (a combination of Ceylon and green tea works well). Allow to cool and add to the Vita Fresh solution. Add ½ teaspoon of salt and stir.[The tea provides antioxidant and anti-catabolic benefits]
- Sports drink e.g. PowerAde, Horley's Replace, Leppin Sport etc.
- Carbohydrate gels e.g. Leppin
- Muesli bars, bananas or other light snacks: Can be consumed during training if you can stomach them



## Post-training

It had been well researched and documented that appropriate food must be consumed within 20mins of finishing training to ensure a fast and adequate recovery. This is called the “20 minute window of opportunity”. A combination of protein and carbohydrates is required to replenish glycogen (the energy source in your muscles) and to repair muscles damaged during the course of training. Remember to drink plenty of water to replace what you have lost in sweat.

Try the following foods post training to get fast recovery:

- Muesli bars
- Protein powder + homemade sports drink
- Creamed rice
- Protein powder + fruit
- Wholegrain sandwich with chicken/fish/ham/red meat and salad
- Wholegrain sandwich with honey, jam or peanut butter
- “Primo Extremo”, “Up & Go” or similar
- Yogurt + fruit
- Mixed nuts and dried fruit



It is also important to consume a large meal within 90 minutes of finishing training i.e. breakfast in the morning and dinner in the evening should be no more than 90 minutes after finishing respective trainings. Once again, make sure that the meal contains good sources of protein, carbohydrates and plenty of vegetables or fruit.

## Competition Day

It can be hard to eat good meals on competition day due to the staggered nature of races. That makes vitally important to eat a decent breakfast containing complex carbohydrates and protein. You should be doing this everyday anyway! A good breakfast will help keep you going for the day, with top ups coming from smaller, easily digestible snacks.

Good options include:

- Porridge
- Muesli (can add fruit and yogurt)
- Eggs on toast

### Pre race

Consume complex carbohydrates that are light and easy on the stomach such as rice crackers (but beware of high salt content). Do not consume excessive amounts of lollies or sports drinks as these can cause a 'sugar high'. Consume plenty of water or dilute a sports drink like PowerAde by at least 50%. Alternatively, use the homemade sports drink.

Try to consume a decent meal such as sandwiches, lasagna, pasta etc at such a time that you will have enough time to digest it before your next race. Make sure the meal contains carbohydrates and protein but not too much fat,



### Post-race

You can consume a small handful of lollies immediately after racing (before warm down). Jet planes or jelly beans are good. Once warmed down, make sure you start drinking (water, dilute sports drink or homemade sports drink). Eat some rice crackers. Now is also a good time to eat something more substantial than rice crackers if you have a good break until you next race.

Follow these tips, remember to **ALWAYS DRINK PLENTY OF WATER** and you should see the results come race day. If you want a more specific eating plan for your needs, please contact a registered nutritionist. If you have questions regarding this information, please contact the Swimming Waikato Development Panel:

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