

FUELING FOR COMPETITION

HERE ARE SOME TIPS AND TRICKS FOR GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR COMPETITION FUEL

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO EAT WHILE RACING?

What we eat is what helps to give our bodies energy for a long session, day, or weekend of racing. It is so incredibly important to eat throughout the day in order to help your body's tank not run on empty.

Think about this - if you eat a small breakfast because you're nervous at 7:00AM before leaving to go to the pool, and don't eat again until after the end of the first session around 2:00PM, you're working hard AND not refueling for 7 hours. Our bodies deserve a little more support than that if we are asking to work on all cylinders during a race. It's easy to think "oh, but the race just lasts a couple of minutes, I'm not really working THAT much anyways". This is not the case! You are warming up, cooling down, being nervous or over excited - all of these things take energy.

When we don't provide our body fuel, it will turn around and break down the energy stored in our muscles. Don't let nervous "not-eating" the day of competition undo the hard work you've been putting in for months building up your muscles' strength and endurance.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD YOU FUEL WHILE AT A COMPETITION?

I always encourage people to combine the following 2 rules:

1. Making sure you're providing fuel for your body at least every 4 hours.
2. Refueling your body within 30 minutes of completing your activity.

When at a meet - think about it as an opportunity to eat something small frequently throughout the meet so that you don't have a large amount of food in your stomach. Eating breakfast before you go, as well as eating a snack following warm up will provide a good energy base for the day. Between events, eating a small snack with quick-digesting carbs and a little protein works well. If you have a longer break between events, eating a slightly larger snack will provide good energy throughout not only that session, but for the sessions and days of competition to come.

QUESTIONS?

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BEST OPTIONS FOR FUELING FOR SUCCESS WHILE AT THE MEET

WHAT ARE SOME GOOD OPTIONS FOR BEFORE THE MEET?

There are many athletes that have a difficult time eating anything before a meet - often times because they are nervous or feel as though they have an upset stomach. That being said, I encourage you to eat anyways. Not to the point of making yourself sick, but often times, your stomach feels better when it has something small and easy to digest.

Keeping in mind the ideal breakdown of meals for optimal nutrition, having a meal with a combination of carbohydrates, proteins, and healthy fats will keep your energy up for all races in the day to come.

Some breakfast ideas:

Oatmeal cooked in milk with cinnamon & honey, walnuts, and apples

Pancakes with peanut butter and bananas

Wholegrain toast with eggs and turkey bacon and side of fruit

SNACKS THROUGHOUT THE DAY

When thinking about snacks, our goal is to have a combination of quick digesting carbs + some protein to help with muscle repair and keeping full longer. Some good snack ideas for between meet events include:

- 12 oz chocolate milk (be careful with dairy DURING competition - dairy doesn't always sit well on stomachs)
- Greek yogurt with honey and blueberries
- Smoothie made with fruit and milk for protein
- Peanut butter and jelly sandwich
- Trailmix

IMPORTANCE OF HYDRATION

Although we swim in water - we still sweat! Hydration is important not only at practice or during daily life, but at meets as well - because we require water for every cellular process in our bodies. This is especially important in performance and recovery.

Lean tissue holds more water than body fat, so lean built people need to hydrate more for their muscles to work properly.

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EATING ON THE ROAD - HOW TO SET YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS WHEN OUT OF YOUR ROUTINE

HOTEL BREAKFAST OPTIONS

Often times when staying at a hotel while traveling, there's limited ability to choose what is offered for breakfast with their buffet. Below are some choices that will prove themselves to set you up better for competition:

- Creating an egg sandwich (bagel, whole wheat bread, English muffin)
- Bread/toast with peanut butter and jam
- Oatmeal
- Cereals
- Omelets (plus if adding veggies)
- Scrambled eggs
- Bagels with peanut butter or cream cheese
- Greek yogurt, cottage cheese and/or milk

EASY SNACKS THAT TRAVEL WELL

Included below are options of snacks that stand the test of travel:

- Apple sauce or fruit pouches
- Beef or turkey jerky
- Microwave rice or pasta packets
- Oatmeal packets
- Nuts and dried fruit
- Dry cereal
- Granola or cereal bars
- Peanut butter

EATING LUNCH AND DINNER OUT

Without the ability to cook, making the best choices at eating establishments can sometimes be hard - especially when going to new places you've never been. When deciding on where to eat lunch and dinner, consider the following suggestions for your best fueling options:

- Sandwiches with turkey, ham, or roast beef
- Soups with vegetables and protein
- Pasta with marinara and protein
- Grilled or baked chicken, turkey, lean beef
- Hamburger or turkey burger
- Baked potatoes or sweet potatoes - but monitor sweet vs savory toppings
- Fresh fruit
- Steamed vegetables

As a rule of thumb, the healthiest and most nutritionally rich options are the ones that haven't been changed too much from their original form, and cooked in water vs in oil. Keep these things in mind while choosing your lunch and dinner options on the road.

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