

Preparation: From the
Kitchen to the cool down pool



What do you eat on a daily basis?

Think about this in two ways. First, what do you eat on a typical day that you have swim practice. Everything from breakfast through dinner. Make a list in your binder.

Second, think about a typical Saturday at a swim meet. What do you pack/eat on a day you know you have to race. Think of everything from breakfast through dinner. Again, make a list in your binder.

Nutrition: What makes a swimmer go!



First, let's eliminate a common misconception or two. First, good nutrition cannot take the place of work ethic, drive, desire, practice attendance, or great coaching. However, all of those things being equal it can be something that sets you apart or gives you an edge over the people you train with or race against.

Thus, a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds will help you train harder so that you are more prepared for competition.

So what does good nutrition look like?

First, you are an aerobic athlete. You spend a lot of your time working on your aerobic threshold and you need carbohydrates. Carbs help you store glycogen which is the fuel that makes your muscles go! However carbohydrates fall into two categories:
Simple and Complex

GOOD CARBS



OATMEAL Great for a golfer's breakfast. One cup (mixed with water) has 159 calories, 4 grams of fiber and 6 grams of protein.



APPLE Perfect mid-round snack with 4 grams of fiber and pectin, which reduces bad cholesterol. Pair with peanut butter (rich in protein).



SWEET POTATO A true "superfood." One cup has 7 grams of fiber, lots of vitamin A and C and 4 grams of protein.



BLACK BEANS When boiled, one cup has 15 grams of fiber and 15 grams of protein. Hard to beat these numbers.



TOMATOES Bursting with vitamins and minerals, not to mention some fiber and the antioxidant lycopene.

Carbs on a daily basis

Complex Carbohydrates are what we are really after, they are the carbs that the body breaks down and uses as energy stores. Complex carbs are foods such as whole grain cereal, bread, rice, pasta, vegetables, and beans. These help build energy and keep you going.

Remember Glycogen is the energy store that helps keep you moving in workouts and in daily life.



Protein on a daily basis



Lean Protein is the second piece of the puzzle. Lean proteins that we should be eating are things like **grilled chicken, egg whites, fish, low fat dairy, and when you are older even a protein supplement.** Eating .6-1.1 grams of protein per pound of weight on a daily basis is what it takes to keep your muscles from fatiguing and breaking down. So if you weigh 105 pounds, you should consume 63-115.5 grams per day

Further, 10-15 grams of protein before a workout can help prevent fatigue and enhance muscle recovery during a workout.

So what does this look like in meal form to properly fuel your body?

Your favorite pasta dish (preferably with whole wheat pasta), whole grain roll, and a favorite vegetable with fruit and angel food cake for dessert.

Another possibility is chili made with beans and some lean meat, corn bread, and a favorite vegetable topped off with a serving of fresh berries and ice cream.

Whatever the dinner menu, just make sure it is loaded with complex carbohydrates and some lean protein while you are in training.

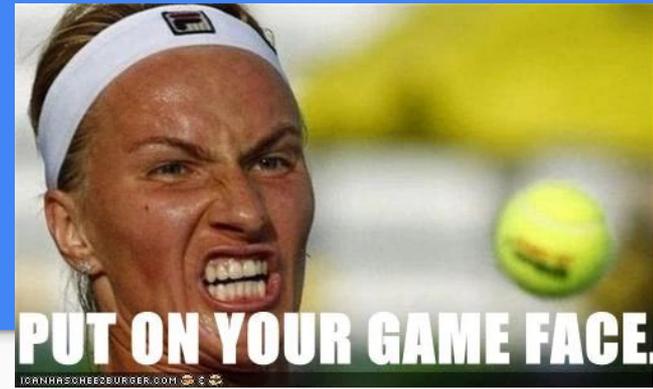
Day of competition - Breakfast is the most important meal of the day!

eating breakfast before an early morning swim meet is especially important because it replenishes glycogen in the liver (which later can be used for fuel when needed during a race) that may have been used by the body while sleeping. Thus, any of the following are great ways to fuel up and prepare

- Cereal + milk or yoghurt
- Toast, muffins or crumpets with jam or honey
- Canned spaghetti on toast
- Pancakes with syrup or honey
- Fresh or canned fruit
- Pasta with vegetarian or other low-fat sauces
- Rice dishes with low-fat sauces, or creamed rice
- Sandwiches or rolls with low-fat fillings
- Fruit smoothie



Now it is ready to race! - Step 1



So you have fueled your body, you have trained for weeks, you have worked on your strokes, and it is time to race. What now? Just swim? There is a lot more to it than that for most of us. Thus, the following may help you out.

Ignore your competition - Swimming is a unique sport in that while you race you do not have contact with your opponent. Nobody is tackled, struck out, or blocked or fouled in any usual swim race. So if you worry about the lane next to you or in the after you all you are doing is taking away mental energy from what you need to focus on.

Step 2 - Focus on you

Your coach has likely worked on a number of keys you need to keep in mind in order to excel. Go through the list of keys in order to reassure yourself and also plan for your race. Think of your streamline, your dolphin kicks, stroke counts, breathing patterns, or any other area you have focused on in your training. By being aware of the little things that we have spent time with in practice before a given race you can build confidence and enhance your preparation.



Step 3 - Think of a great race

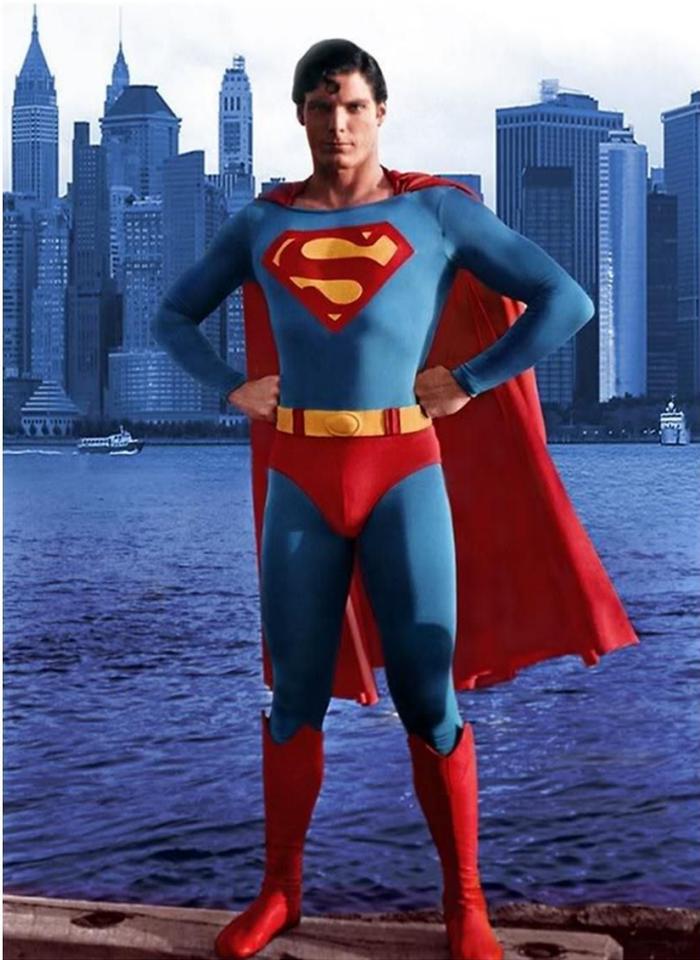
One way to help behind the blocks is to think of a great race you have had in the past. What went well? Why did it go well? How can you repeat certain aspects of that great race? Think about the things you can repeat from that performance when you next dive in the water.



Step 4 - Control your breathing and power pose

Believe it or not our posture says a lot about us. We have all seen that swimmer or athlete that has hunched shoulders and looks nervous. Chances are you are not nervous about that individual. However, slowing down your breathing and working on a “Power Pose” has been proven to boost confidence and performance by lowering levels of cortisol (the stress hormone) within the body.





Post Race

You just hit the wall and BOOM! Your race is over. Whether it is a new best time, or you added there are a number of things you need to do in order to make sure you bounce back not just physically, but mentally.

Strive for a 3/1 Carb to Protein Ratio



Protein is something many of you reach for after a race and that is a great idea. However, just protein is only going to take you so far. Remember, carbohydrates help you replenish glycogen and help with insulin. Basically, balancing the two help you bounce back and prepare to race again. Thus, maybe you should just reach for a chocolate milk and get ready to swim great again!

Further, Gatorade and other sports drinks have high absorption rates and can help you recover quicker and be prepared to swim again sooner than water alone.

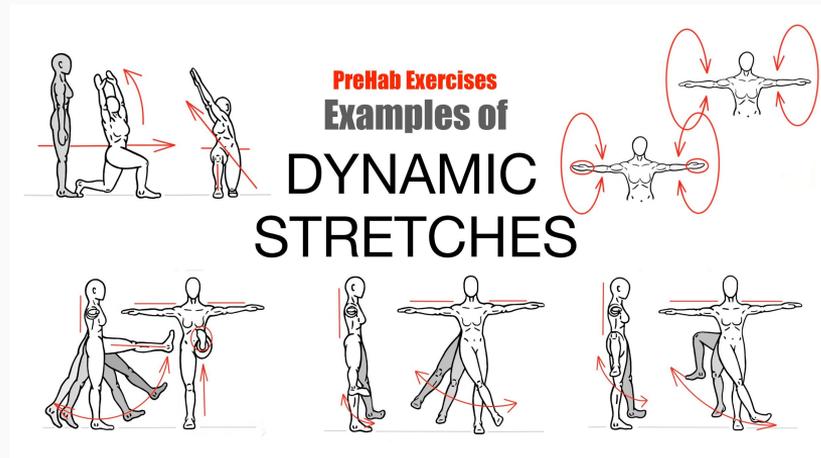
P.O.S.T Strategy



Process: Think about the race you just completed. Reflection is one of the strongest tools an athlete or an individual for that matter has at their disposal. Take some time to not just look at the time but think about what went well and what you can improve upon.

P.O.S.T Strategy

Oxygenate: Swim down and stretch to get oxygen back into your muscles. Do not sit or lie down after a race. Try to keep moving and either get into a cool down pool or do some light active stretching to help your muscles bounce back.



P.O.S.T Strategy



Supplement: Be sure to replenish your body as soon as the race is over. First, hydration is the key here. You just expended a great deal of energy and staying hydrated will help you more than anything. With that said, you need to make sure you are using either water, Pedialyte, a sports drink, or fruit juice diluted with water. Any extremely sugary beverage or soda will only dehydrate you more due to your body needing to pull liquid from your muscles to dilute the sugar content in your stomach.

As for what to eat, healthier snacks for competition day are low in fat and high in carbohydrates such as fresh fruit sliced, wedged, or whole, whole grain crackers, pretzels, bagels, rice cakes, fruit bars, smoothies, and nonfat yogurt are a must. Along with

P.O.S.T. Strategy



Train: Use the feedback from your coach and from your own reflection in order to correct shortcomings and prepare better for your next competition. Fast swimming does not happen by accident and internalizing what a coach says and building them into your workouts every day are crucial.

Think of it this way, every turn is a chance to work on turns. Sloppy walls in practice are sloppy walls in meets. Train the way you hope to perform.

Review

Thinking about all that we talked about over the past few minutes, what stands out to you the most? Take a few minutes to jot down the ideas you think will be the most beneficial to you going forward.

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