
NUTRITION PLAN: GCY MAKOS

Just as hard work and practice are necessary for the success of an athlete, proper nutrition also plays a significant role. Determining what to eat before a race, workout, or even before school can be difficult, especially with all the claims made by big companies. Every time you go into a grocery store, the appearance of a new product is evident. There will always be food and beverage products promising to be the difference between being an athlete versus a professional athlete. However, do not be so quick to believe everything you hear or see. With this nutrition plan, I will provide you with sports nutrition facts-not theories. Whether you decide to use this knowledge is completely up to you, but if you would like to take your swimming to the next level, I would suggest reading carefully.

THE BASICS:

Carbohydrates: Representing the most important nutrient for swimmers, carbohydrates are essential for energy, as well as preventing muscle fatigue. Because carbohydrates are the most efficiently broken-down and metabolized form of energy in the body, swimmers should consume ideally 60-70 percent of their total calories from carbohydrates. Without adequate carbohydrate intake, athletes can experience chronic fatigue and poor performance. Over half of your carbohydrate consumption should be whole-wheat or whole-grain. These products provide more lasting energy, as well as dietary fiber.

Sources of Carbohydrates:

- Whole-Grain bread/bagels etc.
- Whole-Grain pasta
- Rolled Oats (oatmeal)
- Whole-Grain/Wheat cereal
- Whole-Grain/Wheat Crackers
- Fruits and Vegetables

Healthy Snack Options:

- Popcorn
- Whole-wheat pretzels
- Nutria-Grain bars
- 100% Whole-Grain rice cakes
- Oranges, bananas, apples, pears
etc.

*Tip: Ingredients are listed on products based on their weight. Therefore, when looking at food labels, make sure the first ingredient is “whole-wheat” or “whole-grain” instead of “unbleached enriched flour.” If the first ingredient is “sugar” you know the product contains more sugar than any other ingredient in the product. Always look at the food label and know what you are feeding your body!

Protein: Protein is important for building and maintaining muscles; however, it is not the primary fuel for working muscles. Contrary to popular belief, more protein in the body than necessary will not give athletes larger and stronger muscles. Instead, aim for 10-20 percent of calories from protein consumption.

Sources of Protein:

- Lean Meats: Chicken and Turkey (cooking methods: roasted, grilled, or baked)
- Beef: Choose cuts such as "loin" and "round"; trim any visible fat
- Eggs
- Low-Fat Dairy (low-fat cheese, milk, yogurt, almond or soy products)
- Salmon
- Beans, Peas and Lentils

*Athletes wanting to gain muscle mass should take extra precaution. Many protein supplements claim to build muscle-be aware this extra weight is most likely water weight (not gained muscle mass). Consuming additional protein does not guarantee bigger muscles. Also, due to limited regulations within the dietary supplement industry, the risk of product contamination is possible. This in mind, athletes consuming supplements should be weary. If you cannot pronounce the ingredients on the food label, I recommend not adding the food product or supplement to your diet.

Healthier Options for Gaining Weight:

- Eat foods which are high in both carbohydrate and protein
- Choose low-fat sources of foods and beverages
- Snack throughout the day on small meals, such as almonds and fruit, low-fat cheese and turkey, peanut butter sandwich, etc.

Fats: While carbohydrates are responsible for quick, bursts of energy, fat is a valuable metabolic fuel for muscles during endurance swimming. Nonetheless, for most swimmers, an ideal diet should be low in fat, and high in carbohydrates. Athletes should consume 20-30 percent of their calories from fat.

Sources of Fat: Healthy Options

- Margarine
- Nuts (almonds)
- Avocado
- Oils (vegetable, canola)
- Salad dressing (reduced fat)

*When looking at food labels, keep the amount of saturated fats low and 0 trans fats; monounsaturated and polyunsaturated are healthy fats.

WHEN & WHAT TO EAT

Some swimmers might already have meals and snacks which always settle well with them before practice or a race. If so, continue your routine. However, if you're concerned about what time, or what to eat before and after a workout, consider the following tips:

Before a Workout: Consuming a snack or light meal before a morning or afternoon swim is necessary. Eat approximately 1-2 hours prior to practice. You need the fuel in order to perform your best at practice, and remember *perfect practice makes perfect*.

Healthy Options include:

- Fruit: bananas (they contain high amounts of potassium which prevent muscle cramping) apples, oranges, pears, etc. (all contain high amounts of water, acting as a natural sports drink)
- Whole-wheat/grain crackers or pretzels
- Whole-wheat/grain toast/bagel
- Almonds
- Granola Bar (not too high in saturated fat-less than 2 grams)

During a Workout: Although it is recommended to consume a beverage containing carbohydrates (gatorade, etc.) with workouts lasting longer than an hour, be aware that:

- with high intake of sports drinks, your body becomes dependent on them
- sports drinks should only be consumed during a workout-the extra sugar is not necessary for everyday activities
- sports drinks should be consumed *in addition* to water consumption (for an extra burst of energy)
- Drink plenty of water throughout workouts: every 15-20 minutes take a few gulps (with swimming, it's difficult to determine how much you're sweating, so always keep hydrating)

*I know many college athletes who drink or do not drink sports beverages. Many complain it makes them "even more thirsty" while others feel "the replacement of electrolytes boosts their energy." This is a personal preference.

After a Workout:

Consuming a high carbohydrate meal with protein after a workout is essential for replacing glycogen stores and repairing muscles. Scientists recommend eating 30 minutes after; however, this may be difficult sometimes. If you know you will not be able to eat something right after practice, bring a sports drink-then followed by a high carbohydrate meal.

Good Options for Post-workout Meals:

- Whole-wheat pasta with meatballs
- Peanut butter & banana sandwich on whole-wheat/grain bread
- Grilled chicken sandwich on whole-wheat/grain bread
- Turkey sandwich on whole-wheat/grain bread
- Brown rice with grilled chicken and/or salmon
- Low-fat grilled cheese sandwich

RACING

All-Day Meets: Eating before and after a race is just as important as doing so for practice. Swimmers need to ensure their muscles have enough energy for the next race. These following guidelines should be applied to competitions:

One hour or less between event:

- Carbohydrates are the way to go; stick with liquid form (sports drink) or fruit, such as apples, oranges, peaches, watermelon, pears or bananas
 - These foods contain mostly carbohydrate and water, which means they digest easily and quickly. As a result, they will not cause as much of a problem with stomach cramping or gastrointestinal distress.

Two-Three hours between event:

- Foods high in carbohydrates such as:
 - Bagels, hot or cold cereal with non-fat milk (almond or soy milk), whole-wheat/grain toast, fruit, oatmeal
 - Plenty of fluids

Four or more hours between event:

- When swimmers have prelims in the morning, then finals in the evening, having a good meal in between sessions is necessary. Once again, these meals should be primarily composed of carbohydrates:
 - Look under "post-workout meals" for meal ideas
 - Hydrate!

*If athletes only have access to concession stand food, pick items which contain the least amount of fat (fat takes longer to digest, which may result in cramping and GI distress). Swimmers should always pack healthy snacks to ensure they are not stuck in this situation.

COCOA BEACH MEAL IDEAS

Breakfast:

- Multi-grain cheerios (cereal with whole-wheat as first ingredient) with non-fat milk (or almond/soy)
- Whole-wheat/grain toast or bagels with peanut butter
- Oatmeal
- Fruit
- Granola Bar (nothing with more than 2 grams saturated fat)
- Non-fat yogurt with granola
- Fruit and Maple Oatmeal from McDonalds
- Fruit 'N Yogurt Parfait from McDonalds
- Egg McMuffin from McDonalds
- Egg White Delight McMuffin from McDonalds

Lunch/Dinner:

Healthy Subway Menu Items:

- Black Forest Ham
- Oven-Roasted Chicken
- Roast Beef
- Subway Club
- Sweet Onion Chicken Teriyaki
- Turkey Breast
- Turkey Breast & Black Forest Ham
- Veggie Delight

Healthy McDonalds Menu Items:

- Premium Grilled Chicken Classic Sandwich
- Premium McWrap Chicken & Ranch (grilled)
- Honey Mustard Snack Wrap (grilled)
- Ranch Snack Wrap (grilled)
- Premium Southwest Salad with grilled chicken
- Premium Caesar Salad with grilled chicken
- Premium Bacon Ranch Salad with grilled chicken
- Side Salad
- Apple Slices
- Fruit 'N Yogurt Parfait
- McCafe Smoothies

Healthy iHOP Menu Items:

- Harvest Grain and Nut Pancakes
- SIMPLE and FIT Blueberry Harvest Grain N Nut Combo
- SIMPLE and FIT Spinach Mushroom and Tomato Omelette
- Garden Omelette
- Create Your Own-Choose lean meats, such as turkey or grilled chicken; Add some veggies and cheese
- SIMPLE and FIT Whole Wheat French Toast Combo
- SIMPLE and FIT Super Fruit Oatmeal
- SIMPLE and FIT Super Fruit Oatmeal with Almonds and Walnuts
- SIMPLE and FIT Simply Chicken Sandwich
- SIMPLE and FIT Seasonal Mixed Fruit and Yogurt Bowl

Healthy New York Pizza/Pizza Hut Items:

- Choose basic toppings-pizza is a perfect carb for swimmers excluding high fat toppings, such as bacon, sausage, ground beef
- Stick to toppings: grilled chicken, meatballs, ham, eggplant, banana peppers, black olives, fresh tomato, green peppers, jalapeño, mushrooms, onions

Healthy DQ Items:

- Grilled Chicken Sandwich
- Grilled Chicken Wrap
- Side Salad
- Grilled Chicken Salad

Snacks: Make sure you are also snacking and rehydrating throughout the day in order to fulfill your body's energy demands. Smart snacks include fruit, non-fat yogurt, whole-wheat pretzels, trail mix, almonds, granola bars, popcorn, etc. Drink water before you pick up that sports drink. Instead of depending on sports drinks, replace your electrolytes through solid, natural food options (such as fruit).

PRICING

Although some fast food meal options might appear inexpensive, the costs will add up. I recommend purchasing foods which go a long way, such as a pound of apples or bananas (these last all week as opposed to a breakfast at iHOP). Other examples of smart purchases include cereal, oatmeal, pretzels, whole-wheat bread, peanut butter, pasta and granola bars. If you can replace a take-out meal with these items, you will save money in the long run. Additionally, you do not need to buy water-it is free. Plastic water bottles are a waste for you and the environment. Bring a water bottle and refill it.

For more questions or information, contact me at: elisa.grant@gmail.com

REFERENCES:

- www.acsm.org American College of Sports Medicine
- www.eatright.org American Dietetic Association
- www.cfsan.fda.gov Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition - U.S. Food and Drug Administration
- www.usda.gov/cnpp Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion
- www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2005
- www.nutrition.gov National Agricultural Library, U.S. Department of Agriculture
- www.drugfreesport.com/choices National Center for Drug-Free Sport
- www.healthfinder.gov National Health Information Center - U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- www.win.niddk.nih.gov National Institutes of Health
- www.nata.org National Athletic Trainers' Association

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