



Surf Life Saving

About Surf Life Saving

Surf life savers are specially trained volunteers who patrol Australian beaches to ensure a safe beach environment for the whole community. Surf Life Saving Australia has more than 113,000 members, of all ages, in 304 surf life saving clubs around the Australian coastline. Surf sports are an opportunity for surf life savers to engage in regular competition to fine tune their skills and fitness. Surf sports events are many and varied with some events lasting a few seconds and other events lasting over an hour. Physiological demands therefore vary considerably depending on the event. In addition, activities involved in surf life saving competitions include running, swimming, surf boat rowing and paddling on a board and on a surf ski.



Training Diet

Training diets can vary considerably due to the different types of training undertaken for the many different events. However, a diet high in carbohydrate, moderate in protein and low in fat is ideal for a surf life saver. Including plenty of whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, legumes, low fat dairy products and lean meat, fish or poultry will ensure the athlete gets sufficient nutrients.

Fluid Needs

Fluid requirements during surf carnivals are typically quite high because events are usually held in summer and athletes are often required to compete several times throughout the day. Fluid losses due to sweating can be considerable under these conditions. A good strategy to ensure fluids are replaced during competition is to develop a re hydration plan. This involves writing out a schedule of possible races for the day; identifying opportunities for fluid intake during the day and ensuring a supply of cool, pleasant tasting drinks is conveniently available at these times. Try to carry at least one drink bottle with you at all times and make plans to refill this regularly. Race times may vary during the day due to factors out of your control, so don't be afraid to ask parents or friends to bring you a drink bottle if they spot you hanging around without a drink! Drinks such as water, sports drinks, juice and cordial are all good fluid replacement options between races. Frozen poppers and drink bottles in an esky or lunch box are a great way to keep other food and drinks cool throughout the day. The frozen drinks then become a great, ice-cool drink when defrosted later in the day.



What Should I Eat Pre-Event?

Surf carnivals usually involve a full day of competition and can start as early as 7am. It is important to start the day well hydrated and with muscle glycogen levels topped up. A reduction in training volume and intensity plus a high carbohydrate diet (approx. 7-10g/kg body weight) in the 2-3 days before competition will ensure muscle glycogen stores are high leading in to the carnival. A high carbohydrate breakfast will keep these stores topped up on race day. Good options include – cereal, toast with jam or honey, raisin toast, pancakes, crumpets, fresh or tinned fruit, spaghetti on toast. Monitoring your urine colour in the 24 hours is a good way to ensure you are well hydrated. Your urine should be clear or pale yellow on race morning. It is a good idea to consume 300-500ml of fluid before arriving at the carnival. Drinks such as water, sports drinks, juice or cordial are all good options.

What Should I Eat/Drink During Competition?

Surf life saving competitions typically require athletes to compete several times in a single day. Replacement of fuel and fluid is very important between events at a surf carnival. As carbohydrate is the preferred muscle fuel during high intensity exercise, foods rich in carbohydrate should be consumed between races. Foods that are convenient, portable and not too filling are ideal during competition. Good examples are – fruit, muesli bars, sports bars, dried fruit, crispbread, crackers, jam or honey sandwiches, low-fat fruit yoghurt and fruit buns. A great idea is to set up an esky that contains plenty of these foods and a selection of the drinks described in the fluid needs section. Ensure the esky is in a convenient and secure location and you will have ready access to fuels and fluid to speed recovery between races.

What About Recovery?

Recovery after training and competition can be accelerated by consuming carbohydrate to replace muscle glycogen stores; consuming protein to speed up muscle repair and regeneration; and consuming fluid to replace sweat losses. Ideally a recovery snack should be consumed within 30 minutes after finishing training or competition and again every hour until normal meal patterns resume. Recovery foods are particularly important after a day of competition during surf carnivals that last a whole weekend. Examples of recovery snacks that include carbohydrate, protein and fluid are –

- Low fat yoghurt and 600ml sports drink
- Sports bar and 600ml cordial
- Ham sandwich and 600ml soft drink
- 600ml reduced fat flavoured milk



Other Nutrition Tips

Alcohol is usually available after surf carnivals and is often readily consumed after competition. Alcohol has the potential to significantly hamper recovery from exercise and it is usually not recommended. However, one or two drinks after competition are not likely to impact too much on recovery as long as sufficient food and non-alcoholic beverages are consumed prior to taking in alcohol.

How to get involved

Surf life saving is a fun and rewarding activity that provides a valuable service to the Australian community. If you would like to become part of the surf life saving movement visit:

<http://www.slsa.com.au/>

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