

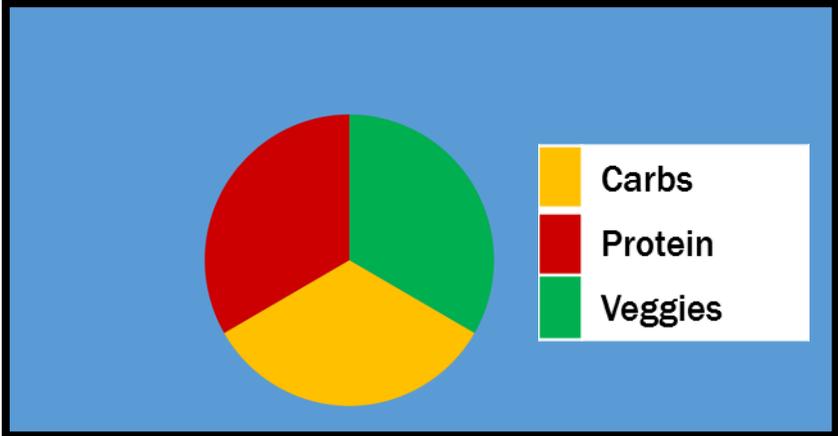
Nutrition – Optimising Competition Performance

Planning and preparing for competition is important as it is the chance to put all your training and effort to the test, so it makes sense to ensure you are at your best on the day. As well as making sure you have planned your journey, decided if you are travelling on the day or making your journey the day before and staying in accommodation, you need to plan your nutritional needs in advance.

NUTRITIONAL TIPS FOR MULTI DAY EVENTS

	HYDRATION	NUTRITION
<p>Travel: Think about your journey, as well as timings. If you are in a car, will you be able to stop on the way. If you are using other means of transport will there be areas to eat or drink? As well as long periods of waiting around?</p> <p>If yes or you're not sure make sure you pack appropriately!!</p>	<p>Maintaining hydration is important whilst travelling but you don't want to be stopping all the time for toilet breaks so small regular sips rather than drinking large amounts every time you stop.</p> <p>Trains and train stations can be hot or cold places so plan your hydration for this. Air-conditioning in cars and other forms of transport can dehydrate you as well.</p> <p>Aim to drink 300ml/hour when travelling as a minimum.</p>	<p>Do you take packed meals for your journey or buy food along the way?</p> <p>Packed food can be planned but buying food as you go along needs some pre-planning as to what is available and how it fits in with the timings of the journey. If you are buying food along the way, taking some snacks with you means you can keep your energy levels up even if you have delays along the way.</p> <p>Good Example snack include – nut & seed bars, yoghurts, veggie sticks and houmous, berries, meat and wholemeal sandwiches/wraps</p>
<p>Accommodation: Think about the accommodation and availability of hydration and nutrition. Self-catering leaves you in control of your food and drinks but needs planning to ensure you have places around where you can get the things you want / need.</p> <p>If there is a restaurant at the hotel, is it open at a time that fits in with your competition time-schedule? Is there anything appropriate on the menu? Does it take a while to get there?</p> <p>Quite often warm up times mean that you will be at the pool before breakfast is available.</p>	<p>Hotels can have air-conditioning which can be dehydrating so you may need more hydration than you think. It may be better to turn it off and open a window slightly as long as you feel secure.</p> <p>Tap water is often fine but you may prefer to have some bottles of water for the room.</p> <p>There is often tea / coffee in the room and readily available at breakfast but caffeine is poor hydrator, drink sparingly and don't drink after 5pm. Stick to one glass of fruit juice which is on offer at breakfast.</p>	<p>If you have any particular dietary requirements make sure they can be catered for before booking hotel meals.</p> <p>Quite often the breakfast is a buffet but it doesn't mean you have to try everything. Stick to what you know especially at competition. Don't forget protein at breakfast though. It's easy to have toast and cereal but forget yoghurt and eggs, these are just as important.</p> <p>Make sure you have enough time between eating and swimming for the food to digest and act as fuel, 3-4hours is a good rule.</p>

<p>Time between heats: As well keeping loose, this is a crucial time for keeping energy levels at the right level so have the right things in your bag, readily available to help you.</p>	<p>Pools can be warm and humid so you will dehydrate faster than you feel. Keeping a drinks bottle with you will allow you to sip regularly. Don't rely only on Sports Drinks. You will require some electrolytes to replace those lost through sweating, so low sugar Sports Drinks have their place but water or weak squash will also keep you hydrated.</p>	<p>Snacks can help keep your energy levels constant. Lots of sugary sweets will only make your sugar levels fluctuate throughout the day. Look to have snacks which are easily stored in your bag but aren't just high sugar.</p> <p>Seed and nut cereal bars, nuts and fruit, beef jerky, or wholemeal sandwiches if long times between races.</p>
<p>Interval between heats and finals: This varies in time depending on the competition and the timing is crucial to deciding on what you eat, to ensure you have time for the food to be digested.</p>	<p>Meal in-between heats and finals will usually be within 3 hours post heats with plenty of time (3-4hours) before you finals. Ensure that you hydrate with your meals, including fluids with them. However, be aware of meal deals as they will often include fizzy drinks which are often high in sugar and carbonated drinks won't help you perform well in the finals!</p>	<p>The duration of the interval can dictate what you are able to eat.</p> <p>1 hour: Would mean that a small amount of carbohydrate such as a small amount of pasta, a filled bagel with some peanut butter or a sandwich may be good choices as they are easily prepared and ingested. This timing will make the meal a slightly larger snack really, so smaller snacks such cereal bars may be beneficial throughout the final swimming session.</p> <p>2 - 4 hours: This gives greater time to recovery for the finals session.</p> <p>Carbohydrate is an element of this meal and again pasta is not the only option. Choices can include, baked potatoes with various fillings, cous cous, bagels and fruit such as bananas. However don't just have carbohydrate based meals. Protein and vegetables are key for recovery and should be included in this meal (*see diagram).</p> <p>Eat foods that suit you, such as making you feel full but not bloated and doesn't upset your stomach. Plan in advance as competitions are not the place to experiment. Use key set training nights or time trials to experiment on so you know what works best for you.</p>



SUMMARY AND QUICK TIPS: OPTIMIZING COMPETITION PERFORMANCE

- Stay hydrated
 - Sip regularly throughout the day
- Snack regularly
 - Healthy options
 - Slow release foods such as fruit, yoghurts, nuts and seeds, nut and seed cereal bars, trail mix, rice cakes, popcorn.
- Follow recovery plan i.e. after each race have a snack
 - Include protein post races
- Spread meals out and don't over eat at main meal times
- Don't rely on the pool cafe - do your homework, what's local?
 - Pack a cool bag alongside your swim bag. Be prepared!!
- Just because items like 'Nutrigrain' bars are sometimes free at competitions, it doesn't mean you have to eat them!

WHERE CAN YOU GET MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ON EVERYDAY NUTRITION?

Government websites are a good source of information such as:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-eatwell-guide>

