



### **Eating Right, Swimming Faster Session 3**

*First, I'd like to start off by stating I am not a Doctor, Registered Dietician or a nutritionist. I am a swim Coach brining awareness to the benefits of fueling for a competitive swimmer. My Primary goal here is to inform you, the parents on the needs of fueling as you are the front line to the athlete. It all starts at home. When the parent's buy in then the athlete will buy in.*

**Athletes need carbs, do not let the latest diet craze influence the way your athlete is fueled.** You are dealing with an athlete who is NOT just a normal non-athletic individual. Your Athletes must understand this. The work starts at the dinner table. Your dinner table.

Getting your nutrition right is key for athletic success. The right meal and the right snack choices every day will significantly improve your athlete's performance in training and competition. The benefits look like:

- Train harder for longer
- Recover quicker between training sessions
- Race faster at competition

Not only that, but you will stay healthier throughout the season, which means fewer training days and competitions missed through sickness. I see this happen all the time with athletes not fueling properly and trying to meet the demands of training.

## ***Managing the demands of a 3-4 day swim meet prelim and finals***

Swimming competitions may last for 2 to 7 days depending on the level of competition. Heats are usually swum in the morning and finals raced at night. Races can last anywhere from 20 seconds to 15 minutes depending on the stroke and distance being raced. In most competitions swimmers may compete 2 to 3 times per day in prelims and have as little as 20 minutes to recover between races while in other situations there may be several hours between races.

*So How do you and your athlete manage this?*

For starters swimmers should not just wake up in the morning and drive to pool for warm ups and compete. This is the absolute least that can be done. And believe it or not it is done often.

### **What to Eat the Day Before a Meet**

The day before the meet, the swimmer should eat foods that are **high in complex carbs** and drink fluids often.

#### **Foods with Complex Carbs:**

- Oatmeal
- Brown rice
- Sweet potatoes or white potatoes with skin
- 100% whole wheat bread and pasta
- Grapefruit
- Apples
- Bananas
- Blueberries
- Cantaloupe

### **What to eat the morning of a Meet**

Wake up early enough to have a solid breakfast. We realize that a meet starting at 9am could have a warm up time of 7am. So, the athlete is up at 6am if the meet is local. Sometimes, there might be a 90 minute drive to a meet so therefore we are

up at 5am. We still must **plan** to have a hearty breakfast before competition starts.

### **Plan the meal (if local)**

1. Whole grain toast with peanut butter and jelly
2. Pancakes with berries
3. Waffles with fruits and nuts
4. English Muffin with Jam and Cheese
5. Fruit salad with yogurt and nuts
6. Oatmeal with bananas and raisins
7. Sports drink or fluids

### **If you have to drive to the meet**

1. Put pancakes in a baggie
2. Dry cereal in baggies
3. Bagel in a baggie with dried fruit
4. Sliced fruits in a baggie and yogurt
5. Pack and egg and cheese sandwich

### **After warm-ups and before first race or between races at a meet**

This is a critical time and we must use the time wisely to fuel.

### ***If you have less than 30-45 minutes:***

1. Sports drink
2. A quarter of a bagel
3. Tetra box of chocolate milk
4. Yogurt pouch
5. Dried fruit
6. Small baggie of fruit banana apples
7. Honey stingers

***If you have more than 1-2 hours:***

1. A pancake in a baggie with fruit
2. Fruit salad with yogurt
3. Some pasta red sauce
4. Honey stinger with chocolate milk
5. A waffle in a baggie with fruit
6. A half or whole turkey sandwich on wheat bread (no mayo)

**What to Avoid:**

Stay away from high fiber, protein and high fat foods in the morning as they are slow to leave the stomach and can cause discomfort.

**What to fuel with right after a race:** (this also falls into the category of how far away is next race is)

1. Chocolate milk is the best
2. Raisins, grapes apples
3. Cereal bars, granola

***\*Parents please note- it takes you buy-in and then the athletes buy in***

*Competition and training venues do not always have suitable food and fluid options available so it is important that swimmers arrive at venues with food and fluids prepared. A cooler bag with drinks and food options should be packed and kept easily accessible for topping up with fuel and fluids throughout the day.*

**The importance of timing your meals**

As you can see from above there is an importance to timing meals at meets and what should be eaten based upon that. It's also important that there is a hearty breakfast.

## **Fueling Between Prelims and Finals if you have 2-4 hours**

Fueling up here is critical to the evenings performance and cannot be skipped or be skimpy. Find a local restaurant in advance or have a meal ready at home.

1. Pasta with red sauce, bread (avoid butter, avoid cram style sauce)
2. Chicken with pasta red sauce
3. Large fruit smoothie with a turkey and cheese sandwich
4. Chocolate milk and PB&J sandwich(es) dried fruit
5. Muscle Milk and fruits

## **Dinner after Finals**

Primary fuel source as swimmers is Carbohydrates  
Need to always top of that tank- Glycogen

Dinner should be a big portion of carbohydrates and a significant source of protein. While your sleeping recovery is extremely high thus the needs for the amino acids from protein source

1. Pasta with red sauce & chicken breast (stay away from a heavy sauce like alfredo)
2. Baked potato with salmon, broccoli
3. Two of three meatballs in red sauce
4. Chipotle- Brown Rice bowls- peppers onions, cheeses avocado- but watch out for too much fat sources (these things would empty a little more slowly)

## ***A look at energy supplements and what to avoid***

Yes, Caffeine does give the swimmer an edge. But we must be wise when choosing this. The challenge lies in the timing and the amount. For a 120lb female/male not more than 100MG for a mature male/female athlete never exceed 200mg.

It is believed the caffeine does improve explosiveness and helps the athletes mental deal with the fatigue during the race. They may just push themselves a bit harder for longer.

You need to practice with it before just using at a meet. (ie at practice)

Use more controlled reasonable servings-

Espresso drinks

Coffee drinks

Pre workout drinks

Also caffeine can be found in  
Gu's, Gels, Honey Stingers caffeinated

### **What to Avoid:**

Celcius, red bulls, monster, Loaded with caffeine

These types will bring you up very fast but drops you off hard and its long lasting.

### **Iron Levels**

It is wise to have athletes do a blood panel 2x per year. Once in the beginning and once mid season. Iron plays a big role in the success of an athlete. Most of us would otherwise never know we are low on iron without checking. It is also not wise to "just" supplement iron because "you think you are low". Get a test. You must ask directly to make sure the sample is being tested for ferritin.

Secondly, you want to request the actually number value of your ferritin level. If not, they might just come back and say you are in the normal levels. But here is the thing. Normal levels for a competitive athlete is not the same a normal level of an individual. Its recommended an athlete should be in the ranges of 50-80.

Once you know if you are low then a good source of iron can be bought aa a pharmacy. No prescription is needed and you can get on a supplementation program.

**In closing:**

I highly suggest you go to Amazon and purchase Abbi Knox RD book titled EAT RIGHT SWIM FASTER

