

16 BREAKFAST IDEAS FOR THE YOUNG SWIMMER

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To eat, or not to eat, breakfast? This is the question young swimmers may struggle with as they scurry out the door to make morning practice or catch the bus and get to school on time.

For growing kids and teens, starting the day with breakfast has its benefits. Breakfast consumption has been linked to better nutrient intake, mental function and academic performance. Skipping breakfast has its drawbacks. A 2010 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES 1999-2006) survey of children aged 9-18 looked at self-reported breakfast eating patterns and the types of breakfast foods eaten. Researchers found that 20% of children and 35% of teens skipped breakfast, 36% children and 25% teens ate cereal, and the rest ate a variety of different breakfast foods. Interestingly, breakfast skippers had higher body mass indices (BMIs) and a higher prevalence of obesity, while cereal eaters had the most favorable nutrient intakes and weight scores.

We have less data for young athletes and their breakfast consumption patterns, particularly about what constitutes the perfect breakfast amount, and composition. However, it is known that carbohydrate-based foods are needed as fuel for athletic performance, and protein sources help build and repair muscle tissue. So it makes sense that young athletes may benefit from the healthy habit of a daily, balanced breakfast. To make getting breakfast on board for your young swimmer easier, check out these breakfast ideas categorized by preparation method:

REFRIGERATE OVERNIGHT

1. ***Peanut Butter and Chocolate Swirl Overnight Oats***
2. **Greek Yogurt Parfait:** Layer vanilla Greek yogurt, fruit, and granola in a glass or Mason jar.

GRAB-N-GO

3. **Nut butter sandwich on whole grain bread:** Make this the night before. Add jelly if you like.
4. **Trail mix:** Use a commercial trail mix or make your own with nuts and dried fruit.
5. **Nut butter and fresh fruit:** Can you say banana or apple and peanut butter? Vary your nut butters with almond, cashew and try sunflower seed butter too. There are many small convenient packets of nut butter available.
6. **Gorp:** Mix dry cereal, nuts, raisins/other dried fruit, carob or chocolate chips together in a baggie.
7. **String cheese and whole grain crackers**
8. **Hard-boiled eggs**

PREP IN 5 MINUTES...

9. **Smoothie:** ½ cup 100% juice or nectar; ½ cup milk; 1 cup frozen fruit; ¼- ½ cup Greek yogurt
10. **Bagel sandwich:** Layer ham and cheese on a bagel. Zap in the microwave for 30 seconds to warm.
11. **Egg and cheese on an English muffin:** fry an egg; toast the muffin; assemble with a slice of cheese into a sandwich.
12. **Breakfast burrito:** Take a whole grain tortilla, fill it with scrambled egg or tofu, add cheese, avocado, leftover veggies and salsa, and roll it up.

13. Walking waffle: Toast two whole grain waffles, spread with nut butter or cream cheese, top with fresh fruit or jam, and assemble as a sandwich.

14. Instant oatmeal: Mix hot water and oats in a to-go coffee cup; top with walnuts and blueberries. Don't forget the spoon!

FREEZE AHEAD

15. Egg and veggie cups: Make these over the weekend and freeze them. Heat them in the microwave in the morning and grab a piece of fruit as a side.

16. Breakfast cookies: Try these [Pumpkin breakfast cookies](#) or these [dried fruit and peanut butter cookies](#). Toss in a milk box or 100% juice alongside.