



## **Breakfast ideas for young competitive swimmers**

May 11, 2016 Swim Parents

One thing swim parents soon learn to live with is higher shopping bills. Swimmers are renowned for having huge appetites. A good breakfast will set them up for the day, so what you need are a few breakfast ideas for your young swimmers.

For an athlete a nutritious start to the day is vital. It helps with energy levels, concentration, mood, strength and endurance, as well as helping prevent the temptation to eat rubbish later in the day. A good breakfast also boosts the metabolism and immune system.

### **Nutritious breakfast ideas for swimmers**

As well as being nutritious you want breakfast to be quick to prepare. Dragging your child out of bed in the early hours for training is difficult enough without complex breakfast recipes, so here are a few breakfast ideas:

- Porridge with blueberries or sliced banana (or any other fresh fruit)
- Non-sugary cereals. Look for whole wheat, and oat cereals. But, avoid anything that starts 'Choco' or 'Frosty'. They may taste good but the high sugar levels are a disaster for the metabolism. They offer immediate energy surges while promoting greater fat storage.
- Fresh fruit with natural yoghurt
- Yoghurt-based fruit smoothie (*try ½ cup 100% juice, ½ cup milk, 1 cup fruit; ½ cup yogurt*)
- Toast/ Teacake/Muffins/ Bagel. The world would be a healthier place without white flour breads. Instead go for whole wheat options if possible, such as wholemeal or granary with complex carbohydrates in them. Jam, honey and marmalade, although high in sugars, are fine in *small* amounts.
- Eggs (Poached/Scrambled/Boiled) Both eggs and beans are protein-high compliments to your toast.
- Fruits (raisins, banana, orange, apple, mango, grapefruit etc.)
- Milk

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- Fresh fruit juice. When it comes to breakfast steer clear of the high sugar fruit juices. If you like fruit juices go for 100% freshly squeezed produce. Try a 400ml protein shake (they're actually pretty tasty!) or 300ml of milk is spot on.

You may also want to consider making breakfast at the weekend and freezing ready for the week ahead. Poached egg and spinach wraps, for example, can be frozen and then heated in the microwave as a quick nutritious breakfast.

If your child finds it impossible to eat before early morning training, or is desperate for a few extra minutes in bed, try encouraging them to drink a milkshake made with milk mixed with liquidised fruit, or even just munching a banana en route to training or school is better than nothing.

The importance of eating well prior to training sessions cannot be underestimated! For some good breakfast recipe ideas check out the [BBC Good Food website here](#).

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## Healthy lunchbox ideas for young swimmers

May 10, 2016 Swim Parents

To keep coming up with healthy lunchbox ideas for kids everyday is difficult enough, but when your children are competitive swimmers you add a new dimension to the problem.

So, to help out time-stretched swim parents across England here are a few lunchbox ideas to help you keep it fresh for your young Olympians or Paralympians.

### Lunchbox ideas: neat nibbles

We know it's essential for swimmers to eat and drink something immediately after each training session. Ideally this will be in the magic 20-minute window.

But it's also important swimmers don't arrive for a training session on an empty stomach, especially after a long day at school or college. So:

Pack your kid's lunchbox with healthy nibbles or snacks

Ensuring your young swimmers always have healthy, nutritious snacks to hand throughout the day is key. It also reduces the risks of being pummelled with "Can I get a chocolate bar from the vending machine?" requests.

So, here are some nutritious options to mix into your kids lunchbox:

- Fresh fruits e.g. Bananas, grapes, apples, plums, pears, berries etc.
- Dried fruits e.g. raisins, apricots, mango
- Crackers or rice cakes with bananas and/or honey
- Mini-pancakes, fruit buns
- Cereal bars, fruit bars, sesame snaps, elevenses, fruit and fibre bars, nutri-grain bars
- Yoghurt and yoghurt drinks (Low sugar)
- Small bags of unsalted nuts e.g. peanuts, cashews, almonds etc.
- Prepared vegetable crudité's e.g. carrots, peppers, cucumber, celery etc.
- Low fat milkshakes

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- Fruit smoothie made with milk/ yoghurt
- Pint of milk and a banana
- Greek yoghurt with fruit and/or granola
- Malt loaf (with natural butter is fine but definitely not margarine)
- Fig rolls (or even figs on their own if they're feeling adventurous!)

## Three Healthy Lunchbox Ideas

So, now we have the general grazing dealt with let's have a look at how we can put them some of them together.

Here are three swimmer designed lunchbox ideas to keep your kids going through the day

1. Chicken and vegetable pasta with tomato sauce, Greek yoghurt, strawberries, cashew nuts, banana, and a fruit bun.
2. Tuna and sweetcorn salad in a wholemeal baguette, milkshake, two clementines, unsalted mixed nuts, fig roll, carrot sticks and dip.
3. Peanut butter and banana sandwiches on wholemeal, apple, raisins, yoghurt drink, chunk of cheese, small malt loaf.

For a range of general healthy lunchbox ideas for kids head over to the [Change4Life website here](#).



## Dinner ideas for young competitive swimmers

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To keep finding dinner ideas to help support young swimmers can be difficult. Also, what sort of dinner your child needs will largely depend on the time when they train.

If they get in from training late at night a huge meal close to bed time probably isn't a great idea. The key is to use your own judgment. You know your kids best.

A protein-rich meal, with some carbohydrates – such as lots of fresh vegetables and perhaps some pasta – is the best option to replace their energy stores and keep them fighting-fit!

### A few dinner ideas to try

- Chilli con carne. Beans, lean mince, and brown rice, with a good helping of salad.
- Baked potatoes (or even better, baked sweet potatoes) filled with baked beans, tuna and sweetcorn, or chicken tikka, with either a salad or some extra vegetables e.g. green beans.
- Omelette made with smoked salmon, tuna, spinach, broccoli, mushrooms, tomatoes or peppers.
- Pasta or pasta bake. Try to go easy on the pasta content, and add plenty of meat or fish, and vegetables.
- For those late finishes, sometimes just a chicken salad and a yoghurt will be enough.

Planning is the key. It's a good idea to plan main meals at the beginning of the week so know what your child will be eating. Try cooking food at the weekend and then freezing meals ready for the week.

### Talking vegetables

The best way to eat vegetables is raw before they've lost any of their nutrients from cooking. But if you're going to cook them ensure you keep the water.

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This contains all the nutrients, vitamins/antioxidants the vegetables lost in the boiling/steaming process. You can use it for stock, gravy, or anything you like!

Microwaving fresh vegetables is one of the healthiest ways to cook them and retain the maximum amounts of vitamins/antioxidants. Don't fry vegetables. There's no better way to destroy nutrients and minerals than with superheated fat that your body will struggle to digest.

For some good quick and healthy dinner ideas head over the [BBC Good Food website here](#).

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