



Performance Nutrition for Swimmers: Fuel the Movement

Swimmers have exhaustive schedules. Competing in swimming requires practicing multiple hours each day in order to improve speed, endurance, and technique. Given the large energy demand of the sport, competitive swimmers must learn how to properly fuel their movement in order to take their performance to the next level. So how do you stay energized throughout a hectic day? Follow these simple fueling guidelines:

1) Fuel the Movement

On average, swimmers should eat every 3-4 hours to maintain a consistent intake of calories, carbohydrates, and fluids. Sometimes you might find yourself getting hungry 2 hours after a meal. Remember, everyone's metabolic rate is different. Focus on simple eating strategies, such as listening to your body's hunger cues – also be mindful not to go too long without eating. You must eat frequently in order to provide energy for activity and promote recovery following activity.

Breakfast doesn't have to be a fully cooked meal, it can be anything from a small snack to a quick smoothie to get you fueled for the day.

Rule 1# for optional performance is to **NEVER, EVER SKIP BREAKFAST**

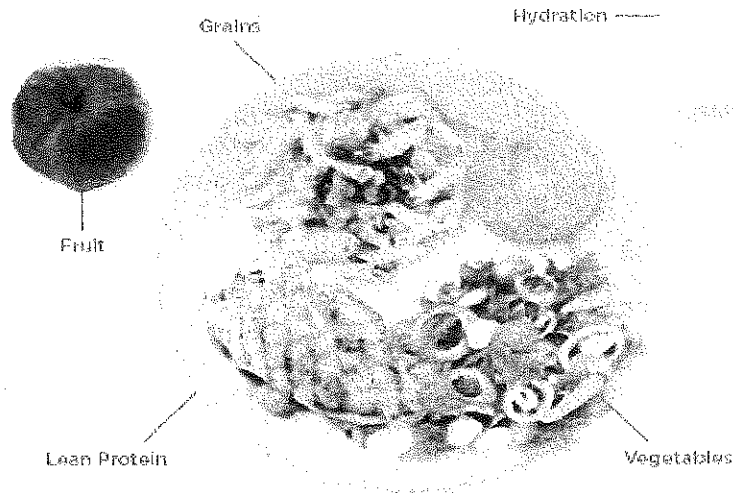
2) Pay attention to the quality of your food:

Swimmers need to consume a variety of foods that are rich in quality calories (and low in added-sugars and unhealthy fats) to promote performance, recovery, and overall health. Each component of the performance plate plays an important role in your diet and fuels your body for optimal sports performance.

- 2/3 of the plate Carbohydrates are an athlete's primary source of fuel.
 - Choose high-quality carbohydrates, such as whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and low fat or fat free milk or yogurt.
- 1/3 of the plate Protein helps build and repair an athlete's muscles.
 - Great lean protein options include turkey or chicken breast (without the skin), fish, nuts, seeds, and eggs.

What Should Your Performance Plate Look Like?

Vary Active/Hard Training



3) Hydrate & Rehydrate

To prevent dehydration, athletes should drink $\frac{1}{2}$ their bodyweight in oz of liquids per day (150-pound athlete needs 75oz per day). Drink 20oz 1-2 hours before engaging in activity

To replenish fluids after exercise, drink 24oz for every pound of body weight lost (150-pound athlete loses 2lbs from training, needs to consume 48oz over the next two hours to rehydrate).

GOOD: 100% real fruit juice (maximum of 1 to 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups per day). Infrequent use of sugar-sweetened beverages.

BETTER: Milk, or calcium/ Vitamin D- fortified milk substitutes (aim for 3 cups per day).

BEST: Drink water, more than you think! The bulk of beverages should be from water. Use Sports drinks wisely and target their usage around workouts and race day.

4) Plan, Pack, and Be Prepared:

The best method for ensuring consistent energy levels is to plan, pack, and be prepared. Each night before you go to sleep, think about your schedule for the following day. Plan your meals and snacks, and pack healthy foods and drinks accordingly. When traveling or preparing for a long day, fill an insulated bag or small cooler with healthy, high-energy foods. Here are some easy snack ideas to keep you adequately fueled:

- Fresh fruit and low fat string cheese
- Whole grain waffle and nut butter
- Grilled chicken and spinach wrap
- Whole wheat pita with hummus
- Dried fruit and nuts
- Low fat cottage cheese and dried fruit

Jeffrey Lucchino MS RDN CSSD
Sports Dietitian
UPMC Lemieux Sports Complex
8000 Cranberry Springs Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
Office: 724-720-3077
Email: lucchinoj@upmc.edu



Match the Sugar amount

<u>Beverage</u>	<u>Sugar (g)</u>
1. Mountain Dew Voltage (20 fl oz)	32g
2. Coconut Water (16.9 fl oz)	52.5g
3. Vitamin Water (20 fl oz)	76g
4. Almond Breeze (10 fl oz)	20g
5. PowerAde (32 fl oz)	22g



Portable Performance Plate Check List

1. Breakfast/Lunch at home _____
2. Soft or Hard Cooler _____
3. Ice Packs _____
4. Hydration _____
5. Pre-Event Snacks _____
6. Between Event Snacks _____
7. Recovery/Post-event Snacks _____

Key Messages

- Don't try any new foods or drinks on the day of the swim meet
- Pack snacks that are healthy & can be eaten in small portions/tennis ball size (trail mix, granola bars, fruit, pretzels, apple sauce, yogurt)
- Pack beverages that do not have carbonation or added sugars (i.e. Soda, Energy drinks, Fruit Juice Concentrate, or Vitamin Water)
- Something packed is always better than relying on the vending machines or what is available at the swim meet