

Guide for Galas, Competitions and Nutritional Tips

If this is your first gala – don't worry or panic. The coach/team managers will be there to guide you through the day and help you all they can. Any problems – just ask. It is a good idea to have packed your bag the night before you swim with everything you might need. As you won't know until the day how close your races are, it's a good idea to take something to do in between races, we've listed a few ideas below.

Here is a checklist, which should be useful to you (no glass bottles or any other breakable items, spares of anything below if you think they may be needed).

- TSC T-shirt and shorts
- Racing costumes (for race)
- Training costumes (for warm-up)
- Goggles plus a spare pair
- Towel
- High competition swimmers will need to bring their rollers, kick boards, resistance bands
- Poolside footwear, such as flip flops!
- Hat (s)

***** Please ensure that your name is on all items *****

Club polo & T-shirts, swim hats, shorts, hoodies and towels can be purchased via the Tavistock swim shop.

- Food of sufficient quantity to last the day – for example: pasta pots, **NO crisps!** (more details below)
- Snack food – with lots of carbohydrates and low in fat, **NO sweets!** (more details below)
- Money in case of emergency
- Drink – Water bottle (large) and maybe energy drink (details below)
- Music or I-Pod (to help relax or psyche you up), reading book (even school work hehe!).
- Be well-hydrated, drink 600ml – 1 litre on the morning of the competition.

Morning of the event

- Don't swim on empty. Even if you feel nervous, make breakfast happen! Stick to easily digested foods such as cereal with milk, porridge, banana with yoghurt, some fruit or toast with jam.
- If you're really struggling, try liquid meals such as milkshakes, yoghurt drinks or a smoothie.
- It's a good idea to rehearse your competition meal routine in training so you know exactly what agrees with you.

Arrival at a Swimming Gala - When you arrive at a swimming pool for a gala, make sure you do so in plenty of time (you should be poolside at least 20 minutes before your warm-up time). Please arrive poolside wearing your warm up swimwear under your clothes. Check out the pool complex layout and familiarise yourself with the important places you will need to go during the day (toilets, reporting area, changing rooms, cafeteria etc).

Safety and well-being are really important to the Club, some of the pools we visit are large and multi-purpose and even finding your way to the toilet can be a bit confusing, with this in mind, here are a few key points to remember

- All swimmers taking part in a gala are the responsibility of the parent/guardian/carer until they sign them in/hand them to a TSC member.
- Primary school aged children should be accompanied by the parent/guardian/carer to the entrance of changing room/poolside where they will be met by a senior swimmer/team manager from TSC.
- At least one parent or guardian should remain on site if your child(ren) are of primary school age.
- When primary school aged swimmers have finished and wish to change the swimmers parent should come to the door where they handed them over to then resume responsibility. Your child will be accompanied to the entrance of the changing room by a senior swimmer/team manager.
- During the gala primary aged children will be accompanied to the toilets with an appropriate adult .
- Secondary age children should, wherever possible, go in same gender pair always letting the team manager know before leaving poolside.
- If your child(ren) are secondary school age can you please make sure that you are visible to the team manager and inform them before you leave poolside for any reason. If someone else is collecting your child can you please make sure that your child informs the team manager.
- ****please note** if you have small children and there are longer gaps between their heats. It may be advisable for them to sit with you to break the time up. The team manager will discuss this as necessary.**

Don't Go Outside – When you are at a swimming gala and with the club – they are responsible for you and you must **not** leave poolside without permission. If your parents are there, please **ask** the team manager/coach for permission to leave poolside before you go to see them.

Pre-Warm up – there will be a poolside mobility session before your warm up, this will be directed by the coach/senior swimmers, please make sure you take part in the mobility sessions as it helps you to get the most out of the warm up.

Warm ups – Check which warm-up is yours and be on time for it wearing your training costume/trunks. When you warm up make sure you get the feel of the water, turns and starting blocks. Your coach will have shown you what warm up to do from the warm up protocol. The warm up is for warming up your muscles properly to avoid injury and prepare to race and to get the feel of the water.

What do I need to do after warm up?

- Have a drink – you need to drink regularly, so make sure your drink is with you and topped up.
- Isotonic sports drinks can be taken but water should be your main drink.
- If there is more than 1 hour between the warm up and your first race (your team manager will be able to tell you) try and have something to eat from the snack guide below.
- The best approach is little as and when, because you want to race on a 'relatively' empty stomach, eating too much and you'll feel heavy and lethargic.
- Keep warm, although the pool is a warm and humid environment, it's important to keep your foot wear on and t shirt/shorts.

Event Marshalling – to make sure the gala runs smoothly there will be a number of marshalling points. Your team manager will let you know when you need to queue up for your event. If you haven't been to a gala before, one of the senior swimmers or your team manager will show you what to do and where to go. Don't worry, they remember what it's like to go to a gala for the first time! The marshall will ask you for your name and tell you which lane you will be swimming in. You will then move to the next marshall, who will do the

same. Don't worry, you won't end up in the wrong lane, the marshalls are other mums and dads who will make sure you are ok. Everyone wants you to have a good time.

The Race – Simply do your best! After the race – go and see your coach. He will give you feedback on your swim, and then where and what you need to do swim down.

After your last race – when you have finished please do not just leave, please see your coach for feedback. He'll have some important information for you and what to do next. Where possible, swimmers should stay until to end, to help cheer club members, or to see your results and check if you have made a final.

Food & Snacks between heats

- Try to eat as soon as possible after your swim to give yourself as long as possible to recover if you have to swim again.
- Right before an event, it's best not to snack or drink. You don't want to start swimming with a stomach full of food!
- High fat and simple sugar foods will do you no favours in competition, instead search out the complex carbohydrates again.
- If you are still feeling nervous try sports drinks that will help replenish your energy supplies and assist the recovery of aching muscles.

The list below offers great food options to be snacking on in and around training and competitions. Remember to keep eating healthy foods in your regular diet through, such as fresh vegetables, fruit and nuts.

- Pasta salad
- Plain sandwiches, for example chicken; tuna; cheese salad; banana
- Dried fruit for example raisins; apricots; mango
- Bananas, grapes, apples, plums, pears
- Crackers and rice cakes with banana/and or honey
- Mini-pancakes, fruit buns
- Cereals bars, fruit bars, sesame snaps, popcorn, Jaffa Cakes, Jelly Cubes.
- Yoghurt and yoghurt drinks
- Prepared vegetable crudité's for example carrots; peppers; cucumber and celery



Drinks -sip little and often, and for each sip of sports drinks, take a sip of water.

- Water
- Sports drinks – isotonic energy drink

Please make sure you take all of your rubbish with you or put it in the bins provided.

Recovery after competition

- Have something to drink and eat immediately after your last swim. Water, a sports drink or sports bars are best.
- Avoid the fast food chains on the way home – their high fat foods will delay recovery.
- The worst thing you can do is wait a couple of hours, and then have a little snack. This will not be sufficient, especially if you have an event the next day. A high carbohydrate meal with protein is best.
- Protein will help repair muscles over-night and work best when consumed with carbo-hydrates.

Good behaviour - When you are representing the Club you are expected to behave properly. Swimmers are expected to sit with the team and **not** with parents in the spectator area. Parents are not allowed on poolside at **any** time during a competition.

Nutritional Information

Pre-competition meals

If you can plan your meals a few days before your competition, this will help your energy levels on race day. This means keeping your carbohydrate and protein levels high on roughly a 60:40 ratio and don't pig out on sluggish unsaturated fats. Eating the right balance of increased carbohydrates and less fat is the key.

Here are some good examples...

- **Baked potatoes** – fill them with beans, sweet corn or chilli, not too much cheese and remember to eat the skin as it's the healthiest part!
- **Pasta meals or bakes** – again go light on the cheese, throw in plenty of vegetables. Tuna is also a great energy source.



- **Beans on toast** – they might be the signature of a student's staple diet but low-sugar baked beans are really good for you. Bags of protein in the beans and wholemeal toast has your complex carbohydrates, and if beans aren't your thing, eggs will do a similar job.
- **Chilli-con-carne** – beans lean mince or vegetarian equivalent and brown rice all should set you up perfectly for exercise in a few hours. Fatty, greasy mince, white rice and salty tortilla chips will not.
- **Porridge** – with milk and banana
- **Wholegrain cereal (bran, muesli)** – with milk and yoghurt
- **Sandwich/roll/wrap** – filled with chicken, fish, egg, cheese and salad
- **Chicken** – with rice and salad
- **Mixed bean hot pot** - and potatoes

Pre-competition snacks

- Fresh fruit
- Energy or nutrition bar
- Cereal bar or breakfast bar
- Jaffa cakes (6)
- Toast and honey wholemeal bread
- Tomato soup and one roll
- Low fat rice pudding
- Low fat yoghurts

- Cereals
- custard
- Milkshake

Morning of competition

The pre-event meal is a 'mini-nutrition period' that occurs in the 2 – 3 hours before the start of a meet, usually the Breakfast. Most swimmers don't understand the exact role of the pre-event meal and eat as much carbohydrates as possible to top-up energy stores. It has little effect on increasing muscle glycogen levels.

Remember, to be able to perform well you usually need the stored of glycogen in your muscles to be full. It is the foods eaten during the week leading up to the meet that established the muscle glycogen levels. By meet day, the glycogen levels are mostly set and there is little that you can do to increase them in the hours before the competition.

- Always start every exercise session well-hydrated
- Drinking 600ml – 1 litre of water, sports drink or other fluids in the 2 hours before exercise will help hydrate your body. Remember if you drink sports drink, you need to have the equivalent amount of water, 'sip for sip'.

During Competition

Foods that are high in complex carbohydrates are easier to digest and empty from the stomach faster, which is important, because not only do you want to race on a relatively empty stomach, you also want the foods you eat to be efficiently converted to energy.

Cereals, pasta, bagels, baked potatoes and sandwiches are good carbohydrate sources that are easily digested and converted into glucose.

- If there is a longer break (a few hours), eat a high carbohydrate meal. A good idea is to precook pasta and have it in your bag.
- Take your own foods and drinks with you (don't rely on the sweet machines).
- A cold pack and a thermos helps to keep foods and drinks cold, which aids in absorption and is better on a humid poolside.
- Record your food and fluid intake to keep count of when you last ate and drank.

'Nibbles' between heats

If there are shorter gaps between heats, there are some useful snacks to give you energy but which don't fill you up, good examples are

- Popcorn; cereal bars; bananas; rice cakes;
- Jelly cubes fruits bars; grapes; chocolate raisins;
- Jaffa cakes fibre biscuits; pancakes;

Studies have shown that drinking an isotonic sports drink as well as water may benefit your performance. If you are under very warm and humid conditions, then rapid fluid replacement is likely to be your priority. Therefore, an isotonic drink will provide more fuel and would suit high intensity exercise. Some athletes may find them a little too concentrated and experience greater fullness and stomach discomfort. As a result, you may wish to dilute a ready-made drink.

- Aim to drink enough to limit fluid lost so a sip or 2 every 15 minutes or 500ml per hour
- Every athlete should develop their own strategy for drinking during sport where it is necessary
- Drinking smaller volumes more frequently will minimise stomach discomfort

After Competition

- Your body will need a boost when you have finished the competition
- Always try and refuel within 30 minutes of finishing and preferably within 15 minutes as your body immediately needs nutrients to repair muscles and replace energy.
- Make sure you are refuelling with the right foods though – low fat but high carbohydrates and protein
- You need to have drunk 3 litres of fluid during the day.

Summary

Days before competing

CARBOHYDRATE MEALS

1 – 2 hours before competing

BREAKFAST/PRE COMPETITION SNACKS

During competition

KEEP HYDRATED/NIBBLES

15 – 30 minutes after competing

RE-FUEL

Competition Checklist (home and overnight)

1. Always arrive on poolside at least 20 minutes before the start of the warm up. For longer distance races (usually 400m and above) you will have to register with the control room. Your team manager will help you. You need to get settled and used to the environment. You can't expect to perform at your best if you arrive, drop your bag and get straight into the pool.
2. Never waste time after you have arrived. Prepare your body and your mind. Avoid less conscientious swimmers who are not there for the same reasons as you.
3. YOU may need to organise your parents! It may be your responsibility to get them out of bed in a morning so that you are not late for a competition. Persuade them that they need to give you every chance to do your best.
4. If you are staying in a hotel close to the venue, try to arrange for your room to be away from noise so that you can sleep or relax between heats.
5. Request that the maid services your room during heats or the morning sessions. Then there's no need for you to be disturbed if you go back for a rest in the afternoon.
6. Avoid contact with people with colds and other bugs.
7. If travelling, pack your swim kit either on the top of the case or in a separate bag, so that you can get to them quickly and easily. You might be going straight to the pool after travelling. Travel light, take only what is needed to look professional but comfortable and to swim fast.
8. Only shave for major meets (do not shave during last 5 weeks until just prior to the main event – applies to males and females)
9. Have spares of all competition swim wear (hats, goggles, costumes etc)
10. If your room is hot, fill the sink or bath with water so that there is moisture in the air, as air conditioning tend to dehydrate the air. Open the window when sleeping if you are sharing a room with other people.
11. Keep a glass of water beside your bed and take a sip or drink each time you wake during the night.
12. Have a minimum of 2 drink bottles plus post competition snack ready for each day. Keep your drink bottle clean and do not allow anyone to use yours or you to use anyone else's.
13. Alarm clock/phone/tablet – make sure it's charged or take a back up in the event of a power failure.
14. Keep your sleeping habits the same as you would at home, especially if you are staying in a hotel where you will not want to be distracted.
15. Own individual pillow – take it with you if it means you sleep better!
16. Earplugs – be accustomed to sleeping with these just in case of a noisy roommate or neighbours.
17. Eyeshades – be accustomed to sleeping with these if you find it difficult to rest in daylight.
18. Develop a pre race meal which you can pick up anywhere – rice/pasta are really good – see nutritional info for more ideas.
19. Take a woolly hat, gloves and coat if the temperature is cold. Some pools are cool! And at some point you will be going outside.
20. Get quality rest and relaxation. Understand that being nervous is normal.
21. Make sure your phone/MP3 containing your music is fully charged.

22. Avoid over exposure to the sun at meets during the summer.
23. Support the team effort whilst maintaining your own goals.
24. Practice vivid visualisation skills every day, swim your perfect race achieving your goals in your mind.
25. Understand that negative athletes never achieve – do not mix with negative people.
26. Make the environment work for you and do not become a victim of the environment
27. If possible, be selective about whom you sit beside on the mini-bus (choose someone positive with who you get along with and can relax with).