

SECTION 5

Protein check

Although young swimmers have elevated protein requirements compared to non-active people this increase is usually covered by a swimmer's normal food intake (partly due to the fact they eat more food / day!). Provided that a swimmer is eating a well-balanced and varied diet that covers his/her energy requirements then he/she will usually be consuming adequate amounts of protein.

Studies have shown that athletes may require between 1.5-2.0g protein per kg.

Loading up with more protein than this has NOT been scientifically proven to be necessary or beneficial. Even during hard training and/or heavy gym work consuming in excess of the recommendations will not accelerate muscle growth or speed up recovery. Loading up with amino acid supplements or protein drinks is expensive and usually unnecessary.

Work out your protein requirements using the calculation above and check the table below to reassure yourself that protein intake is sufficient. Remember that many of the carbohydrate rich foods also contain some protein (e.g. bread/pasta/rice/milk/noodles/yogurt/peas/beans/lentils etc). Vegetarians should not usually have problems achieving this goal either provided that the meat/fish in a meal is replaced with an alternative such as beans/ lentils/nuts/cheese/eggs/tofu/Quorn etc.

PROTEIN IN FOODS:

CEREALS/GRAINS	PROTEIN (g)
Bread x 3 slices	9g
Medium bowl breakfast cereal	7g
Medium bowl porridge	5g
Large plate (100g dry weight) pasta	12g
Large plate (100g dry weight) rice	7g
Pizza per slice (150g)	14g
MEAT/FISH	
Chicken (per 200g breast)	50g
Beef (per 4 slices)	35g
Minced beef (per 2 serving spoons)	20g
Tuna per tin (200g)	30g
Cod-per fillet (200g)	40g
Prawns (x 4 tablespoons)	20g

DAIRY AND EGGS	
Per egg	7g
Milk (0.5 pint semi-skimmed)	9g
Cheddar (per small cube of 30g)	9g
Cottage cheese (per half a tub)	14g
Yogurt (per 150g pot)	6g
FRUIT/VEG/PULSES	
Bananas/oranges (per piece)	1g
Apples/raisins	0.5g
Large jacket potato x 1	8g
Peas x 4 tablespoons	6g
Baked beans per half tin (200g)	10g
Sweetcorn per half tin (160g)	5g
Kidney beans per half tin (200g)	15g
OTHER	
Nuts per tablespoon	6g
Tofu (per 100g)	8g
Quorn (per 100g)	14g
Butter/margarine	0
Crisps per packet	2g
Chocolate per bar	4g
'Cola'/fizzy soft drinks	0

Follow the guidelines below to check that protein intake is varied and adequate.

- ✓ Eat some lean meat or fish with your main meal (or a vegetarian alternative such as eggs/beans/ tofu/nuts etc) each day.
- ✓ Have a bowl of cereal/porridge and milk for breakfast or a snack each day.
- ✓ Eat 2 other portions of dairy produce each day (some cheese/a yogurt/milk drink).
- ✓ Choose high carbohydrate foods such as bread/pasta/rice/lentils/beans/cereals/corn. These also contain a reasonable source of protein as well. Notice that high carbohydrate foods such as chocolate/sweets/sweetened fizzy drinks/biscuits/cakes/crisps (List 2 carbohydrate rich foods) are not such good sources of protein.
- ✓ Always choose a post-training snack that contains protein as well as carbohydrate. This will optimize recovery from training.
- ✓ Spread your protein intake out over the day by including a protein rich food with each meal.
- ✓ Studies have shown that eating protein right before bedtime might improve the recovery of the muscles while we sleep. So a glass of milk/milky drink before bed may be of benefit.

- ✓ Drink milk/milky drinks and/or home-made milkshakes. These are nutrient-rich.
- ✓ Only use protein based, commercial sports supplements when you have checked with your nutritionist and coach that you need them. You may not need them!

NOTES :