

Invisible Training for Invincible Swimmers

I. Sleep

- A. Most children and teenagers need at least 8 hours/night; some, especially those in heavy training, may need 9 or 10
 1. Go to bed and arise at the same time on weekends to maintain sleep cycle
 2. If you sleep poorly on consecutive nights, talk to your coach about omitting a morning practice (one good practice is better than two mediocre ones and you will do better in school too)
 3. In the long term, you must learn to manage your time wisely in order to get to bed early

II. Diet

A. Drink

1. Bring a water bottle to practice and drink frequently
2. What you drink to rehydrate:
 - a. Water is the best thirst quencher, and the US has the best tap water of any country—use it
 - b. If using a sports drink, dilute with at least equal volumes of water
 - c. Consider a carbohydrate replacement drink if you're bonking during practice
3. What you drink at meals:
 - a. Skim milk is a good source of protein and vitamin D (aids Ca²⁺ absorption)
 - b. If you must have sweet, drink diluted fruit juice and avoid soda
 - c. Avoid coffee: if you need sleep, change your schedule to provide it

B. Food

1. General guidelines for healthy eating
 - a. Make changes gradually
 - b. Don't deny yourself everything you crave
 - c. Devise a healthy, performance-oriented diet that is practical and sustainable
 - d. No one meal is critical; the overall balance is
 - e. There is no perfect meat food or diet; eat what you usually do
 - f. Eat a wide variety of foods with special emphasis on
 - (1) Whole grains (wheat, corn, rice, barley; e.g., Grape Nuts or Shredded Wheat, not Cocoa Puffs)
 - (2) Lean meats, fowl, and fish (especially salmon)
 - (3) Legumes
 - (4) Fresh fruits and vegetables (steaming veggies retains most nutrients)
 - f. Avoid or minimize consumption of the following
 - (1) Processed or packaged foods
 - (2) Condiments including salt, sugar, mayonnaise, and butter
 - (3) Fast food
 - (4) Candy
 - (5) Fatty meats
 - g. Relish your carbs (see II.B.1.e.(a) above)—no carbs = no zip
 - h. Anchor meals with some protein/unsaturated fat
 - i. Cook with unsaturated liquid vegetable oils (e.g., olive or Canola oil) if possible
 - (1) Avoid animal fats and partially hydrogenated vegetable oils
2. Planning a daily, performance-oriented diet (especially important for those doing double practices)
 - a. Eat 5-6 small meals/day rather than 3 large meals; an example is shown below
 - (1) 400-500 kcal of mostly complex carbohydrates within an hour a.m. practice
 - (2) Mid-morning snack of another 500 kcals

- (3) Balanced lunch--800-1000 kcals
- (4) Pre-practice snack—300-400 kcals
- (5) Balanced dinner—1000 kcals
- (6) Pre-bed snack—300-400 kcals

b. Increase baseline intakes shown below by 400-800 kcal for every hour of practice (swimmers doing doubles should be eating vast quantities of nutrient-rich, calorically undense food)

- (1) Kids 7-10—2000 kcal/day
- (2) Girls 11-18—2500
- (3) Boys 11-14—2500
- (4) Boys 15-18—3000

- c. Lower intake accordingly when on reduced training, taper, or break
- d. Bring food with you—don't rely on vending machines or vendors

III. Mental/emotional inputs

A. General guidelines

1. Winning is not the criterion of success; striving to win is
 - a. It is the process--not the product--that stimulates growth
 - b. Honor your competitors, for without them, you will not reach your potential
 - c. Focus not on the score, but on your effort to affect that score
 - d. Following are a few of the many ways you can win in swimming regardless of your place in the race
 - (1) Improve your effort
 - (2) Improve your health
 - (3) Improve your fitness
 - (4) Improve your technique
 - (5) Improve your times
 - (6) Try to win your heat
 - (7) Participate in the team cheer
 - (8) Swim your relays as if they are the Olympics
 - (9) Score points for your team
 - (10) Encourage your teammates
 - (11) Make a new friend
 - (12) Compliment a competitor
 - (13) Thank a race official, meet volunteer, or coach
 - (14) Embrace a challenge
 - (15) Tackle a new event
 - (16) Try a different pacing strategy such as negative-splitting a distance race
2. Swim in your own lane
 - a. By striving to be the first to the wall, you extract more from yourself; do not make winning a race or beating a particular individual the sole criterion of your success
 - b. Set reasonable goals that account for your abilities, ambitions, and improvement rate
 - c. Focus on what you have achieved, not on what you haven't
 - d. Don't be discouraged if you don't reach a goal; striving brings you closer than you would otherwise have been

B. Self-talk

1. Practice thought-stopping whenever you find yourself discounting your own abilities or playing some version of the "I can't" game
2. Replace such negative self-talk with messages affirming what you have accomplished