



# Nutrition for Adult Swimmers

## **Masters Swimming Australia Overview**

### **Introduction**

Masters Swimming Australia is the national sports organisation/governing body for Masters Swimming, which is a not-for-profit organisation for adult swimmers aged 18 and above. Coaching adult swimmers is in many ways identical to coaching adolescent or age-group swimmers, but you will need to keep in mind some specific points when planning a Masters program. This section discusses these points and offers some possible solutions to situations you may encounter.

### **Who is Masters Swimming Australia?**

It is a non-government, not for profit organisation, constituted in 1975. Masters Swimming Australia Inc. used to be referred to as "AUSSI", which is an acronym for "Australian Union of Senior Swimmers International". This acronym was dropped from the name in October 2009. The organisation does not receive funding from any government source; however, some Branches are eligible for and receive funding from State Governments.

### ***Our Mission Statement***

To provide at club, branch, and national level an environment that encourages all adults, regardless of ability, to swim regularly, to compete to promote fitness and improve their general wellbeing.

### ***Our vision***

Enrich and Inspire Adults to Swim for Life

### ***Our motto***

FITNESS, FRIENDSHIP and FUN

### **What does Masters Swimming Australia offer?**

Masters Swimming Australia caters for those who can only just swim through to the experienced swimmer, emphasising participation in a fun and friendly environment which encourages and facilitates adult involvement in swimming. Only 30% of members compete in swim meets, so you don't have to be a champion swimmer to join!

### **Who can join?**

Membership is open to all people who have turned 18 or are older in the calendar year of joining.

#### **Masters Swimming Australia National Office**

Level 2, 50-56 York Street,  
South Melbourne VIC 3205  
Email: [admin@mastersswimming.org.au](mailto:admin@mastersswimming.org.au)

## Introduction

You will find most of the information for this reading by referring to the hyperlinks overleaf, and the appendices:

- Appendix 1: Fueling Fitness for Swimmers
- Appendix 2: Eating and drinking during and after sport

## Objectives

When you complete this reading, you will be able to:

- identify the reference groups that can give swimmers nutritional advice
- identify the basic principles of nutrition for health and swimming performance

## Nutrition for adult swimmers

Fuel for activity comes from the food we eat. Implementing a suitable nutrition program for adult swimmers can be complex, requiring an understanding of their individual needs, preferences and lifestyles.

Although it may seem strange, even with the abundance of foods available to Australians, poor food choices still abound and coaches have to contend with nutrition problems. Common problems include consuming too little food for the activity undertaken, making poor choices at important times, and eating on the run. The results can be a diet insufficient in carbohydrate, too high in fat and with unbalanced nutrients.

Australia has numerous well qualified Sports Dietitians who can give coaches and athletes additional advice. Sports Dietitians are qualified dietitians who have undertaken additional study to specialise in sports nutrition.

To locate a Sports Dietitian near you, contact Sports Dietitians Australia (SDA) on 03 9425 0015, email [info@sportsdietitians.com](mailto:info@sportsdietitians.com) or visit [www.sportsdietitians.com.au](http://www.sportsdietitians.com.au)

Sports Dietitians Australia have produced numerous sports nutrition resources such as a series of Fact Sheets and Consensus Statements. You can access these and other information, on the Sports Dietitians Australia website.

The Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing produces Guidelines to Healthy Eating for the general community and special populations, such as adults. You can download publications from [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

### Further reading

Sports Nutrition Fact Sheets available at [www.sportsdietitians.com.au](http://www.sportsdietitians.com.au)

Guidelines for Healthy Eating available at [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

## ABOUT SWIMMING

Swimmers typically train 2 times per day, including a morning and afternoon session, spending up to six hours per day. Each session can range from 2-10km depending on the phase of training. Swimming is a highly anaerobic sport, with aerobic metabolism increasing with race distance. Races can last between 20 seconds to 15 minutes. Many swimmers are required to race 2 or more times in one day

## TRAINING DIET

A high energy, high carbohydrate diet is required for swimmers to support the high-energy demands of training. As swimmers are usually training twice per day, high carbohydrate snacks and drinks are essential to aid recovery. Swimmers with high-energy requirements need to increase the number of snacks during the day and make use of energy dense foods.

## FLUID NEEDS

- Most swimmers require at least 2-3 litres per day. On hot days, sweat losses can be significant, especially when training in the sun.
- Swimmers can assess how much fluid they lose during a training session by weighing themselves pre and post training. For each kilogram lost, one and a half litre of fluid needs to be replaced.
- Sports drinks are suitable fluids during long training sessions as they contain carbohydrates and electrolytes along with fluid.
- Warning signs of dehydration include dizziness and light-headedness, muscle cramps, nausea, headaches, dark urine, dry mouth and feeling of extreme heat.

## WHAT SHOULD I EAT PRE-EVENT?

1. Low fat, high carbohydrate meals 2-4 hours prior to the event along with plenty of fluid.
2. A small snack such as a muesli bar, fruit or dried fruit can be eaten about an hour prior to the race.
3. Examples of pre race meals include:
  - Cereal with low fat milk and a piece of fruit
  - Pancake with syrup and a glass of juice
  - Liquid meals such as Sustagen Sport or a smoothie
  - Sandwiches with low fat fillings
  - Pasta, rice or noodle based meals.

## WHAT SHOULD I EAT/DRINK DURING COMPETITION?

Between events swimmers can refuel by including some high carbohydrate snacks and drinks.

- **Less than 30 minutes between races:** fluids, sports drinks, juices, glucose lollies, fruit
- **30-60 minutes between races:** bread with honey/jam/banana, sports bars, cereal bars or low fat muesli bars
- **1-2 hours between races:** pasta, rice or noodle based dishes with low fat sauce/toppings sandwiches or rolls
- **More than 2 hour between races:** a more substantial meal or meal replacement.

## WHAT ABOUT RECOVERY?

As swimmers are usually training twice per day, a recovery snack straight after each training is essential to help refuel the muscles for the following training session. Sports drinks, lollies, fruit, muesli bars, sandwiches and low fat muffins are all great foods for recovery and should be eaten within 30 minutes of a training session or race. Following this a more substantial meal containing both carbohydrates and protein is required.

## OTHER NUTRITION TIPS

- Before training it is suggested to eat a Breakfast bar, a piece of fruit and a glass of orange juice + a sports drink during training, then followed by breakfast (as suggested above) after the training session.
- Swimmers are often eating in the car on the way to and from training. It is important for swimmers to be organised and pack suitable foods and drinks with them for pre and post training.
- Do not rely on the foods available at the venue as they may not be appropriate for recovery.
- Many female swimmers can struggle to maintain low body fat levels. Athletes watching their body fat levels should follow a low fat diet maximise performance and promote long-term good health.
- Swimmers tapering their training before a competition may need to reduce food intake to avoid unwanted gains in body fat.
- A multivitamin/mineral supplement may be useful in hard training or when travelling to compete. If you require more information about nutrition supplements, contact a sports dietitian in your state [Find a Sports Dietitian](#).

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