



A SIMPLE GUIDE TO HYDRATION AND NUTRITION FOR SWIMMERS

Hydration

The need for good hydration as a swimmer cannot be underestimated to perform at your best the body needs to be properly hydrated.

Poor hydration can lead to:

Poor performance

Mood Swings

Fainting (dizziness)

Cramping

Heat Exhaustion

In extreme cases there are much more serious outcomes even death.

So what can you do to ensure that you perform at your best?

1 - 2 hours prior to training 4 - 600 ml of fluid should be consumed.

During exercise a further 200 ml should be consumed every 15 - 20 minutes in small sips.

(The coach will allow time for this however it is the swimmers responsibility to ensure that they follow these guidelines and always have a drink on poolside.

After a session typically a further 4-600ml should be consumed.

The above are suggested values based on the average swimmer, age and build are factors in the volumes recommended.

The swimmer should be able to regulate their fluid intake based on simple checks such as is their urine a pale straw colour if its darker then they are not properly hydrated, if their lips feel dry this is also a good indicator of poor hydration.

What fluids?

Water is a good basis for hydration

If you do not like water on its own cordial can be added to make it a little more appealing.

There are isotonic sports drinks available that help to replace the salts and minerals lost during exercise (available as powder or premixed)

Fizzy drinks and drinks containing caffeine should not be consumed prior or during training or competition



Nutrition

A well balanced diet is essential for a swimmers growth and development, to understand the complexities of what each individual food group offers the swimmer would take many pages so below is a typical menu followed by competing swimmers to give you some ideas:

Breakfast:

Glass of fruit juice or piece of fresh fruit i.e. grapefruit
Breakfast cereal with semi skimmed milk
2 slices wholemeal toast with spread and jam/honey

Snack

Fruit or Yogurt or cereal bar

Lunch

2 x wholemeal rolls or sandwiches filled with lean meat, cheese or tuna with salad and spread.
Packet low fat crisps
Piece of fruitcake
Yogurt

Pre-Training Snack

Breakfast cereal with semi skimmed milk
Crumpet, toast, raisin bread, fruit loaf, bagels with a spread of jam, honey or peanut butter.

Post Training Snack

2 biscuits i.e. digestives, slice raisin bread or cereal bar

Dinner

Lean meat or fish
Starchy carbohydrates-rice/pasta/potatoes/noodles
Vegetables
Dessert - Rice pudding/fruit with ice cream

Supper

Toast with spread
Warm milky drink

So snacking is important. What kind of snack is good for you?

Toast, Breakfast cereals, Teacakes, Scones, Scotch pancakes, malt loaf, Fruit, Dried Fruit, Bread Sticks, Rice Cakes, and Energy bars are all good examples of sensible snacks.



Training/Competitions:

Heavy meals should be avoided prior to training or competing, unless consumed 2 hours prior as these will cause poor performance and potentially result in the swimmer becoming sick.

Dependent on the amount of time prior to training/competing the information guidelines below provide a good basis upon which to make an informed choice.

When it comes to competitions

A popular misconception is that a sugary snack will give a swimmer a boost. This is not true it will in fact reduce the body's ability to perform due to the production of insulin.

If the interval between swims is less than an hour then only fluids should be required.

If the interval is greater than an hour then one from the above list of snacks will serve to boost the energy store of the body, but this should be consumed at least 30 minutes before the next event.

If the interval is 1-2 hours the swimmer should have a small high carbohydrate low fat meal.

If the interval is longer than this the swimmer should have a substantial meal but this should be 2 hours prior to the next event.

30 Minute Rule

The muscles are most susceptible to restoration of carbohydrate stores within the first 30 minutes after exercise; thereafter the process becomes progressively more difficult. The swimmer should eat 50 - 100 grams of carbohydrate, whilst keeping fat low, as soon as training finishes, and definitely, within the first 30 minutes after training, the following are examples of appropriate snack foods and their approximate carbohydrate content:

An apple banana or orange:	15-20g
Muller Rice:	20g
Nutri-grain Elevenses bar	25 - 30g
Fruit Shake or Smoothie	25 - 30g per glass
1x thick Jam or Honey sandwich (no or minimal butter)	50g
Malt Loaf (Soreen)	18g per eighth of loaf
Fig Rolls	13g per biscuit.