

Hydration

There are 2 reasons to drink fluids: (1) to stay hydrated, and (2) to provide the body with fuel.

During Workout - Regardless of age or length of workout, all swimmers need fluids during practice to stay hydrated. Easily accomplished with a couple of sips from the water bottle every 15-20 minutes. As swimmers progress, workouts get longer and tougher. It's well established that exercise beyond 90 minutes benefits from a supplemental fuel source. The sports drink can provide it. But we still have hydration to think about. Drinks that are too strong, or "concentrated," can provide the fuel but also inhibit fluid absorption and often lead to cramping.

After Workout – Water is an excellent choice to replenish fluids after practice. It's always wise to drink at least one cup. But after a tough workout, replenishing fuel stores is equally important. Competitive swimmers need a little over 1 gram of carbohydrate for every kilogram they weigh (lbs/2.2) each hour after workout. And they need it within the first hour.

During the Day – Staying hydrated during the day is just as critical as hydrating during and after workouts. Most swimmers can do this by incorporating a variety of fluids into their daily diet. Water, fruit juice, milk, soups, etc, etc. Water is always an excellent choice, but other drinks, including sports drinks (defined as 6-8% carbohydrate by weight) are okay too.

