



Do you have a health-related question to ask the USA Gymnastics Health Care Referral Network? If so, send it to USA Gymnastics magazine, Pan American Plaza, 201 S. Capitol Ave., Suite 300, Indianapolis, IN 46225.

Kelli Hill, owner and head coach of Hill's Gymnastics in Gaithersburg, Md., has incorporated a snack break into her gymnasts' practices. Kelli has coached 1992 and 1996 Olympic Gold Medalist Dominique Dawes, Goodwill Games Silver Medalist Elise Ray, as well as numerous other national team members. We spoke

with Kelli regarding the logistics of snack breaks and here's what she had to say.

Q. How do you incorporate snack breaks into workout?

A. We keep snacks in a bin marked Level 5 Snacks, Level 8 Snacks, etc. The bins are located outside the locker room door and the gymnasts drop their snack bag in the respective bin prior to practice. Every group has a scheduled time to take a 10 minute snack break. After practice the gymnasts clean up the snack area.

Q. How many hours into practice do you have a snack break.

A. Usually 2 1/2 - 3 hours. My elite group of gymnasts take their snack break anytime they feel they need it. I encourage them to take a snack break as they're putting on their grips or waiting in line for vault. My other teams have a scheduled 10-15 minute snack break in their workout.

Q. Are your gymnasts allowed to have water bottles in the gym?

A. Absolutely. Water bottles are encouraged in our gym. The gymnasts carry their water bottles from event to event. They are allowed anywhere in the gym.

Q. Why did you begin snack breaks with your gymnasts and how long have you been incorporating them in your practices?

A. I started snack breaks after attending a nutrition lecture. We wanted to see if it really made a difference. It definitely did so, with a little planning, we incorporated a snack break into our schedule.

Q. Would you encourage other coaches to practice snack breaks?

A. Definitely!

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