

Eat Well – Train Well – Compete Well

In the modern world of sport, if athletes are to reach their full potential it is no longer enough to rely on just natural talent, fitness and desire to win. We now have masses of scientific information which tells us that athletic performance is closely linked to diet. In other words, the more healthily you eat, the better you are going to swim!

The main general pointers when providing nutrition to your swimmers are:

- ✓ Enjoy a variety of nutritious foods daily
- ✓ Decrease your saturated fat intake
- ✓ Maintain fluid balance before, during and after training and competition
- ✓ Focus on high carbohydrate foods and drink

Use this eatwell plate to get the balance of your food right

The eatwell plate



Use the eatwell plate to help you get the balance right. It shows how much of what you eat should come from each food group.



Each section indicates the food portion that you should eat for a healthy, well balanced diet.

A Swimmers and Parents Guide To Eating Healthily and Nutritionally

Eat Well – when should you eat?

Your day should start with **BREAKFAST**

Eat a high carbohydrate breakfast accompanied by some fruit or fruit juice and maybe even a yogurt. Remember to have a drink

Mid Morning

Cereal bar and a drink, avoid fizzy drinks

Lunch

If you eat school lunch select the healthy option such as pasta, rice or baked potato plus some fruit and a drink

If you have a packed lunch eat all your sandwiches plus some fruit and a drink

Mid Afternoon

Banana or cereal bar plus a drink

Home from School

Home by 4.00pm. Training at 7.00 don't eat after 6.00. In other words don't eat less than an hour before training. Have a light meal or snack plus a drink

During Training/Time Trials

Drink the contents of your water bottle. If taking part in time trials or club championships bring some digestive biscuits or a cereal bar to nibble on

After Training / On Journey Home

Drink a carton of fruit juice but no fizzy drinks. Have a snack in your bag ready to eat, a banana, cereal bar or digestive biscuits to build up your energy levels again. Try to eat within 30 minutes of the end of your session

Supper

Have a high carbohydrate meal with some protein. Add to your meal by eating bread with it or drinking fruit juice. If you are really tired when you get home at least have a bowl of cereal with some semi-skimmed milk

Sleep

Sleep is important because it is the time when you grow and recovery from daily activity takes place. Get a good nights sleep before a competition to enable you to swim fast

Food and Meal Examples

High Carbohydrate Breakfasts

✓ Cereals – try some wholegrain varieties e.g. branflakes, shredded wheat, porridge, weetabix or muesli. Add chopped banana or other fresh and dried fruits to increase the carbohydrate content. Use skimmed or semi-skimmed milk, or yogurt with the cereal. Don't choose the same cereal every day and don't go for the sweetened cereals e.g. Frosties

- ✓ Toast – use wholemeal or wholegrain bread. Always go for thick sliced bread. Try raisin bread for a change. Take care not to smother it in high fat spreads
- ✓ Porridge sweetened with honey, raisins and dried apricots
- ✓ Scotch pancakes with syrup
- ✓ Toasted crumpets/teacakes with a little butter
- ✓ English muffins and marmite
- ✓ Bagels with jam/honey
- ✓ Low fat milkshake with banana/fresh fruit/low fat yogurt
- ✓ Fresh fruit and yogurts
- ✓ Beans on toast
- ✓ Boiled egg and toast

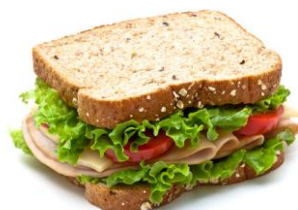


Light Meals and Snacks (ideal for lunch)

- ✓ Filled sandwiches (thick sliced), rolls, pitta breads. Choose fillings such as cottage cheese, peanut butter, banana, salad, honey, marmite, tuna, chicken, turkey, ham or combinations of these e.g. ham salad
- ✓ Thick vegetable/ pulse based (made with beans) soups and crackers
- ✓ Rice or pasta salad
- ✓ Beans or scrambled/poached eggs on toast
- ✓ Toasted sandwiches – thick sliced with one of the fillings listed above. If you want cheese go for a lower fat option such as Edam
- ✓ Jacket potato and filling – opt for low fat fillings such as tuna (no mayonnaise) and cottage cheese rather than cheese
- ✓ Risotto
- ✓ Tinned spaghetti in a tomato sauce
- ✓ Pasta with a light tomato based sauce

Snacks on the run

- ✓ Sandwiches as described above
- ✓ Low fat yogurts and fromage frais
- ✓ Fresh fruit – apples, bananas, nectarines, oranges, grapes etc
- ✓ English muffins, scones, crumpets
- ✓ Scotch pancakes – no butter or margarine
- ✓ Dried fruit – raisins, apricots etc
- ✓ Cereal bars
- ✓ Nuts and dried fruit combinations
- ✓ Rice cakes, crackers and dry breakfast cereal



Main Meals

- ✓ Spaghetti Bolognese
- ✓ Chili Con Carne
- ✓ Chicken with Potatoes
- ✓ Jacket potato with tuna
- ✓ Have fresh fruit, yogurt or jelly for desert
- ✓ Take a look at Mama Parry's Meals for Little Olympians – there are loads of great meal ideas in here for swimmers

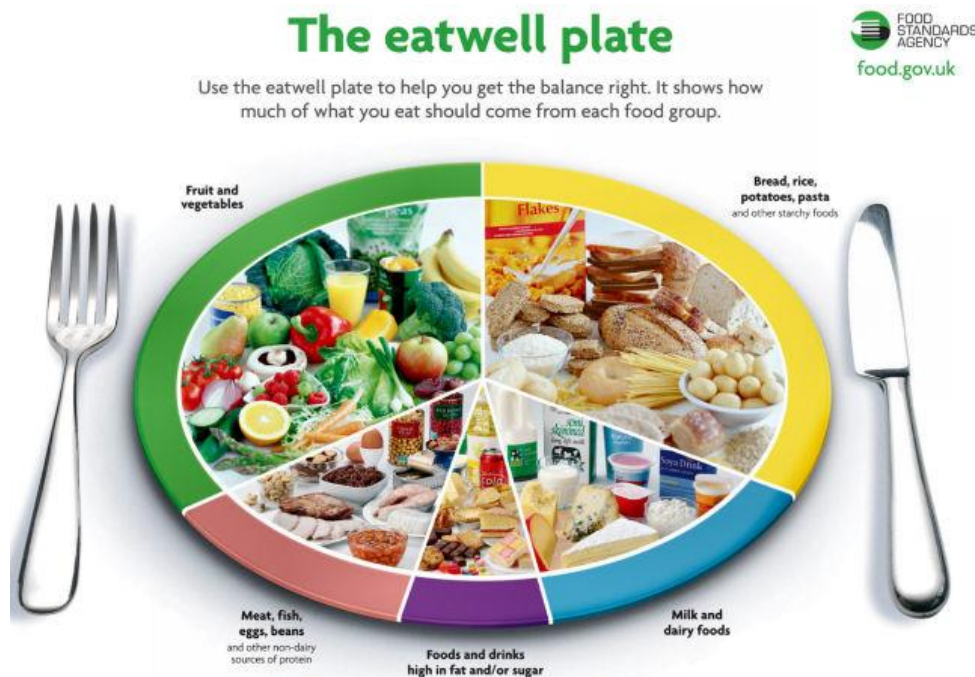
Snacks to have between events (1-2 hour breaks)

- ✓ Small can fruit
- ✓ Bananas and other fruit
- ✓ Hot cross bun or raisin bread
- ✓ A small sandwich with a light filling. Try a banana sandwich
- ✓ Rice cakes you can top them with honey or jam
- ✓ Bagels
- ✓ Fruit scones
- ✓ Plain crackers with jam
- ✓ Jam or honey sandwiches
- ✓ Carton of rice pudding

At competition

- ✓ Breakfast before you leave
- ✓ Arrive on time for warm up
- ✓ 30 mins warm up
- ✓ Replace fluids
- ✓ Less than one hour before race just keep to fluid replacement
- ✓ More than one hour try to eat a little
- ✓ Best to eat little and often during the day to keep energy levels high
- ✓ Eating too much at once can make you feel heavy and tired
- ✓ Try to eat during the longer breaks
- ✓ Take your own food with you
- ✓ Take enough fluid to last the whole day
- ✓ Have something to eat and drink immediately after you last race
- ✓ Avoid Burger King etc on your way home – high fat foods delay recovery
- ✓ Have some high carbohydrate foods + protein prepared for you to eat as soon as you arrive home
- ✓ Have a good nights rest especially if you are competing over the whole weekend

The Eatwell Plate



In order to be able to train hard and swim fast at competition, you need to eat a well balanced diet consisting of 50-60% carbohydrate (eg. pasta, potatoes, beans, cereals, bread, etc) 10-15% protein (meat, fish, eggs and soya substitutes, etc) and 25-30% fat (concentrating more on vegetable and fish oils rather than dairy produce - fish like salmon, tuna and mackerel are among the best oily fish to eat and things like olives, avocados and nuts provide useful fats).

Also, guard against dehydration. Hydrate before you come to training and drink the contents of your water bottle during the session and rehydrate afterwards. As a rough guide, you should be drinking 6-8 glasses of water (rather than fizzy drinks) a day. Not only will this help you train, it will also help you concentrate better at school and work. Eat FIVE portions of fruit and/or vegetables a day. Remember that half a tin of baked beans counts as one portion. The vitamins contained in these foods not only help make and keep you healthy but assist your body in producing the energy you need for training and competition.

The most efficient source of energy comes from carbohydrate but needs to be eaten well in advance of training and competition to be effective. The easiest way of doing this is to eat regular meals and to plan your meals in such a way that you are not swimming on a full stomach. Imagine the sugar contained in sweets and fizzy drinks like a firework. There is a big bang (ie. energy) and then nothing soon after. Carbohydrates are more like a lump of coal which burns more slowly (also providing energy) but does this over a longer period of time. In other words, a bowl of pasta eaten the evening before a gala will have a longer lasting effect than a chocolate bar in the morning.

Begin reloading your carbohydrate stores after training in preparation for the next session. Eating a tuna sandwich and an apple within fifteen minutes after your training session would be ideal and will be a lot better than a bar of chocolate.

You need to plan your eating during a gala as getting it wrong could be costly in terms of your performance. Have something like a bowl of cereal and some fruit for breakfast. Make sure that you get up early enough to be able to eat breakfast and do not be tempted to eat nothing. For lunch some pasta and tinned fruit (preferably not at the same time!) is a good idea. Try to eat as soon as the lunch break starts rather than at the end just before the

afternoon warm up. Most important, do not eat too much as this will leave you feeling sluggish. It is much better if you snack during the day between races (without overdoing it) rather than just the one meal at lunch time. For snacks, bananas and cashew nuts are an ideal and tasty combination and will do you a lot more good than chocolate bars! Potassium intake is important when competing.

To find out more about nutrition including how to make your own sports drink, visit the [BBC website](#) where you can learn how to avoid dehydration, what to eat and when to eat. It works for the top swimmers so why not give it a try yourself!