

Nutrition for Events

THE WEEK LEADING UP TO AN EVENT

- Ensure a high-carbohydrate eating plan.
- Include more rice and pasta: they have more carbohydrate than potato.
- Include nutritious carbohydrate-based between-meal snacks (see list below).
- As your training will be tapered pre-event, you won't need to eat more!
- Eating the right balance of increased carbohydrate and less fat is the key.

THE PRE-EVENT MEAL

- Eat this meal about 2-3 hours before competition (approximately 2-3 hours before warm-up).
- This meal should top-up your blood sugar levels after the night's rest.
- The meal does not have to be large, but should fill you up for the next few hours.
- High-carbohydrate foods are the best options: e.g., bread, cereals, fruit, pasta, rice, etc.
- Ensure that the meal is low fat, this speeds up digestion.
- Eat breakfast before you get to the pool, this leaves time for the carbo fuel to get in!
- Have a drink to optimize hydration: try sports drink, juice, or a liquid meal.
- Avoid the caffeine in cola drinks, coffee, chocolate, and tea - it is dehydrating.
- If you feel too nervous to eat, try a liquid meal (see later in this article).
- Practice with your pre-event meal prior to competing to fine tune this eating strategy.

AFTER THE WARM-UP - RECOVER FOR THE HEATS

- After the warm-up, replace fluids immediately (leave your drink bottle at pool side).
- Sports drinks are optimal as they replace fluids and carbohydrate simultaneously.
- If there is less than 1 hour between races, just keep to fluid replacement.
- If there is more than 1 hour between the warm-up and your first heat, try to eat a little.
- See the "top-up between event" ideas later in this article.

- The best approach is to eat a little and often during the day.
- Seize the opportunity to eat a little "top-up" when you can.
- Eating and drinking a little and often will help to keep you "firing" all day.
- Eating too much at once can make you feel heavy and lethargic.
- Little top-ups are best - they also prevent you getting really hungry.

DRINKING AND EATING BETWEEN EVENTS

- Try to eat in longer breaks (longer than 1 hour between races).
- In shorter breaks, use a sports drink or water to replace fluids.
- The indoor pool environment is humid and dehydrating.
- Adequate fluids are essential all day to keep your blood and energy pumping.
- If there is a longer break (a few hours) through the day, use it to eat a bit more.
- Take your own high performance foods and drinks with you (don't rely on the canteen).
- A cold pack and thermos helps to keep foods and drinks fresh and pleasant.
- Record your food and fluid intake to keep count of when you last ate and drank.
- To monitor hydration check that your urine output is regular and "looks clear."
- Monitoring body-weight change over the day is another way to check hydration.

RECOVERY AFTER A HARD DAY'S COMPETITION

- Have something to drink and eat immediately after your last swim.
- Avoid the "fast food" chains on the way home - their high fat foods will delay recovery.
- Have some high-carb food prepared so you can eat as soon as you arrive home.
- If possible take a thermos with a meal inside so you can eat even earlier.
- Check your body weight to ensure you are rehydrated.

TOP-UP SNACKS BETWEEN EVENTS (breaks of 1-2 hours)

- **Snack fruits (small cans of fruit) or canned baby fruits.**
- **Bananas.**
- **Fruit that is peeled and cut up (easier to eat this way).**
- **Plain bread rolls (white bread may be less heavy) - try pita bread!**
- **Fruit buns (e.g. hot cross buns) or raisin bread.**
- **Plain or fruit scones.**
- **Home-made low-fat fruit muffins.**
- **Pikelets (packet variety okay).**
- **Rice cakes (you can top them with honey, jam, or banana).**
- **Boiled or milky or creamed rice (use reduced-fat milk).**
- Rice pudding or bread pudding (use reduced-fat milk).
- Instant noodles (varieties that do not contain oil or the flavor sachet).
- **Jam or honey sandwiches.**
- Plain boiled pasta with a little tomato sauce.
- **Fruit fingers (see baby food selection at supermarket).**
- **Plain crackers (not high-fat types).**
- "Petit Miam" yogurts.
- Small amount of reduced-fat yogurts.
- **Power bars (try gyms or sport stores).**

[**Note:** Choose smaller amounts if you only have just over 1 hour. In longer breaks you can afford to eat a little more. Items in bold might be better for middle length breaks as they are smaller and perhaps easier to digest.]

IF YOU PREFER TO USE LIQUID MEALS TRY

- Sustagen Sport (made with water or skim milk).
- Exceed Sports Meal.
- Sports drink (e.g., fluid-replacement kind).
- High-carbo drink (e.g., Lucozade).
- Your own fruit smoothie made with reduced-fat milk.

BEST FLUID REPLACERS OVER THE DAY

- Sports drink (contain carbohydrate to boost energy as well).
- Water

IN LONGER BREAKS OR AFTER THE COMPETITION

- Sandwiches with low-fat fillings (avoid butter and too much salad).
- Pasta or rice with tomato pasta sauce (a little chicken or very lean meat in sauce is okay).