

## **Eat Well to Swim Better**

While eating well will not turn you into a world class swimmer, eating badly may stop you from reaching your potential and achieving your goals.

Eating healthily can help you improve your performance. Here's a 5 point checklist of things to do to get you eating healthily:

### **1. Eat 3 meals everyday**

Sounds easy but sometimes it can be hard to find time to eat a meal.

Make sure you have a breakfast, a lunch and an evening meal..Each of these meals must include a starchy food such as breakfast cereals, bread, potatoes, rice pasta or noodles and beans. Try having the wholegrain versions of these foods such as granary or wholemeal breads, high fibre cereals such as Porridge as these will fill you up for longer and stop you becoming as tired during and after training sessions.

### **2. Never miss breakfast**

It might be tempting to swap breakfast for an extra five minutes in bed in the morning, but don't. Eating breakfast will set you up for the day and make sure you are not using your energy stores before you even get to school let alone training! Foods to try are:

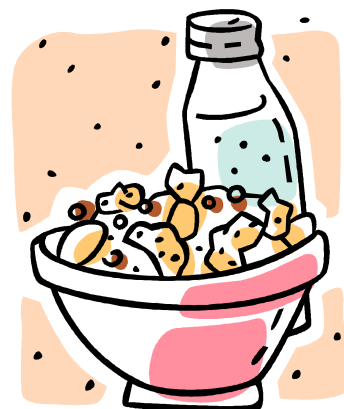
High fibre breakfast cereals but not too much sugar on top! Instead try some fruit like a chopped up banana or a spoonful of dried fruit.

Granary toast with jam, honey or chocolate spread

Warmed or toasted bagals

Pancakes

Toasted tea cakes



### 3. Eat a variety of foods

It is important to make sure you include a variety of foods each day:

#### ***Fruit and Vegetables***

Try to have 5 to 9 portions of fruit and vegetables every day.

These foods are bursting with vitamins and minerals which will help you use your energy stores better and give you better health and protection against illness so you will be able to train better.

A glass of fruit juice will give you one of these portions but drinking more than one glass does not count towards further of your fruit and vegetable portions.

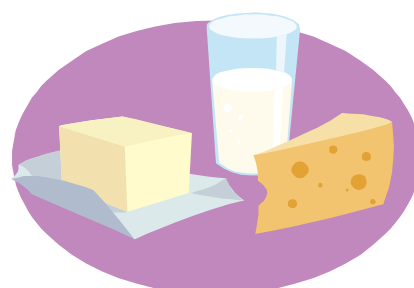
Try to have some fruit and or vegetables with every meal such as fruit on your cereal or fruit juice to drink at breakfast, some salad in your sandwich or cucumber or carrot sticks and some fruit in your lunch box and some vegetables or salad with your main meal.

Frozen vegetables are just as good as fresh ones and tend to be cheaper and have less waste so are quicker to prepare and cook.

If you don't like eating fruit on its own try mixing it with other foods such as grating an apple or a carrot with some cheese for your sandwich, putting tinned fruit or soft fruits such as strawberries in a jelly to have for pudding. Making homemade biscuits and cakes using fruit and vegetables such as carrot cake is another way to sneak some healthy stuff into your food!

#### ***Dairy Foods***

As you are still developing your bones it is important to have 2 to 4 portions of calcium rich foods each day. These foods include milk, cheese and yoghurt and other dairy foods,.



### ***Protein Foods***

Have 2 to 4 portions of protein rich foods each day. Try lean meat, and poultry, fish and eggs. Quorn alternatives are good too. Beans and lentils and the protein in dairy foods help you meet your need for protein foods.

### ***Oils and Fats***

The oils in nuts and seeds and oily fish such as salmon, mackerel, sardines etc and using olive or sunflower oils in cooking will help you improve your recovery from training sessions and races and will help you use energy better when you are doing long training sessions.

Try to eat less high fat foods and snacks.

## **4. Eat Enough**

Make sure you don't go to training when you are hungry. Try one of these snacks about an hour before training starts:

Milk or yogurt and some fruit

Slice of wholemeal toast with peanut butter, hummus or honey

Cereal bar

Dried fruit

Breakfast cereal and milk

Crackers or rice cakes and cheese

Homemade scone or cake

Once you have finished training you need to eat starchy foods to help your energy stores restock and your body to recover from the training. Try one of these:

Fruit (fresh or dried)

Nuts and raisins

Fruit yoghurt or yoghurt drink

Smoothie

Roll or bagel

Mini pancakes

Fruit cake, cereal bar or biscuits

## 5. Drink Enough

Apart from food, the other most important part of your diet is your fluid intake. And to know if you are drinking enough fluid you need to look at your wee! You want your wee to be pale in colour, like straw. If your wee is dark in colour and even smelly you are not drinking enough. It is very easy to become dehydrated while you are swimming as, even though you are surrounded by water in the pool, it tends to be warm and the air is warm causing you to lose lots of fluid through sweat and evaporation.



Try to have a good long drink about two hours before each training session. Then take a drink's bottle to the training session (remember to use a proper bottle) and drink every moment you get chance. You are trying to drink about 500ml fluid over the training session. This will keep your muscles hydrated and they will work more efficiently, helping you to swim faster. Once you have finished training, you will need another long drink to help the recovery process.

The best type of drink to help your body recover is a hypotonic or isotonic drink. A hypotonic drink is one that is more dilute your own body's fluid and so is quickly absorbed. While an isotonic drink has the same concentration as your body's fluids and so is absorbed as fast or faster than water but will help your body to take on more energy as well as rehydrating.

## Food and Drink for Galas and Open Meets

Sweets are easy to eat **but** the energy they give you does not last very long in your system. Also the sweets can make you extra lively using up your energy on poolside leaving you have even less energy for your race.

*Better foods to take to galas and open meets include:*

Scones/teacakes

Crackers

Maltloaf

Mini pancakes or English muffins

Fruit (fresh or dried)

Bread sticks or rice cakes

Fruit, cereal or energy bars

Popcorn

**And don't forget to pack lots and lots of drink!**

