

## The day before:

- 1 Pack a bag of things you need for the meet.** Do this in plenty of time so you won't be scrambling gathering your things and you can get as much rest as possible (for a morning meet do this the night before). Pack things such as towels (at least 2), two pairs of goggles, club hat and a spare, club costume and a spare, club top, snacks (see later) and plenty to drink.
- 2 Make sure that you know your game plan for the meet the next day.** For example; ask your coach what time warm ups are, what events you're swimming and where the meet is.
- 3 Eat a good dinner the night before you swim.** Eat plenty of carbohydrates and proteins but don't eat something too heavy or completely out of the norm. The best plan is to eat something simple, easy to digest. Although pizza, chicken wings, and plates of pasta may seem like "Power food," the reality is that they will sink you like a rock.  
Carb loading is a technique that is out dated and since been proved inefficient and unhelpful unless in special circumstances only usually encountered at an elite level.
- 4 Go to bed as early as possible before your swim meet, especially if you are getting up early.** If you go to bed at midnight every night for a week and get 5 hours of sleep every night for a week, getting 10 hours of sleep the night before is not going to help you. You will still be exhausted the day of the swim meet.

## On the day:

- 1 Eat a light breakfast such as a bowl of cereal and a banana, or an energy bar if you're swimming a morning event. If you're swimming in the afternoon, eat a big breakfast and a light lunch.** Don't swim on empty. Even if you feel nervous, make breakfast happen. Stick to easily digested foods – cereal with milk, porridge, banana with yoghurt, some fruit or toast with jam. Eat at least two hours before the event. The best foods are pasta, cereals, bagels, breads, fruits, and vegetables. Equally make sure it has not been more than 3 hours since you ate at the point you swim otherwise you may not have enough energy. Bananas are great because they have potassium which makes you more resistant to fatigue. If you're really struggling, try liquid meals such as milkshakes, yoghurt drinks or a smoothie.
- 2 Rest.** Do not over-exert yourself, save your energy for the race.
- 3 Check your kit.** Don't put Fastskins on until after warm up and you are dry. Be sure you have water and healthy snacks. If you are swimming both trials and finals, you may need up to five towels; however, you can hang up your towels to dry to save space in your bag.
- 4 Listen to some good pump up music.** Plug in your iPod or phone and listen to your favourite mix of positive tunes. Dance if want but don't wear yourself out!
- 5 Drink plenty of liquids.** Water is best! Drink plenty throughout the day and during the meet. Lack of liquids do affect your performance as well, even before you feel thirsty.

## During the meet/gala:

- 1 Focus on the things that you can control vs. the things you cannot control.** You can control your start and your turn, you cannot control the size or speed of your opponent. You can control what you eat before your race, you cannot control the traffic on the way to the meet.

**2 Do some stretching on the pool side.** Don't avoid poolside warm up just because your mates aren't doing it! Try the following:

- arm rotations
- horizontal arm swings
- trunk twisting
- shoulder stretch
- hamstring stretch
- ankle stretch

**3 Visualise your race.** Sit down somewhere quiet, and visualise the race from the moment you're up on the block to the moment you hit the wall. Visualise the exact time that you want to see on the time board. This helps keep a positive attitude.

**4 Get in the zone.** Depending on what kind of person you are, you may want to get pumped. Do a super intense 30 seconds of push-ups, jumping jacks, or anything that suits you to get you going, 10 minutes before your race.

**5 Warm up swim.** Don't miss it! Check with your coach. Dry off after and if it's a while until your race, now is the time to change into your fastskin if you haven't already.

**6 Dry off between heats/races and keep warm. Stay hydrated.** Water on the skin will cool you down rapidly. That mixed with the adrenaline could cool you down even more. Dry off and put on a t-shirt. Prepare and focus for the next race or cheer on the team if you have finished. Drink some fluids (water is best) and try to drink 100-150mls every 15-20 minutes in small sips. Have a small snack straight after a race if you have a more than 30 minutes until the next race. If less time is available, stick to sweets (a handful), small banana or some sports drink (instead of sweets-not as well!). If you know you are likely to want to snack more frequently, have some sugar-free polos or similar.

### **SUITABLE GALA SNACKS**

High fat (crisps) and simple sugar (sweets, jelly) foods will do you no favours in competition. Instead search out complex carbohydrates.

If you can't stomach anything solid try sports drinks, flavoured milk or diluted juice 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 for a competition. Remember to keep eating healthy foods in your regular diet though, such as fresh vegetables, nuts and fruits.

- Water, diluted fruit juice with a pinch of salt or a sports drink (not full of sugar)
- Bananas, grapes, apples, plums, pears
- Dried fruit e.g. raisins, apricots, mango
- Smoothies
- Crackers and rice cakes with bananas and/or honey
- Mini-pancakes, fruit buns
- Cereal bars, fruit bars
- Yoghurt and yoghurt drinks
- Prepared vegetable crudité's e.g. carrots, peppers, cucumber and celery

Lunch for longer meets:

- Pasta salad
- Plain sandwiches e.g. chicken, tuna, cheese with salad, banana, peanut butter