

Welcome to the first Swim Ireland parent's bulletin.

At National Team Day 2017, Swim Ireland's Performance Pathway Manager held a Parents Forum for parents of athletes on National Teams last year. During this forum, the parents noted a number of areas that they felt they would like more information and assistance/education in. As a result of this, we have put together the Bulletin below.

We hope you enjoy reading. If there are any topics that you would like included or if you would like to be added to the email distribution list of this bulletin, please contact Niamh McDonnell at [performance@swimireland.ie](mailto:performance@swimireland.ie)

## Tips on Nutrition

*"Proper nutrition is the key to unlock your bodies potential."* (Brian Holifield)

Life in swimming revolves round recovery from multiple sessions across the week and also the day. Good nutrition helps growth and repair, reduces the risk of illness and injury and optimizes performance in the pool. Eat a healthy balanced diet with plenty of fruit and vegetables and limit high fat/sugary foods. Fuel sessions with carbohydrates and include a carbohydrate/protein recovery option to refuel and repair the body after training.



Example Athlete's Plate for moderate training.  
The distribution will vary during hard and easy training periods

Processed cereal bars are a go to for athletes in need of a quick energy fix but they can be very high in sugar and do not contain any protein. Be aware of buying supermarket protein bars as they will not be batch tested. Give some of these recipes a try and experiment with ingredients:

- <http://www.jamieoliver.com/recipes/uncategorised-recipes/granola-bars/>
- <http://minimalistbaker.com/healthy-5-ingredient-granola-bars/>
- <http://www.thekitchn.com/recipe-4-ingredient-banana-oat-bars-snack-recipes-from-the-kitchn-156571>
- <https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/2407637/energy-bites>
- <http://minimalistbaker.com/5-ingredient-peanut-butter-cup-energy-bites/>

## Managing your own emotions when it comes to your child's success and disappointments

*"If you look at any superior athlete, you will find a strong parental influence. Parents introduce their children to a sport, and then they support them."* (Ivan Lendl)

It's not easy being the parent of an athlete. You have invested just as much in the process as they have however there are some things to consider if you find yourself outwardly displaying a lot of emotion when it comes to their performance. Young athletes who say they feel high levels of anxiety, pressure and stress report higher levels of drop out. Research (and real life) shows that when parents react with emotional intensity and react harshly, that their children's distress levels tend to escalate, and the problem doesn't get resolved.



Here are our 5 top tips for managing your own emotions:

1. **Perspective** – Challenge whether this is really worth getting annoyed about. Is this your goal or theirs? There are many reasons for under performance so understand these to enable you to provide the right support to help your child. Experiencing disappointment is character building and is healthy for children in order to build both their resilience and coping ability.
2. **Language** – It's not just your words which can inspire or do damage. Your body language and tone impact 93% of the message so practice controlling this and be aware of how this comes across. Minimise criticism and try to offer understanding and encouragement.
3. **Composure** – take time out before you react and be conscious about what you say to your child. Instant reaction is highly emotional whereas it's better to be controlled particularly in negative situations so you can get a meaningful message across.
4. **Emotional control** – Understand why you are feeling a certain way towards your child's performance. Is it due to the child's lack of effort or is it perhaps them not achieving the desired outcome? Focus on the process rather than the outcome as this is key to long term success.
5. **Breathe** – You may end up feeling as anxious or aroused as your child so take a few deep breaths (count in for 3 seconds and out for 3 seconds) as this is an easy way to regulate the heart beat which helps manage your emotional control.

Consider the example you are setting. Is it building the child to be resilient, reflective, confident and respectful? All of which are all key traits of successful athletes. If not, consider taking on board 1 or 2 tips to instill helpful change. (Kelley Faye, Performance Psychologist, [www.kfperformance.com](http://www.kfperformance.com))

## Date for your Diary

25<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> July – Irish Summer Nationals will include Parent's Seminars covering the topics introduced above - Performance Nutrition and Psychology for Parents.

Stay in touch and let us know what you think...

