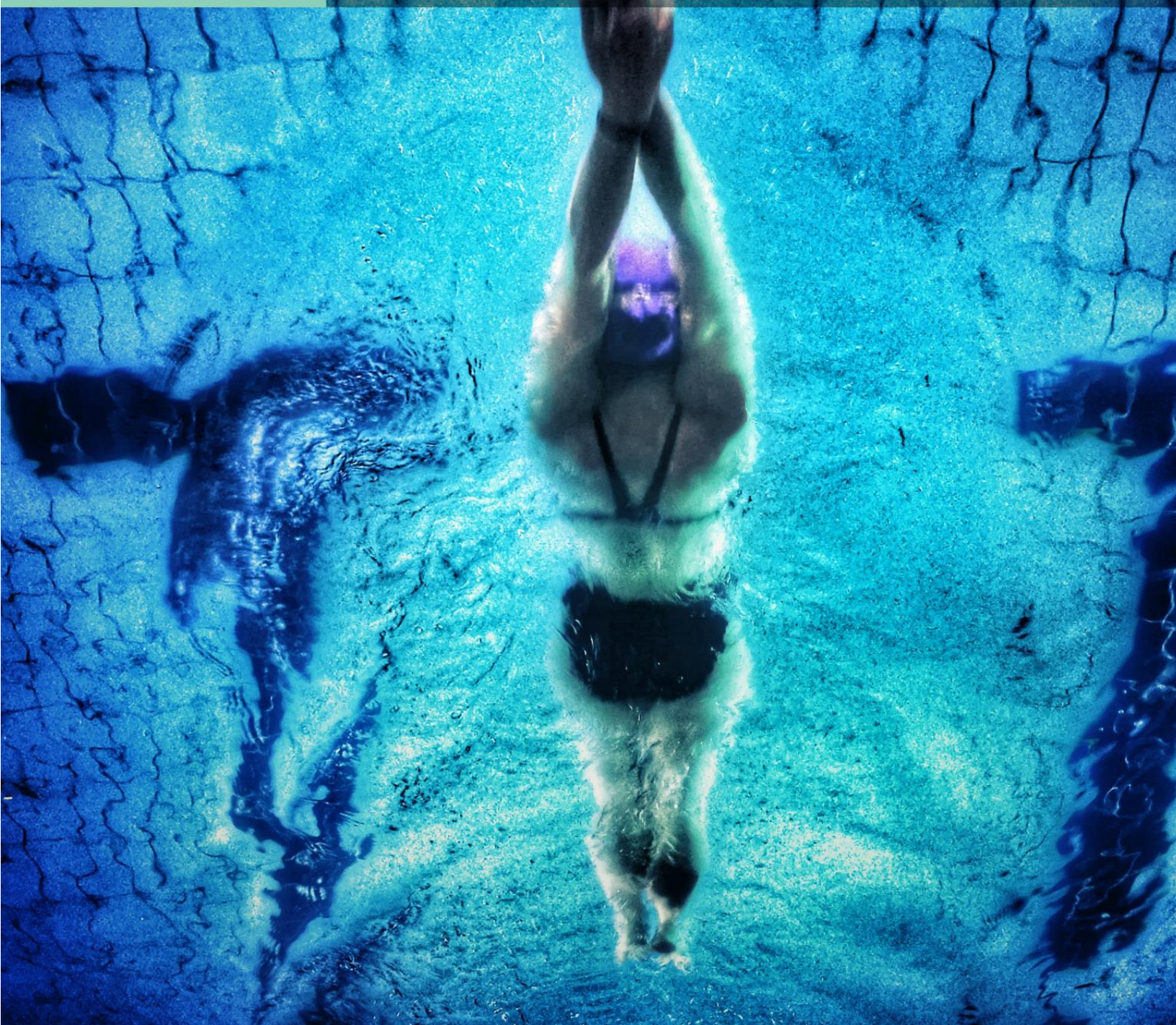


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CLEAN EATING HACKS FOR SWIMMERS



WELCOME

Our grocery stores and fueling stations at the pool are filled with endless options when it comes to food.

If you want your meal or post-workout 30-minute magic window food to be quick, easy, already cooked, or even frozen for later - there's something on the shelves for you.

Our food has gotten so commercialized and processed with the emphasis on nutrition and quality thrown out the window. We are constantly barraged with tasty-looking advertisements claiming to be "healthy" and geared towards athletes. Most of us don't even know what's in the food we see, we just trust that it's "healthy" for us.

This has created a growing number of swimmers complaining of stomach and gut disruption, fatigue, skin irritations, mental health concerns, painful and disrupted menstrual cycles in women, and major recovery problems. Athletes are desperately trying to figure out what they are doing wrong... and how they can recover and eat better.

But, when searching for answers, they are usually handed a prescription and told to move on. It is so sad to see when so many problems are simply what they are putting into their bodies.

Eating healthy feels complicated, and labels are confusing... you barely have time to eat, let alone spend extra time with complicated recipes, right?

Let me tell you something ... Clean eating isn't a new concept or a novel idea. In fact, man was doing it long before grocery stores even existed.

And it's definitely not complicated either- really, it's just about getting back to the basics.

In this guide, I will open the world of clean eating and give you five surprisingly simple hacks to get started clean eating without thinking too hard about what you are eating.

If you are in the "clean eating is hard" crowd, but want to make changes for your health, this guide will show you exactly how to do that, without any complicated steps, directions, or expensive ingredients.

LIVING IN A TOXIC WORLD

One of the things that surprises so many athletes exploring clean eating and what it means to “eat clean” is the number of toxins that are not only in our food but in our environment.

- Pesticides are used on our produce that causes inflammation and a host of other illnesses.
- Chemicals in our cleaning and personal products disrupt our immune system and hormones.
- Chlorine in the water we swim in each day can disrupt the thyroid and brain.
- Even chemicals are leached out of and absorbed into our bodies through the food containers we use to store food.

These toxins build up in our body and clog up the function of the brain, our organs, and even our skin. Even more important, if you have MTHFR C677T or A1298C gene variants, limiting exposure to toxins is not only important, but essential for optimal health.

This isn't to frighten you, although the idea is frightening.

Instead, it is meant to show you that there is more than likely an answer to your mysterious chronic fatigue, digestive issues, poor performance, or brain fog.

Knowledge is power, and understanding the world around us and what we encounter allows us to make better choices for ourselves.

While we can't completely eliminate toxins from our lives, we can control and manage a good amount of what we are exposed to daily.

That is where clean eating comes in.

WHAT IS CLEAN EATING FOR SWIMMERS?

When you are used to buying your food in boxes and bags, the idea of “eating clean” can sound foreign and a little too far out of your league.

Not to mention we live in a world of fad diets that try to restrict and control everything we eat.

Is clean eating the same as a fad diet?

No, not at all.

To put it simply, clean eating is simply filling your diet with whole and natural foods.

If anything, it is a lifestyle that promotes vitality and uses the natural gifts of nature to nurture and sustain us.

The recipes can be as simple or as complicated as you want to make them, but **everything comes down to this:**

- Fruits and veggies
- Whole grains
- Clean meats and proteins
- Simple ingredients that don't have long labels or difficult names.

The biggest challenge comes in the shift from eating foods that are partially (or fully) prepared, to recipes with natural ingredients.

That usually sends athletes into the drive-thru lane starving or wasting a ton of money on food they can't or won't eat.

Let me share a few hacks to make it easy.

THE 5 HACKS FOR CLEAN EATING FOR SWIMMERS

When I first started cleaning up my diet, I was just as overwhelmed as you might be right now, and there were several times I stared with a blank face at the grocery aisles wondering what to get.

These little tips and hacks are the biggest game-changers that made eating clean easier to adjust to and maintain over the years.

Remember, it's not so much eliminating food or restricting yourself- it is switching to more nutritious and natural ways of eating.

DITCH OMEGA-6 OILS

This might not seem like an obvious starting point, but when pretty much everything you see in a package is processed with omega-6 oils - this can be like asking you to just stop eating altogether.

Omega-6 oils convert to trans fat when slightly heated. You will find many foods, even some that you wouldn't suspect, have these oils in the ingredient list on the package. These oils include canola oil, vegetable oil, corn oil, palm oil, cottonseed oil, safflower oil, and sunflower oil. These cause major disruption to the digestive system and create unnecessary inflammation in the body.

As an athlete, you already have enough inflammation and soreness, there's no need to ingest foods that create additional inflammation.

Ditching omega-6 oils does not have to be that dramatic or frightening, and I promise you won't starve.

Here are a couple of tips to make it easy:

- **Shop around the aisles.** Fresh foods and less processed foods are generally refrigerated or kept in more open space so stick to the produce, and edges of the store as much as possible.
- **Single ingredient foods are safest.** If you have the option to grab post-workout snacks from a fueling station, stick with items in the refrigerator or single ingredient foods like banana, apple, pear, natural nut butter, and nuts.
- **If you can't say it, skip it.** Items with long labels and ingredient lists with complicated things in them are more than likely going to be contaminated with omega-6 oils.
- **Learn how to read labels.** To make sure you know what you are buying, and what is in it, learning a little bit about food labels, and what they mean will clear a lot of confusion.
- **Rely on brands you can trust.** Finding brands that don't use omega-6 oils can be tricky and frustrating. Once you find a brand, stick with it and experiment with the other products they offer.
- **Stick with omega-3 oils.** These reduce inflammation and are often referred to as "good fat." Olive oil, avocado oil, and coconut oil are all great oils to find in your foods.

My favorite omega-6 oil free brands you'll love:

- [Siete Foods](#)
- [HU Kitchen](#)
- [Primal Kitchen](#)
- [RX Brand](#)

If these brands are completely foreign to you, don't worry. It took me time to discover these tasty and clean brands. You'll probably find even more brands you love as you continue to read labels.

CLEAN 15 AND DIRTY DOZEN LIST

The EWG (Environmental Working Group) does a study every year on the fruits and vegetables that tend to have the most and the least exposure to pesticides that leave residue (and end up in our stomach).

This is probably one of my favorite hacks because it is literally a list you can keep with you when trying to decide what to spend a little more for organic might be.

Anything on the Dirty Dozen, buy organic when possible. The Clean 15, all of these are safe to buy non-organic and carry the least amount of pesticide residue.

Here is the 2021 list from the EWG:

CLEAN 15	DIRTY DOZEN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Avocados ● Sweet corn ● Pineapple ● Onions ● Papaya ● Sweet peas (frozen) ● Eggplant ● Asparagus ● Broccoli ● Cabbage ● Kiwi ● Cauliflower ● Mushrooms ● Honeydew melon ● Cantaloupe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strawberries ● Spinach ● Kale, collard greens, and mustard greens ● Nectarines ● Apples ● Grapes ● Cherries ● Peaches ● Pears ● Bell and hot peppers ● Celery ● Tomatoes

<https://www.ewg.org/foodnews/>

DITCH THE PLASTIC

One place that no one expects to find chemicals that cause health issues is in the packages that our food and water come in, and what we store and eat out of.

Plastics contain a chemical called BPA that can leach out of the plastic and into whatever is in them.

BPA can cause cancer, tumors, chronic inflammation, and even genetic issues.

Switching to ceramic, glass, or stainless-steel containers is more than just a healthy switch - your food will taste better and store better too.

My favorite non-plastic storage container brands you'll love:

- [Stasher Bags](#)
- [Ikea Glass Food Storage](#)

DITCH THE SUGAR

Sugar is an important part of our body's functioning; it helps regulate a lot of functions in the body.

The problem is, most of the sugar we eat these days is overly processed, bleached.

Sugar is also addictive, meaning your body will crave it, and you will have symptoms when reducing it- so of course, it is added into everything from apple sauce to even cheeses.

That also means we get way too much sugar daily.

My best hacks to cut down on sugar is to:

- Use sugar (carbs) along with protein post-workout to help replace glycogen stores, repair muscle damage, and reduce inflammation.
- Use alternative natural sweeteners like honey and maple syrup
- Stick with natural sugars in fruits and vegetables.

REDUCE THE GLUTEN

Gluten is a protein that is generally found in certain grains like wheat, barley, and rye. It is also found hidden in tons of different foods under different names.

It is one of the top allergens that go completely unnoticed by people when looking for answers to things like:

- Chronic fatigue
- Digestive issues
- Allergic reactions
- Inflammation
- Poor Recovery

Many athletes I work with suspect they have a gluten allergy, however, what really is the problem are the MTHFR gene variants they discover that they have that don't allow their bodies to methylate folic acid - found in many flour-based processed products.

Folic acid can cause major recovery issues and digestive disruption to an athlete with MTHFR gene variants. By reducing the gluten, exposure to folic acid is reduced.

I have worked with so many athletes that feel major differences in their recovery and energy within weeks of reducing gluten in their diets.

BONUS HACK LIVING CLEAN

These hacks and tips are great to get you started with cleaner eating, but I know you couldn't have missed my earlier comment about toxins in other things we are exposed to that wreak havoc on athletes' bodies.

Here are a few other things in your life that you might not know are exposing you to harmful chemicals:

- Cleaning products
- Makeup
- Clothing

- Shampoo / Conditioner
- Soaps
- Lotions
- Personal care and hygiene items

These items look and smell harmless, but in reality, many are packed full of chemicals that impact our bodies within seconds. Taking it another step further, athletes with MTHFR gene variants don't flush these toxins at 100%. Up to as much as 90% of these toxins/chemicals stay in the body much longer than they should and cause major disruption to energy, recovery, mental health, and overall health.

My favorite toxin reduced/free brands you'll love:

- [Beekman 1802](#)
- [Beauty Counter](#)
- [Norwex](#)
- [Brandless](#)
- [Modere](#)

We are lucky to live in a time where the clean movement is thriving and there are so many healthy revolutionaries offering clean products without chemicals. Even common brands that we typically find on the shelves are introducing products with less or no chemicals.

The food in your kitchen can even be used to replace many of your cleaning products and will look and smell better. Try white vinegar diluted with water to clean essentially anything. It's cheap and easy!

We don't have to live with toxins in our lives, and we don't have to live chronically fatigued and unable to recover.

Our bodies will naturally support us when we nourish it, clean and living eating do that.

I sincerely hope this guide has helped give you some ideas on trying clean eating for optimal performance.

LEARN HOW TO GET STARTED WITH CLEAN EATING

Hi I'm Erica,

I am a certified sport nutritionist and health coach that advocates for a simple, clean, healthy, and easy lifestyle filled with the delicious (and nutritious) ingredients brought to us by nature.

I've worked with over 20 Olympians and countless high school, club, college, and professional swimmers on determining what foods and products are best for their bodies based on genetics.

Our world may be moving forward technologically, but some of the repercussions of cutting corners, especially with our food production and consumption have left athletes desperate for help.

Most foods I see at competitions, in athlete hospitality rooms, fueling stations, and in concession stands are NOT performance foods. These foods work against you and your ability to perform and recover at your best.

If you are struggling with fatigue, exhaustion, digestive issues, and poor recovery, I encourage you to schedule a call and get to know how I can help guide you to what YOUR body needs genetically and how to put those needs into action.

When you take control of your diet and what you allow into your home and body, you create an atmosphere for your body to recover and begin to function at its best again.

I can help you get there.

[Click here](#) to schedule a free 30-minute consult where we can discuss your health history and I'll explain the entire process of working together to discover what's in YOUR genes to help you on the clean eating journey.

Talk soon,

Erica