



PRE-MEET PREPARATION:

- **Nutrition:** (see the nutrition write-up on page 4)
Good nutrition plays a very important role in your swimming success. Nutrition fuels your body and should be a part of your preparation plan prior to the meet. A nutrition plan should be devised prior to the meet and then acted upon during the meet. Remember to hydrate, hydrate, hydrate before, during and after the meet!
- **Mental Preparation:**
Swim meets are like exams. To do well on an exam at school you must study the night before. The same is true for mentally preparing for a swim meet. Try to visualize your race, from start to finish, and be as vivid as possible. See yourself in perfect form and pace. Good visualization will provide the tracks for a successful meet. As we approach the season ending "focus" meets you should begin your mental preparation the week before the meet.
- **Sleep:**
Make sure to get a good night sleep before each day of the meet. A poor nights sleep will have an affect on your swimming.
- **Equipment:**
Make sure you have all of your equipment packed for the meet. Swim suits, goggles, towels, proper clothing for the meet. It is not a good idea to use new goggles for the first time at a meet. Although sometimes it is unavoidable it's good to practice with them before you race with them. I can't tell you how many times I have seen swimmers get "goggle" lunch with new goggles at a meet.

DAY OF MEET:

- **Arrive On Time:**
Part of having a successful meet is showing up on time and being prepared for the meet. We like to do group warm-ups and if you are late you will miss the group warm-up. If you have expectations of a good meet and you miss the group warm-up you have started the day on a bad note.
- **Check In For Events:**
Once you arrive at the meet check in for your events.
- **Check In With Your Coach:**
After you check in for your events, meet with your coach to confirm warm-up time and to let your coach know you're ready. This should be done 10-15 minutes before warm-up time. This will allow time for stretching prior to warm-ups.
- **Warm-ups:**
It is very important to do a proper meet warm-up. Don't cut corners here!
Warm-ups will vary depending on the age and workout group of the swimmer but the general rule is that if you don't get tired in your warm-up, you will get tired in your race. Have you ever done a timed swim at the end of a workout or a hard set and had a surprisingly fast time? Well, it's probably because you were very warmed up.
- **Warm-up Structure:**
 1. General Warm-up: Usually a long easy swim. Might involve some kicking, sculling, or drills.
 2. Warm-up Set: A set of more specific work. May involve kicking, drills, and variables in speed. A higher intensity than the general warm-up.
 3. Speed & Heart Rate Set: This is usually a short set that is used for speed work and to get the heart rate up. It's usually very intense but also very short. Kind of like revving up the engine of a car.
 4. Starts: Swimmers will do one or two starts. If you are swimming backstroke you should do a backstroke start especially if you are at an away meet. (Backstrokers should also get a stroke count from the flags to the wall at race pace).
 5. Pacing: Pacing may be done for longer events at the coaches discretion.
 6. Warm Down: Swimmers will usually swim a 200 warm down.

RACE TIME:

- Pre Race Routine: Swimmers should have a pre race routine that they do before every race. The pre race routine should include the following:
 1. Warm-up for your race 10-15 minutes before your race. Ask your coach about how much you should do.
 2. Talk to your coach about your race.
 3. Go behind the blocks and prepare to race (stretch and perform your mental preparation skills).
- Post Race:
 1. Talk to your coach about your race. This is an excellent time to learn about areas that you need to work on to improve and to also get reinforcement on things that you did well.
 2. Warm Down: Most swimmers do not warm down after a race as much as they should. If you don't warm down enough it will probably have an effect on your races later in the day. Ask your coach how much you should do.
 3. Talk with your coach to determine the order in which you should practice your post-race routine.

AT THE MEET:

- Swimmers:
 1. Swimmers should stay in the team area at the meet. This makes it easier for coaches should they need to look for swimmers.
 2. Conserve your energy. Don't use all of your energy playing around at the meet. Save it for your race.
 3. Make sure you eat properly and hydrate.
 4. Cheer for your teammates.
- Swimmers Attitude:

It is very important that swimmers have a good attitude at the meet. Your attitude affects your swimming and your teammate's swimming. It is alright to get upset after a poor race, it's natural, but you need to get over it quickly and move on. A good way to deal with it is to use the "5 minute rule". You can get upset about your race for 5 minutes but after that be finished with it. I have seen swimmers who had a bad swim their first race of a meet and were done for the weekend because they couldn't get over it. Don't be "one and done". If you need help dealing with a race, talk to your coach. I have always felt that good swims are contagious. If a swimmer has a good swim and gets excited, other swimmers see that and get excited and then they swim fast. Pretty soon the whole team is swimming fast! Poor swims can also be contagious. So, it's important to have a positive attitude not only for yourself but also for your teammates.
- Parents:

A parent's role at a swim meet is very important. Parents need to monitor the following:

 1. Make sure your swimmer gets enough sleep.
 2. Make sure your swimmer packs the proper equipment.
 3. Make sure your swimmer gets to the meet on time.
 4. Make sure your swimmer is eating properly and is hydrated.
 5. Monitor your swimmer's behavior in the team area.
 6. Help your swimmer monitor the timeline of the meet so they can start their pre race routine on time.
- Parents Behavior:

Parent's behavior at swim meets is vital to the success of their swimmer. It is important for the success of their career. It is also important for the success of the team.

 1. Don't Coach. Leave the coaching to the coaches. This includes pre race strategy, psyching, and motivating. This also includes post race critiquing and setting goals...
 2. Support the Coach. They need your support for everyone to "win".
 3. Be Your Swimmer's Best Fan. Support your child unconditionally. Do not get upset and withdraw love if your child performs poorly. Your child should not have to perform well to win your love.
 4. Support and cheer for all swimmers on the team.
 5. Take your concerns directly to the coach in an appropriate manner. Do not go to parents to discuss concerns.

Nutrition

These notes were taken by Bret while at the American Swim Coaches Association (ASCA) World Clinic held September 4-7, 2002 in Las Vegas.

Speaker: Charlene Boudreau, USA Swimming

Regular Maintenance—How we eat on a regular basis (daily) affects our energy and production at workout. It is important to eat a variety of foods that allow you to show up to practices fueled and hydrated. Being thirsty means you are likely dehydrated.

Below is a description of carbohydrates, protein and fat.

- Carbohydrates (carbs) should make up 60-65% of your diet. Carbs gives energy throughout the day and practice. This helps in recovery (have snack within two hours after practice ends).
- Protein makes up 10-15% of your diet. These repair muscle tissue from workouts. They aren't used for exercise but for recovery instead.
- Fat should equate to about 20-25% of your diet. A well-trained body learns to utilize fat as a fuel source during prolonged exercise.

Examples:

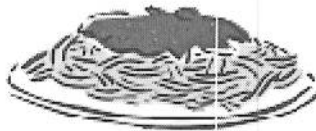
Use low fat over high fat

Lean meat
Frozen yogurt instead of ice cream
Non fat, 1% or 2% milk
Baked instead of fried
Angel food cake rather than chocolate cake

It is important to read nutrition labels. Look at the serving size. You might be surprised how small a serving size is.

Meet time Maintenance—As we approach our meets it is important to begin preparing ourselves for optimal meet performance via our diet. Here are a few tips on how to accomplish this.

- 2-3 days prior to swim meet
 - Focus on carbohydrates
 - Replenish glycogen
 - Keep protein and fat consistent (don't overload)
- Night before meet snack
 - High carbohydrates
 - Water (two full bottles)
- Morning of the Meet
 - Focus on fueling for the day
 - 2-4 hours to race - high carb intake like bagels, bread, cheese, and peanut butter (see Breakfast below)
 - One hour to race - fruit, V-3, water or sports drink



Breakfast—This meal should be low in fat

- Home or at a restaurant: pancakes, bagels, dry cereal, muffins, juice, skim milk, scrambled eggs
- Fast food: pancakes - no butter or sausages, muffins - 1/2 because high in fat, juice, fruits
- Convenience stores (7-11): 1/2 muffin, juice, low fat milk

Lunch and Dinner

- Home or at a restaurant: pasta, breads, salads, thick pizza with veggies instead of meat, turkey sandwich, vegetables, baked potato with chili on it. (Eliminate fries or fried foods, soda and chips)
- Fast food: Look for the following or similar choices: fajitas, hamburgers without cheese, BK broiler, bear burrito, 2 slices of thick pizza.

This article should be used only as a guideline and reference. Questions about your child's diet and nutrition should be directed toward your Physician.

