



Swim Practice Nutrition Guide

Before Practice

There are 4 primary functions to what you eat before a swim practice. What you choose to eat before practice should include foods that **prevent low blood sugar**, **fuel your muscles**, **fill your stomach**, and give you the confidence that **you are preparing your body to perform**.



Low-fat Foods

When choosing what to eat before a practice, make sure to reach for foods that are **low-fat**. There are different types of fats, be sure to limit foods high in **saturated fats and trans fat**. “Good” or healthy fats include **monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats**, such as nuts, seeds, fish, avocados, low-fat cheese, and many more.

Low-fat foods will digest quicker and you will be less likely to experience unpleasant symptoms during practice such as cramps, nausea, and indigestion.

Complex Carbohydrates

Complex carbohydrates are turned into glucose (blood sugar) in the body and are used as energy. For swimmers and many other athletes, complex carbohydrates are **essential for fueling your muscles** -- during practice and for replenishing what was depleted during a workout. About 50-60% of what you eat should consist of complex carbohydrates, but **varies from person to person**. This can be anywhere between 40-80 grams of carbs.

So what are some things I can have before practice?

Keeping in mind **personal diet restrictions, allergies**, and what might just not sit well with you while swimming, refer to this list for suggestions on what is great practice fuel:

- Complex Carbs - bagels, cereal (not high sugar cereals!), brown rice, whole wheat toast (and peanut butter!), oatmeal, granola bars, whole grain crackers (with low-fat cheese), rice cakes
- Low-fat sources: fruit smoothies, energy gels, bananas, peanut butter (in small amounts), tuna sandwich, hard boiled eggs, nuts, raisins, low-fat yogurt, and **fruit**
 - **Fruits** do not have refined sugars, are high in vitamins and minerals, and high in water content to help with hydration (but ALWAYS have a water bottle with you!). They can also help to curb cravings that may lead to eating those not-so-complex carbohydrates (like candy).

Remember:

Fueling your body with the right foods can provide your body with energy to **perform at maximum ability, help muscles recover faster between sets**, and **you will be able to train harder and longer at practice**.

After Practice

The **sooner** you eat after practice, the **better** -- ideally within 1 hour after working out. Just like before practice, it is important to consume complex carbohydrates, but protein is key to recovery.

Complex Carbohydrates

The carbs you ate before practice fueled your muscles so you could push through the workout, but now they need to be **replenished**. Refer to the list above for foods that are high in complex carbs in order to replenish what you lost during the workout, and prepare your body for the next time you swim/lift.

Protein

Protein will play a big part in the repair and growth of muscle tissue. Your muscles are broken down during workouts, and consuming the right kinds of protein sources can provide your body with what it needs to rebuild muscle tissue. **Protein provides your body with amino acids, or the building blocks for your muscles.** These help to repair what was broken down during practice (don't worry, this is what you want to happen), and can help reduce any soreness you may experience the next day.

Depending on your personal dietary requirements, the ideal amount of protein you should get from your diet is **about 20 grams**.

So what are some things I can have after practice?

Keeping in mind **personal diet restrictions, allergies**, and what might just not sit well with you after swimming, refer to this list for suggestions on what to consider for optimizing muscle recovery:

- Lean proteins - chicken, beans and lentils, nuts/nut butters, eggs, fish, non-fat dairy
- Don't forget to add some **green** to your post-workout meal! Fresh fruits and vegetables provide vitamins and minerals that may have otherwise been depleted during the workout

- If you find that you don't have a lot of time after practice to make or grab a meal, liquid meal replacements are a great option. These are things such as **protein shakes, nutrition shakes, and high-carb drinks** – but make sure to do your research before grabbing just anything off the shelf at the store. Try to find a meal replacement that fits **your needs and diet**.
- Carbohydrate options - bagels with peanut butter or bananas, oatmeal with raisins and nuts, greek yogurt with fruit, etc.
- As always, **stay HYDRATED** -- this means having a water bottle with you at all times