



As with all athletes, it is important for swimmers to constantly look for opportunities to improve performance. One of the easiest and most effective reflectors of performance is an athlete's diet. Athletes should always practice healthy meal habits to improve performance by choosing meals which include and healthy protein, carbohydrate, and fat.

Proper intake of nutrients can improve many levels of a swimmer's performance, including better swim times, quicker recovery time post workout, increased muscle mass, increased energy, and decreased possibility of illness. Furthermore, during times of long practice sessions and weekly practice times that could easily be over eight hours for young swimmers and twelve hours for older swimmers, proper macronutrient intake should be consumed. While an exact macronutrient breakdown and calorie consumption would vary based upon age, weight, activity and practice intensity, a good general rule would be to eat three meals a day with a snack between lunch and dinner and another snack post practice to ensure a growing athlete is not in caloric deprivation. Pack snacks for post-practice that will aid in quicker recovery, such as hard boiled eggs or nuts.



Nutrition for swimmers does not have to be complicated! It can be easy to eat the right things and reap the benefits of improved athletic performance. The most important step for athlete's nutrition is to simply *eat*. A calorie deficit will not help a swimmer's energy or performance. Fueling the body with proteins like eggs and lean meats, complex carbohydrates such as vegetables and whole grains, and healthy fats like avocados and nuts such as macadamia nuts and walnuts, will allow the athlete to have increased energy and improved performance. Ensure proper planning is in place to allow for healthy meals, and pre and post workout snacks, this will keep nutrition on track. Below is an example of whole and nutritious meals for all day long:

*Breakfast:*

- Omelets - with eggs, vegetables, meat and cheese

*Lunch:*

- Turkey and cheese with fresh vegetables on a whole wheat wrap or bread

*Dinner:*

- Grilled chicken, brown rice, steamed vegetables

*Snacks:*

- Hard boiled eggs
- Cheese and nuts
- Hummus and raw vegetables

Make a list like this to plan ahead and prepare for a long day of practice. This will allow you to stay on track and maintain energy for workouts.