

JANUARY 2022 | ISSUE 01

The World Swimming Coaches Association

The Official e-Newsletter of WSCA



IN THIS ISSUE

- How to Eat for Immune Support During Covid 19 by Truesport.org
- How To Find The Right Strength Coach For Your Team by Deniz Hekmati
- Fit kids, fat vocabularies by Andrea Boyle Tippett
Photo by Sarah Goldfarb

**“YOU MUST DO THE THING
YOU THINK YOU CANNOT DO”**

- ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

JOIN US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

 <https://www.wscacoach.org/>

 <https://www.facebook.com/wscacoach>

 <https://twitter.com/WSCAcoach>

 <https://www.linkedin.com/company/world-swimming-coaches-association>



SIGN UP FOR OUR CLINIC WITH COACH DON HEIDARY!

*Developing Character as the Engine of
Your Program, from age group to elite.
Building Leaders and Success*

ON FEBRUARY 22, 2022 AT 12PM CST


**\$20 Registration Fee
FREE for PRO Members**



JOIN US!



**PICK THE
BRAINS OF AN
OLYMPIC MEDAL
WINNING
COACH - A Q&A
WITH DR. JON
RUDD**



*A great opportunity to have your
questions answered directly by our
guest speaker.*

**JANUARY 27, 2022
ZOOM MEETING
15:00 GMT, 9 AM CST**

\$20 Registration Fee
FREE for PRO members



How to Eat for Immune Support During Covid 19

by Truesport.org

https://truesport.org/nutrition/eat-immune-support-covid-19/?utm_source=TrueSport+eNewsletter&utm_campaign=17af8d9544-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_01_09_10_13_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_978107bdf8-17af8d9544-77363893



Nervous about your young athlete's immune system as cold and flu season continues and COVID-19 is still a part of everyday life? You're not alone. But luckily, there are some easy ways to boost your child's immune health without turning to supplements or pills: Food can be a powerful tool in your efforts to keep your child healthy this year.

Here, TrueSport Expert Kristen Ziesmer, a registered dietitian and board-certified specialist in sports dietetics, shares her best tips for boosting immunity in the kitchen.

Educate your athlete

Ziesmer believes that when kids are educated about nutrition, it's easier to encourage healthy eating. "I like to explain to kids how digestion works: when you eat something, it travels through your body and it gets absorbed into your whole system, so if you're eating a bunch of junk food, that's what is absorbed into your system, and you won't perform your best." She recommends watching an explanatory video or two about the digestive system with your kids to help get them on board with improving their diets.

Improve the microbiome

Research has shown that immunity is linked to good gut health, which means a healthy gut microbiome. That's right, not all bacteria are bad—and having a healthy balance in the gut can go along way towards keeping your child healthy.

"There's no one magic food, but you can start improving immunity by having a healthy gut microbiome," Ziesmer says. "The bacteria in your gut affects so many different things in your body, and about 70 percent of your immune system is found in your digestive tract. We want to populate our gut with good bacteria, which comes from fermented foods. Eating those foods will raise the level of healthy bacteria in your stomach, which will boost your immune system."

Ziesmer recommends gut-bacteria-boosting foods that are rich in probiotics, including sauerkraut, kimchi, kombucha, and kefir.

Eat the rainbow—especially greens

"Eating a generally healthy diet with lots of fruits and vegetables will provide vitamin C, vitamin E, and different antioxidants," Ziesmer says. So, make sure that most meals are colorful, with a wide variety of vegetables, whole grains, and clean protein sources. Green vegetables in particular have been shown to potentially boost immunity, and of course, are part of any healthy diet.

Sneak in greens whenever possible, whether it's a handful of spinach in a smoothie, broccoli in a stirfry, or a little extra arugula on your athlete's sandwich.



Add more fiber

Certain fibers—including those found in apples, oats, and nuts—have been shown to strengthen the immune system while decreasing inflammation. Meaning that yes, an apple a day may keep the doctor away! "Naturally occurring fiber found in fruit and vegetables also helps populate your gut with healthy bacteria," Ziesmer adds. "Probiotics are the healthy bacteria, but prebiotics are the fibers from foods that the healthy bacteria eat. Apples, bananas, asparagus, oats, and Jerusalem artichokes are great prebiotic sources."

Watch out for fast food

Fatty foods, primarily those that are deep-fried and high in sodium as well as fat, have been linked to worse immune health, so it's critical to keep the overall food quality of your athlete's diet high. The occasional trip to a fast-food spot won't destroy your child's immunity, but it's important to make a high-quality diet a priority.

"If your athlete is eating a lot of junk food, that's obviously going to make the bacteria in the stomach more toxic rather than increasing the good bacteria," says Ziesmer. "When eating out, you're going to be consuming a lot more saturated fat, salt, preservatives, and additives, all of which can raise the level of inflammation within the body and counteract the effects of having the healthy bacteria in your stomach."

Even picky eaters need to eat right



It's tough to push a plate of vegetables on a picky eater, but it's critical for their health. Ziesmer recommends starting off by just putting certain vegetables on their plate at dinner. "Some kids have to be exposed to new foods 20 times before they will even try them," she says.

You can also increase buy-in by having kids help pick new recipes, grocery shop, and food prep. And when all else fails, Ziesmer says to disguise foods, adding spinach to smoothies or wrapping asparagus in prosciutto. Or she recommends the classic banana, which is packed with fiber and other vital nutrients. "Most kids like bananas," she says. "Put one in the freezer and it's just like ice cream!"

Takeaway

Food can be one of the many tools you use to help keep your young athletes healthy, and it doesn't have to be hard with these basic tips on eating for immune health.

HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT STRENGTH COACH FOR YOUR TEAM

by Deniz Hekmati

The Power of a Mentor

"The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image but giving them the opportunity to create themselves."

—Steven Spielberg

A seasoned strength coach relishes each day his athletes excel. He takes pride in his craft. He finds tremendous joy in passing on knowledge and helping athletes get faster, higher, and farther. As athletes grow and evolve, so does the relationship with the coach. The mere act of coaching gradually turns into a mentorship.



What to Look for in a Strength Coach

Good coaches are hard to come by. Great coaching allies -- even harder. Particularly today, now that the globe has become your marketplace. Evolving swimming teams and coaches are continuing looking for solutions in their current strength- and dryland training programs. Understand that each team will face different constraints in regards to available equipment or growing group sizes. Here's my advice on what to look for in a coach. I also discuss this on [my podcast](#) as well as in my [free resources](#).

1. **They Should Be Strong Communicators.** Communication lies at the heart of all coaching. A good coach may not be a debate team champion, but he must know how to convey knowledge, relate to athletes, and establish a bond of trust.
2. **They Should Have a Profound Love of Learning.** A great coach is endlessly curious. She is curious about her athletes, her sport, her rivals. She knows how to cut through dense information to find and connect disparate ideas. And she knows how to awaken the same sense of curiosity and awe in her athletes.

3. **They Should NOT Spoon-Feed You.** Commitment has little to do with convenience. As I [write in my book](#): there are no shortcuts on the path to greatness. It takes work and persistence, and a great coach will not shield you from that reality. He will, however, constantly remind you: everything's possible.
4. **They Should Lead by Example.** This holds true for both successes and failures. No coach is perfect. They, too, have endured years of trial and error to refine their skills. Training, like most else in life, is a continuous process that requires constant work. A great coach will lead you both in that, and also decorum and etiquette.
5. **They Should Acknowledge Their Limits.** Every good coach has a tireless desire to help. This is a blessing and a curse. Empathy can sometimes push coaches beyond the scope of their expertise. It might seem counterintuitive, but a great coach will not shy away from acknowledging their limits.
6. **They, Too, Should Have an Advisor.** Even the most seasoned veterans need someone -- a coach, an advisor, a peer -- to use as a sounding board. Continuous development is key. While less experienced coaches might be surprised by seemingly random obstacles, veterans will recognize their inevitability and not hesitate to seek guidance.
7. **They Should be Great Listeners.** Leading without listening is impossible. A great coach understands that wisdom is the reward you get from knowing when to keep your mouth shut. (This also applies to the athlete.)
8. **They Should Understand, Teach and Encourage Patience.** To coach is in large parts an exercise of patience, because learning is a continuous journey with no shortcuts. The best coaches learn to love this process and understand that their mastery of patience and handling emotions directly correlate to their leadership abilities. When frustration runs high among athletes, coaches must remain firm. There are no shortcuts in sports.
9. **They Don't Try to Please Everyone.** Beware of the consummate people pleaser. They may mean well, but generally have not yet attained the courage to stand up for something. Not everyone can be perennially pleased. A coach will be open and attentive to input, but also have the ability to stick with decisions.
10. **They Have a Sense of Humor.** A great sense of humor is the highest form of intelligence one can possess. Negativity abounds in the world. Being a cynic requires little effort. A good coach knows that an upbeat demeanor does not collide with a devotion to the sport. He takes the sport and his craft seriously, not himself.

Getting Started

Once you have identified a potential coach, it is time to reach out. Few pay enough attention to first go through the list above. Be different -- and it'll benefit everyone.

Keep the outreach simple and open-minded. Focus on building trust and respect the relationship-building process. All good things take time.

Do your research. Many coaches have produced an abundance of work and a digital track record -- be it videos, podcasts, documents or even books. Do your homework before reaching out. It'll help you weed out bad fits, pique your interest in others, and save everyone time.

Be clear about the guidance you're seeking. Understand precisely what you are looking for -- and learn to articulate it. One helpful exercise: grab a pen and paper and try to explain the type of guidance you are seeking in one paragraph, one sentence, and one word, respectively. Following this "1-1-1 approach" will help you distill your goals.

Choose the appropriate medium. The more traditional routes -- an email, a phone call or filling out a form on the person's website -- usually are the best to take. Messages on social media can be hit-or-miss.

Be sure you have spelled their name correctly. They say that every person's favorite word is their own name. Lay a foundation of respect by taking the time to research the person's name -- and get it right.

Respect their time. Everyone's busy in today's hyper-connected world. Many coaches run a lean operation without teams that help manage administrative tasks. Be prepared; be precise; be direct; and feel free to note which aspects of their work has interested you most, and why.

Affirm your commitment. How can you show your prospective performance coach that you have what it takes to do the work and take full advantage of their guidance? Take some time to think about what you can say or do to distinguish yourself.

Final Thoughts and Future Direction

Coaching is a two-way street. The relationship is built from both ends. And nobody can do the work for you.

Swimming coaches are notorious for doing "all of the work." From the detailed sets in the pool, to carefully calculated weekly yardage and administrative work. The swimming coach also finds themselves programming all of the dryland. On top of that, strength training will continue to carry a certain stigma for many swimming coaches.

Having a good coach is great; but having several can be very beneficial over the long-term. Be open to working with people of varying ages, backgrounds and experiences, to broaden your horizons and become an even more well-rounded swimming team.

Our [Swimmer Strength Virtual Coaching Program](#) is personalized to meet your team's needs and goals. We have worked with hundreds of swimmers and club teams in more than 10 countries. Check out our [podcast](#), and spread the word!

Yours Truly,
Coach Deniz Hekmati, MS

Logos and links to:

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/swimmerstrength>

YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/c/SwimmerStrength1>

LinkedIn

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/swimmerstrength/>

Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/swimmerstrength/>

Fit kids, fat vocabularies

by Andrea Boyle Tippet

Photo by Sarah Goldfarb

<https://www.udel.edu/udaily/2021/july/swimming-vocabulary-growth-study/>



Swimming a few laps likely won't turn your child into the next Katie Ledecky or Michael Phelps, but it just might help them become the next J.K. Rowling or Stephen King.

A [recent study](#) by University of Delaware researchers suggests exercise can boost kids' vocabulary growth. The article, published in the *Journal of Speech Language and Hearing Research*, details one of the first studies on the effect of exercise on vocabulary learning in children.

Children ages 6 to 12 were taught new words before doing one of three things — swimming, taking part in CrossFit exercises or completing a coloring sheet. The children who swam were 13% more accurate in follow up tests of the vocabulary words.

It makes sense to the lead researcher, Maddy Pruitt, herself a former college swimmer who now regularly takes CrossFit classes. “Motor movement helps in encoding new words,” she said, explaining that exercise is known to increase levels of brain-derived neurotrophic factor, a protein Pruitt describes as the “Miracle-Gro of the brain.”

Why then, did swimming make a difference while CrossFit did not? Pruitt attributes it to the amount of energy each exercise demands of the brain. Swimming is an activity the kids could complete without much thought or instruction. It was more automatic, while the CrossFit exercises were new to them. The children needed to learn the moves, which required mental energy.

Pruitt conducted the research as part of her Master's Degree Capstone Project and graduated in 2020. She now works as a speech language pathologist at an elementary school in South Carolina, where she puts her findings into practice.

"My sessions are very rarely at a table," she said. "I'll take my kids out to the playground or we'll take a walk around the school."

Pruitt's adviser and coauthor Giovanna Morini is building on the findings in her lab. Morini, an assistant professor in the Department of [Communication Sciences and Disorders](#), said most research into exercise examines it from the angle of a healthy lifestyle, not much enters the domain of language acquisition. She said she sees this as a rich line of inquiry and has another student running a similar experiment now with toddlers.

"We were so excited about this study because it applies to clinicians, caregivers and educators who can put it into practice," Morini said. "It's simple stuff, nothing out of the ordinary. But it could really help boost the outcomes."