

Guidelines For Going On The Road

By Coach Jamie Thomas

Swim team families look forward to February and March as the championship season. Travel comes with the territory. So, whether you're going to a qualifier or to nationals, you need a plan for going "on the road". The length, usually three or more days, of these championship level meets can lead to a loss of that "great feeling" and cause performances to suffer.

The keys to a good road trip are:

1. Eat the proper foods,
2. Get plenty of rest, and
3. Make the days as normal as possible.

The swimmer's diet should consist of low fat high carbohydrate foods. Appropriate breakfast foods are pancakes, bagels, French toast, cereal, and fruits. Pancakes and toast should be served without butter or margarine. Syrup and jams are OK. Drink low fat milk.

At lunch, avoid fried foods at fast food places. Try a salad with a minimum of dressing or a potato with a minimum of butter. Sandwiches with lean meat or skinless poultry are good. Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches are good and easy, but watch the peanut butter because it is high in fat. Soup and crackers are also fine, but avoid cream-based soups. Stay away from soft drinks and drink low fat milk or juices.

For dinner, choose restaurants that offer high carbohydrate items such as pasta, salads, rice, vegetables and fruits. If you must have pizza, get one with a thicker crust and get low fat toppings like green peppers, onions, Canadian bacon or mushrooms. Avoid fatty meats and extra cheese.

Be nutrition conscious at all meals. Remember: don't sacrifice great performances by eating conveniently while on the road.

Understand that swim meets can be extra exhausting. While away from the pool, swimmers need to rest and relax. Napping between trials and finals is a good idea. When swimming in an afternoon session, swimmers may sleep a little later than usual. Do not allow swimmers to stay up late or run around socializing while at the hotel. This wastes important rest time as well as disturbing others.

During "free time" on the road, swimmers and parents should avoid excessive talking about the meet, particularly anything negative. Instead, think very positive thoughts for short periods of time.

Diet, rest, and attitude are keys to maintaining a "fresh feeling" through a tough, long meet. Remember these guidelines when you are on the road and minimize the effect of road trips on performance

