



Swimming

Training Guide





Around 3 million people take the plunge every week, making it more popular than the number of people playing football every week. Swimming offers a huge number of benefits beyond simply playing with the kids, ranging from weight loss, muscle strength gains, and toning, to broader benefits such as reducing tension, and improved psychological well-being. This swim guide in conjunction with the training plans will help you better understand your training and help you maximise your results.

Making training a priority within your lifestyle will bring you better all-round results and ultimately make your race more enjoyable. This guide will give you information over and above your physical training programme to optimise elements of your lifestyle that most impact on your training efforts.

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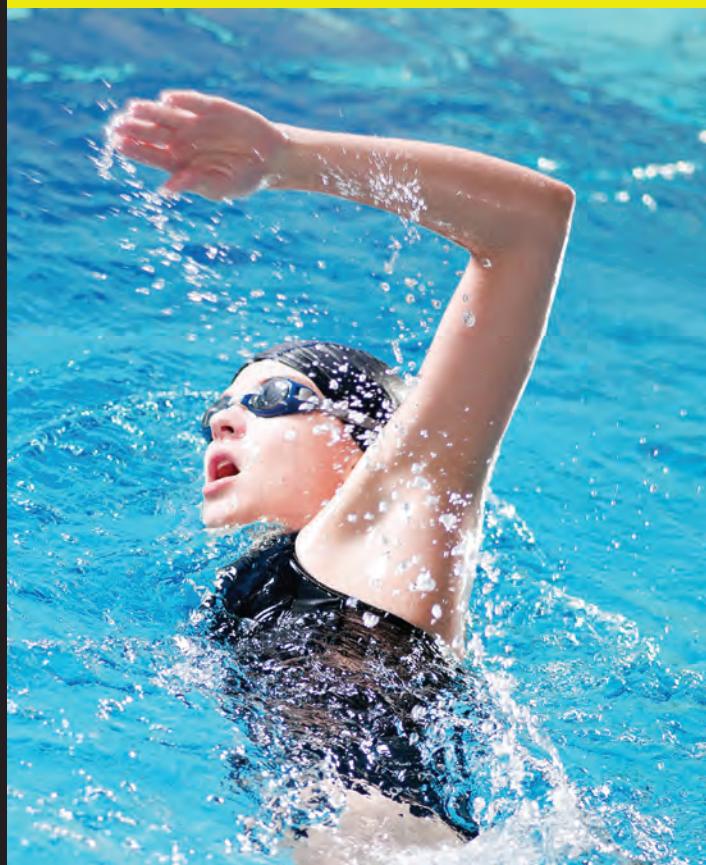


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Look to the back of this guide for a 12-week combined beginner and intermediate training plan to suit you.



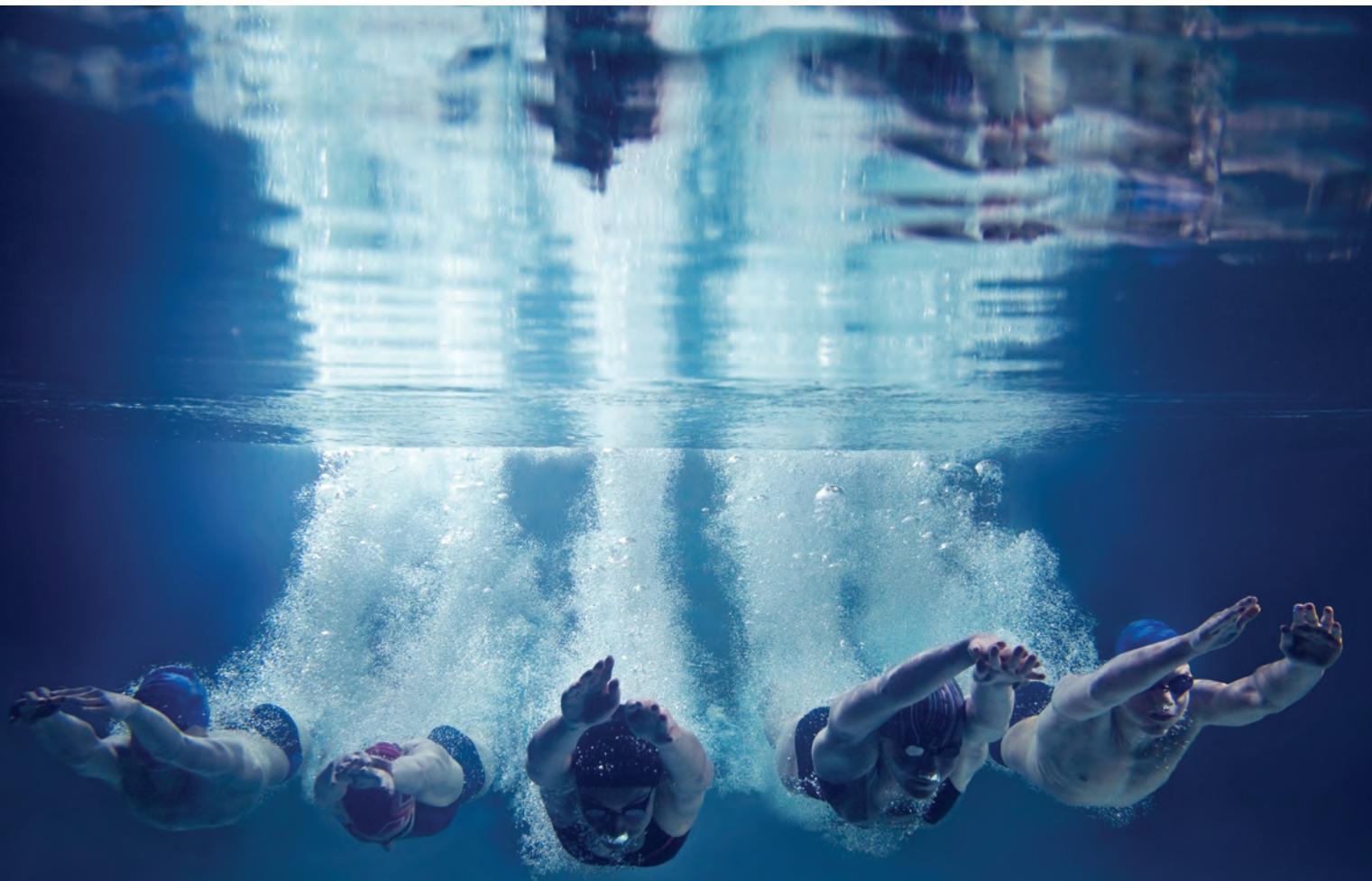


Getting Started

If you haven't exercised for some time and have any health concerns it is advised that you speak to your doctor before starting a new exercise programme. You should consult your doctor if you have arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, asthma or lung, liver or kidney disease. It's also recommended that you speak to your doctor if you suffer from any of the following:

- Pain or discomfort in your chest, neck, jaw or arms during physical activity
- Dizziness or loss of consciousness
- Shortness of breath with mild exertion or at rest, or when lying down or going to bed
- Ankle swelling, especially at night
- A heart murmur or a rapid or pronounced heartbeat
- Muscle pain when walking upstairs or up a hill that goes away when you rest

If you know of any other reason why you should not do physical activity it is advised that you check with your doctor first.





Busting The Jargon

Cross-Training

Cross-training will negate the shortcomings of training your body in just one way, avoiding over-use of joints, muscles or ligaments that may become over-worked and over-time can result in injury. The law of specificity means that there is no better way to train for your swim than to swim. However, any good training programme will complement this routine with relevant supportive work such as core and resistance training to strengthen the body's 'chassis'.

Tapering

A period at the end of your training programme which represents a reduction in training volume prior to your main event. This should be phased and built into your training plan and will typically consist of one week or more (depending on the duration of the event).

Drafting (also draughting)

A technique which is used to save energy, as one athlete follows in the slipstream of another athlete, whether it be swimming, cycling or even running, in order to reduce effort.

Spotting

If you're swimming outdoors, 'Spotting' will help you keep as straight a line as possible during the swim. To spot in front crawl, take a breath and then on the next stroke simply look up as your forward arm enters the water and begins pulling down. You needn't raise your whole head out of the water and don't breathe on this stroke, just look up enough so you can see, then lower your head and complete the stroke. Try focusing on a large landmark which will keep you in the right direction throughout your swim, such as a dominant tree, building or inflatable marker in the water.





First, Set Yourself A Goal...

Like anything in life, focusing your efforts on an end goal will help you keep single minded and keep you on track. This is your event, so avoid the temptation to pitch yourself against friends or colleagues, after all, you have no idea of their current fitness levels, health condition, injuries or other motivations.

You may want shed some extra pounds, improve your health, achieve a certain time or create a better work/life balance by incorporating a more activity into your lifestyle. Without a doubt, you are more likely to achieve your goal by writing them down as a positive statement, ensuring that they are measureable, attainable and within your control. A great tool for logging your efforts and progress is a training (or food) diary. You'll find electronic diaries on line or simply jotting them down in a book at the end of the day will keep you focused on your efforts:



Think of ways that you can measure your success, through taking statistics at the beginning of your training programme and at regular intervals thereafter. Some examples may include:

- **Achieve weight loss** - find scales that measure your body fat %
- **Improve strength** - pick 3 tests that track your lower body, upper body and core strength
- **Increase speed** - introduce fartlek and intervals into your training, and complete a weekly time trial
- **Achieve a specific race time** - Assess your current speed and set yourself a goal beyond that
- **Better health measures** - lower your blood pressure, resting heart rate, improve the quality of your sleep
- **Improve your work/life balance** - plan your training ahead of each week so that you can integrate it with your forthcoming work commitments



Swim Kit

What do I need?

Kitting yourself out for swimming is very simple and requires very little specialist kit or complicated gadgets. The most important task is to find a local pool which is either close to home or your work so that you can fit it easily into your day. Below are the most important pieces of kit that you'll need for training and race day:



1 Costume or trunks

Buy the best swimsuit you can afford, as swimming weekly can lead to a poor quality swim suit losing shape which will ultimately affect your efficiency in the water. Your costume must be a full body costume and not a bikini as it will need to be comfortable for long periods of time. Try on your swimming costume or trunks (men) before you buy as comfort is imperative. Depending on whether your race in indoors or open-water, you may decide to buy a short wetsuit for the event. Always rinse out your swimsuit after being in the pool and look out for chlorine-resistant suits that will prevent fading.



2 Swim Hat

If you're training for an outdoor swim, it's recommended that you wear a hat since a large proportion of heat is lost through the head when you exercise – silicone hats are ideal for open-water swimming. For women mostly, it best keeps hair out of the face but performs an important job of streamlining your body as it glides through the water.



3 Ear Plugs

Some people find water in their ears very uncomfortable and opt for moulded (impermeable) cubes that can be placed snugly in the ear to keep water out when training. You should place these in your ears when you are dry and not wet to ensure it is sealed properly.



4 Goggles

It's important to get yourself a decent pair of goggles, there is nothing more frustrating then getting to the pool or open-water, changing, getting into the water and finding that your goggles leak or fog up. Such a small item can deem your training session over and for that reason it's worth picking up or borrowing a second pair as a back up. Goggles vary in price, so look out for those that will perform best with features such as:

- Silicone seal that moulds to the shape of your face (foam seals can break off)
- Check for dark or light lenses, dark lenses can be better swimming outdoors or in bright environments. Anti-glare goggles will provide better visibility on sunny day in open-water.
- Check that the lenses have anti-fog coating. Coated lenses are better, but won't completely eliminate the need to de-fog them.
- Try before you buy. Leave the straps off, and push the lenses against your eye sockets. This will give you a quick idea if the lenses will be comfortable enough for you to be worn for an hour or two at the pool. If they pass this test, put the straps on and check that they are still comfortable, ensuring that the nose bridge doesn't hurt.
- Check if the straps can be easily adjusted and don't detach themselves too easily.

A full swim mask will provide you with a much more comfortable fit with less chance of your goggles being knocked off during the race. The larger mask provides better awareness of other swimmers around you, with a 180° visibility so ideal for open-water swimming.

However much you pay for your goggles, they will at times fog up. Applying some saliva to your thumb and cleaning the inside of the lens works wonders!



5 Watch

A water-proof watch with a timer-stop function is vital, preferably with a multi-lap function, essential for monitoring your pace during your training. Your watch will become your new best friend, monitoring your laps in the pool. Most ranges have a budget version, so you don't have to spend a fortune.

6 Pull-buoy

Commonly found on the side of public pools, these kidney bean shaped buoyancy aids (placed between your thighs) can be used to improve your arm technique (and strength) by taking your legs out of the equation, drawing your hips up to the surface and giving you the chance to focus purely on your arms.



7 Paddles

Paddles are attachable plastic 'hands' which increase the drag throughout the water, increasing resistance and therefore effort. These are a great training aid to increasing your power through the water, so ideal for incorporating into a training day.





A Guide To Training

Optimal Training

It is often thought that training is a purely physical procedure, the more you run, bike or swim the better you will be. However, the amount of time you dedicate to optimising your wider training environment, the better your health and wellbeing, performance and ultimately your race.

It's easy to brush aside these elements of 'training' which often involve making changes to your lifestyle that may feel out of your control. However, set yourself a goal of focusing on at least one of the following for the duration of your programme and experience the difference it makes!

Sleep

Arguably the most significant part of recovery is sleep. Sleep is hugely underestimated and often neglected all together. After a good night's sleep, we wake up better equipped for the day ahead, with activities such as reaction time, organisation of information, decision making, learning, emotional stability and memory amongst just some of the many benefits. However, whilst you sleep, your body also stops all vital functions so that repair and growth can be maximised and releases hormones regulating growth (e.g. soft tissue repair) and appetite control.

Sleep deprivation builds up over time, an hour cut short by watching an extra TV programme, a disrupted night's sleep, or a few very early morning starts. Over a period of weeks, this deficit can accumulate to many hours which can be detrimental to your training i.e. reduced cardiovascular function, speed, agility and reaction time.

Start by bringing forward the time you climb into bed by 30-60 mins, read to unwind (or write up your training log!) and create a high quality sleep environment: quiet, dark, cool and comfortable and see how you feel.

- A high protein snack before bed will promote serotonin production to promote sleep e.g. a slice of turkey
- Stay away from any screen devices at least an hour before you go to bed, let your brain unwind naturally
- Remove your mobile (and any other electronic devices) from your bedroom, if you need an alarm clock, buy a stand-alone alarm
- Monitor the temperature in your room, personal preference is best but a room too hot or too cold will stop you from falling asleep. An air conditioner, fan, heater or the weight of sheets or a blanket can help you regulate temperature
- Unload your mind - keep a pencil and paper by the bed to jot things down that are keeping you awake



Take a break

Along with good quality sleep, rest is absolutely vital to your training programme. Fail to build in rest days and your body will simply not repair and bear the burden of your training regime, with niggles and injury a common occurrence amongst those that don't rest.

Once you get into a training programme, it can become hard to slow down, coupled with juggling work and other commitments, you may be tempted to cut out sleep or simply pack in too much into your day. Ensure you build in time post-training to rest and relax, both your body and mind need a break and give you the mental strength for a good training week ahead.



The Principles of Training

Training can be a highly rewarding activity. One of the many unique qualities of the human body is its ability to respond and adapt to regular exercise and therefore training with a progressive load and effort will bring improvements over a period of time. For this improvement to occur, your body must be confronted with some form of 'stress' for the body to respond to, whether that is weights in the gym, a run outdoors, or a hilly bike ride.

This 'stress' will leave the body feeling some discomfort in the form of muscle soreness if unaccustomed to the type of activity that you're performing. Exercise-induced muscle damage is also known as Delayed-Onset Muscle Soreness (aka DOMS) and symptoms appear 24-72 hours after exercise. This is perfectly normal and part of the natural adaption process.

A swim programme will initially build your aerobic base whilst conditioning your body and perfecting drills so that it can cope with the intensity applied later in the programme. This will allow for the soft tissue, ligaments and muscles to adapt with reduced risk of injury and discomfort. Gradually increasing the intensity and length of your workouts will ensure that you don't push yourself too far.

With these principles in place, a good training plan will allow your body to adapt slowly, train consistently, progress continuously and rest regularly, to ensure 16 weeks of good quality training.

Training Drills for swimming

Practicing technique is crucial for improving your swim efficiency. Incorporating drill work into your sessions (see training plans) will pay dividends by boosting performance and also making your training sessions more interesting. Aim to do all three drills in rotation, 4 lengths of each, rest in between drills for up to 45 seconds maximum:

- **Stronger arms** – using a pull-buoy between your thighs to de-activate your legs and focus on your arm technique. To increase the difficulty and resistance wear a pair of paddles on your hands.
- **Improved kicking** – hold a float in front of you, ensure your hips are raised and practice kicking. Kick too hard and you will create too much resistance which will slow you down!
- **Improved breathing** – In the pool, practice alternate lengths, breathing on the 3rd stroke and the next length breathing every 5th stroke to minimise coming up for breath. Finish each session with a full length to see how far you can get to the other end of the pool in one breath and make a note of where you stop. Aim to swim a full length underwater by the end of your programme!
- **Stroke efficiency** – Top swimmers will use far fewer strokes per length than beginners. This drill encourages you to 'glide' for as long as possible with each stroke and helps develop longer strokes. As you swim, keep your non-stroking arm out in front (in a 'superman' position) until the other arm completes a full stroke cycle. Glide before you start the next stroke. Count how many strokes you do on your first length versus your last to track your improvement.





Top Tips

1 Reduce resistance

Good swim technique is ultimately about minimising drag in the water. Your head and hips should be in a neutral position with your spine to ensure a smooth, straight body position. Swim with your eyes fixed on a point and slightly forward, keep a long, tall position in the water when gliding through the water. Kick to propel yourself but don't create big clumsy moves with your feet which will serve to just slow you down.

2 Hold your glide for as long as possible

Let the stroke do the work and minimise how much energy you're using by holding your glide for as long as you can. Count the number of strokes per length and keep a diary throughout your training programme to see how you improve.

3 Hand Entry

Each hand should enter the water between your ear and shoulder and must not cross on to the opposing side of the body. Ask a friend to come along to a training session and watch you from the gallery for some feedback on your stroke.

4 Pull-through phase

As you enter the 'pull through' phase of your stroke, the hand should be kept under the body, but should not pull across the centre line.

5 Bi-lateral breathing

Coming up to breathe both sides (in crawl) is a good technique for keeping a straight line, so practice drills which perfect your technique and train to improve your stroke, so that you reduce the number of times you need to take a breath in each length.

6 Combatting foot cramp

Foot cramp can be a frustrating hindrance to the swimmer, both indoors and outdoors making it difficult to continue. It can hit the sole of the foot when the muscle is fatigued, when the swimmer is dehydrated or if the muscles are already tight from a previous session. A 'dry stretch' before swimming and stretching afterwards is important to incorporate into your training and race day routine as well as focusing on your hydration and electrolyte drinks (if required).

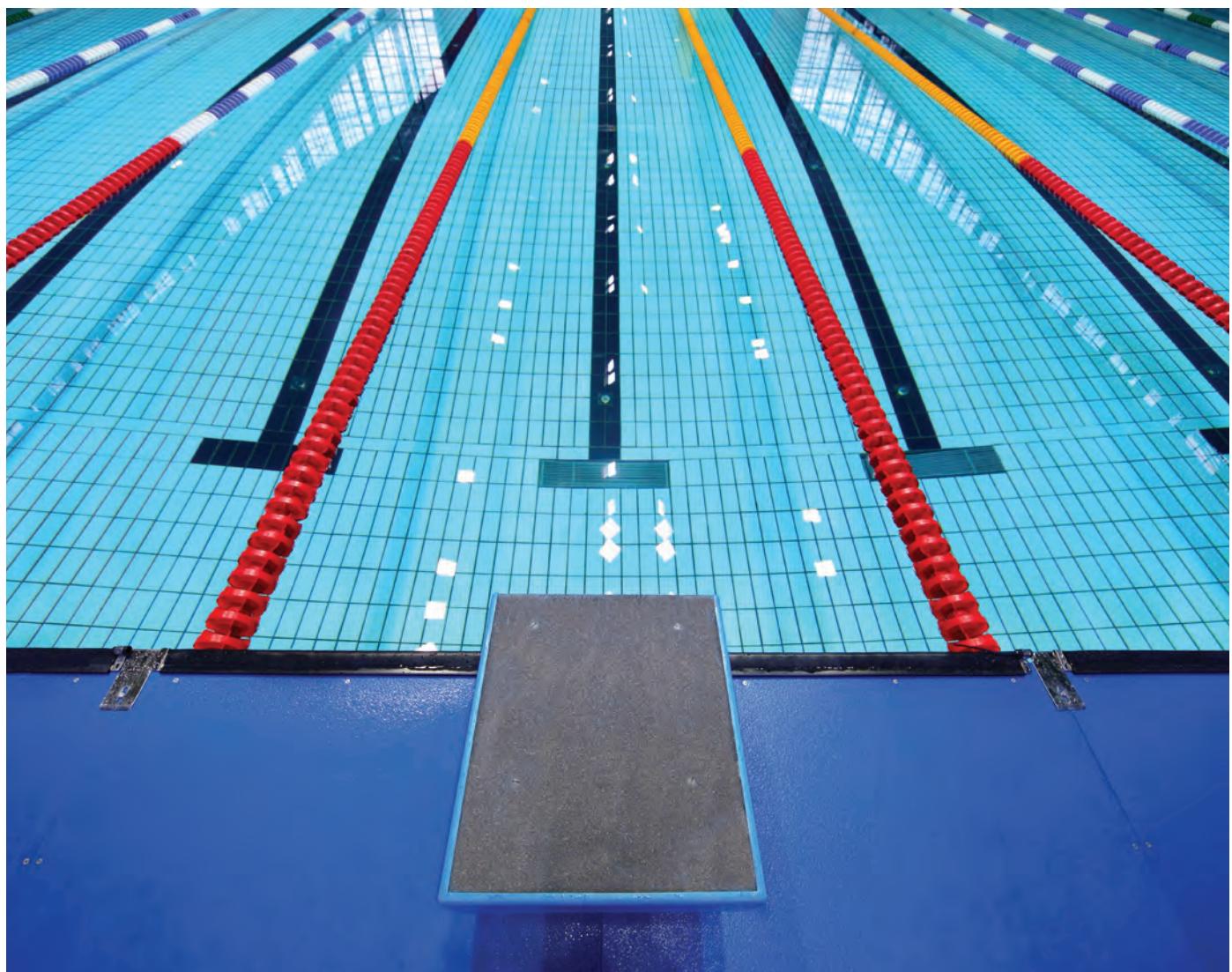


Where To Train

Joining a club can help inspire you, as well as make your swim training more interesting and variable. Your local leisure centre is the best place to enquire about swim clubs. Clubs are a great place to meet other people looking for training partners and offer a great environment in which to learn through others.

Your local swimming centre should be sufficient for much of your swim training, providing a training environment for practicing drills to perfect your technique and lengths for building your endurance. However, if your race is outdoors, it's vital that you experience an outdoor pool before race day to ensure you've practiced outdoor techniques such as 'spotting'. Practicing in an outdoor environment will also get you used to the difference in water temperature.

All of these factors and experiences are a crucial part of your training. Rehearse them before race day and not for the first time on race day!





Nutrition & Hydration

Food is not just fuel

Optimum nutrition is one of the most important aspects of your training programme and one that is often overlooked but will bring with it a plethora of benefits beyond just fuelling your body for physical effort. It is a vast area and we've provided you with some initial suggestions and ideas which we hope you will want to explore and read about further. The improvement in your general health will be tangible, reducing colds and bugs during training along with longer-term health implications.

If you're looking for a personalised nutritional programme, or have any allergies or conditions that may affect your food choices, you may want to seek further advice from a qualified nutritionist.

The status quo

You may think that a typical athlete's diet should consist of a lot of carbohydrates and very little fat in the diet. Staples such as pasta, rice, potatoes, cereals, bread and cereals will feature in many meals. The triathlete's shopping basket may include 'low fat' yoghurts, products marked as 'light' and be brimming full of plenty of fruit, all of which sit within mainstream healthy eating. The food mentality of 'calories in equals calorie out' has long justified eating as many calories burned on a long training session.

A calorie is not necessarily a calorie

However, thinking about the 'composition' of your calories, i.e. the amount of fats, carbs and protein in your day's calories is a fundamental way of optimising your health and wellbeing. This in turn will support weight loss goals, appetite control, energy levels and repair from injury, all of which will have a direct impact on your race performance.

The fundamental issue with classic, very high carbohydrate diets is the significant rise in blood sugar (and therefore the hormone insulin) that is released in the body following this spike. If blood glucose is constantly elevated through eating carbohydrate, then the ability of the body to access its fat stores to burn as fuel is reduced. With this in mind, here are 10 tips that will help provide a nutrient dense diet which will fuel and nourish your body throughout your training.



1 Think nutrient dense, not calorie dense

Foods such as: Fruit (particularly low fructose variants such as raspberries, blueberries, pears and kiwis) a wide variety of vegetables, lean meats, fish (unbreaded), nuts (e.g. almonds) and seeds. Buy the highest quality food that your budget can afford. For example, opt for organic (e.g. meat, eggs, milk, vegetables) or grass-fed meats and always strive to ensure the food that you buy is unprocessed.

Why: Increased intake of micro-nutrients and antioxidants support your overall health and recovery.

2 Eliminate processed and refined sugar from your life

Foods such as: Biscuits, chocolate, cakes, fruit yoghurts, jams, condiments, cereal.

Why: Conservative estimates suggest that we are eating between 20-34 tsp of sugar a day, exceeding the NHS recommended maximum of 16.5 tsp for men and 12 tsp for women. Processed and refined sugars are linked to weight gain, Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, bowel cancer, lower cognitive function, ageing skin, a depressed immune system, liver and kidney disease.

3 Moderate starchy carbs

Foods such as: Depending on your training requirements, honestly review the number and size of your portions of bread, potato, rice and pasta you're eating per day. When looking to include carbohydrates in your diet to fuel training, remove poor nutrients, refined sources such as bread and pasta for more nutrient dense foods like quinoa, sweet potatoes and lentils.

Why: Carbohydrates should continue to play its part in an athlete's diet but timing and type is key. Carbohydrates should be consumed around training to safeguard glycogen stores. At other times, carbohydrates should be reduced in favour of natural fats and protein and nutrient-dense leafy vegetables.



Moderate starchy carbs

4 Pack a punch with protein

Food such as: Eggs, nuts, chicken, turkey, lean mince, fish (such as cod, plaice, haddock and bass) and oily fish such as tuna, mackerel, salmon, sardines and trout. Don't forget game meats such as venison, pheasant and partridge and fleshy protein dense fish such as prawns, sea bass, monkfish and snapper. Whey protein shakes also provide excellent protein for post training snacks.

Why: Proteins are broken down by the body and converted into amino acids, which have multiple uses in cell function. This includes boosting the immune system and helping to rebuild muscle after exercise.

5 Don't be scared of good fats

Foods such as: Avocado, nuts (almonds and brazil nuts), oily fish such as salmon, mackerel and sardines, unprocessed meat such as turkey, chicken, venison and lean beef.

Why: By focusing your intake on good fats (in conjunction with cutting down your carbohydrate intake) you will be training your body to regain control of blood sugar levels and allow your body to use body fat as fuel. A shortfall of (good) fat in the diet will lead to a lack of essential nutrients which are critical for immune healthy, hormone regulation, bone and cell growth

6 Watch out for seemingly 'healthy' foods

Foods such as: Reduced calorie salad dressings, condiments such as ketchup, , breakfast cereals, low fat yoghurts (opt for full fat, and reduce your portion size), soft fizzy drinks and fruit juices/smoothies. Eat only the whole fruit, not just the juice.

Why: Foods that are marketed as 'low calorie' or 'low fat' often contain more sugar to compensate for the taste experience. Even if you're not looking to lose weight, a glass of orange juice is high in sugar (fructose) which goes straight to the liver and is processed as fat.

Don't be scared of good fats



7

Avoid alcohol

Drinks such as: Beer, wine and spirits

Why: Actively prevent the body from burning fat, reduce energy levels and encourage over-eating. Try to cut down in the week or experience the benefits of eliminating altogether whilst you're training. You can celebrate your personal best with a glass of bubbly!

8

Refuel during and after training

What: Carry two water bottles on your bike, water for instant and direct hydration after the session, and a second bottle containing a sports drink, to provide energy for the third leg of your ride. There are a number of different bars, gels and snacks in sports shops for consumption before and during training. Aim to eat a protein and carbohydrate snack (or meal) within 30-40 minutes of training to optimise recovery.

Why: Optimise your refuelling and hydration strategy before race day. Not everyone can digest solid foods whilst on the move, so drinks and gels are a good alternative. How much, when in the race, and how you integrate these into your training is an important element of your training so that you have no surprises on race day.

9

Always eat breakfast

What: Porridge, poached eggs on toast, omelette, peanut butter on toast, eggs and smoked salmon, Shredded Wheat and Weetabix

Why: The most important meal of the day, wakes up your metabolism after fasting throughout the night and kick-starts your body into burning calories. Breakfast is very individual and will also depend on when you're training in terms of composition, timing and digestion.

Always eat breakfast



10 Nutritional training for race day

Training: Keep a note of your nutritional requirements specifically around training times. If you train after breakfast, optimise your breakfast so that you know exactly how much time you need (usually 1.5-2 hours) after eating before you can exercise comfortably. Try different energy drinks, bars or gels, during your training and at which point during your ride to take them, so that you have no surprises on race day. Weather conditions will also play a huge role in what form and how many calories you consume, so again keep a note of this in your training diary.

How: There are numerous on-line electronic diaries which will automatically calculate your calories and macro splits or simply keep a hand-written diary yourself. Keep a log of what you eat, but also when you eat, and how you feel, in relation to your training. As you move through your training programme you will find that certain foods affect you differently such as: fuelling before exercise, ease of digestion and best recovery foods.

Nutrition on Race Day and Post Race Day

Experimenting in training is crucial to honing your event day nutrition. This will involve knowing what is the ideal breakfast, how long you should eat before the event.



After your event, the first thing you should do is hydrate yourself with water and fluid replacement. You may also want to consider an electrolyte drink. After this, there is a well-established 'carbohydrate window' in which your body best refuels itself. Ensure you eat some simple, easily absorbed carbohydrates within 40 minutes of finishing your race (e.g. banana). After two hours, you should eat a well-balanced meal which includes protein, fat and carbohydrate and eat plenty of protein throughout the week to help fuel your body for a complete recovery.



Injury Prevention

Strength and conditioning

A simple circuit of exercises should be incorporated twice a week to condition and strengthen our joints, tendons and ligaments. These structures hold our body together, whilst the large muscles (quads, hamstrings, calves) make us move. When these large muscles become tired, over-worked or tight (through training) then we develop problems which can lead to injury. If you are a member of a gym speak to a gym instructor or personal trainer who can help you with a programme.

Key Stretches



Calf stretch



Plantar Fascia stretch

Stretching

It's been long believed that stretching provides a longer, smoother stroke and reduces risk of injuries. Before your swim, do a 'dry stretch' before you get into the water, taking your body through some dynamic movements to warm up the muscles and take your joints through the full range of motion. You can create your own dynamic warm up incorporating shoulder rolls (forward and backwards), arm swings, side stretches, rotations of the upper body, hip swings, and leg swings with gentle, smooth movements at first so as not to make any sudden aggressive movements. You should also incorporate these lower leg/foot stretches into your pre and post training routine to avoid foot cramps:

1. **Calf stretch** – stand with one leg in front of the other and lean against a wall. Bend your front leg and keep your back leg straight, with your heel on the floor until you feel your calf area stretched
2. **Lower calf stretch** – targeting the 'achilles' area of the calf complex. Perform the calf stretch above, and then bend the knee (of the leg that is behind you) into the wall and you will feel the stretch move into the achilles area
3. **Plantar Fascia stretch** – in a standing position, roll your foot over a golf ball to relieve tension. If this is too painful, perform this exercise seated, to reduce the amount of weight on the golf ball.

The whole stretching process should not last more than 10-15 minutes and you will notice quite a bit of difference in how flexible you are after performing these consistently for 2-3 weeks.



Managing an injury

Should you be unfortunate enough to become injured then stop training immediately and please consult a medical professional for advice.

Alleviate any inflammation by icing the area straight away and resting. Eat foods with anti-inflammatory properties such as garlic, green tea, dark berries and dark chocolate! Ensuring you eat a healthy well-balanced diet, with protein to encourage muscle and tissue repair and plenty of nutrient dense foods such as fruit and vegetables will also aid your general recovery e.g. vitamins and minerals help support collagen formation, enhance immune cell function and promote wound healing.

Good Luck!

We hope you enjoy your challenge and with the help of the guide and training programme will see and feel a difference to your health, fitness and well being. Hopefully you will have achieved some personal goals and may be thinking about your next race already! Guide Dogs have lots of different events throughout the year, whether you're looking to improve your swim time or would like to try a new challenge such as running, cycling or our unique Coniston Challenge, go to

www.guidedogs.org.uk/events

Thank you for supporting our four legged heroes.

Guide Dogs Events Team





Beginner Training Programmes

The following is based on a 1 mile training programme (in a 25m pool), adjust accordingly based on the length of your local pool and race distance.

Week 1 - Getting Started

Training		Training Notes
Mon	REST	
Tues	Swim	Warm up for 5 minutes walking the length of the pool, return to the side of the pool and stretch your arms above your head and lean to your left. Repeat stretch to the right. Swim for 10 minutes (using your preferred stroke). Stretch in the water or a 5 minute cool-down.
Wed	REST	-
Thurs	REST	-
Fri	Swim	Warm up for 5 minutes walking the length of the pool, return to the side of the pool and stretch your arms above your head and lean to your left. Repeat stretch to the right. Swim for 10 minutes (using your preferred stroke). Stretch in the water or a 5 minute cool-down.
Sat	REST	-
Sun	Brisk walk 20 mins (optional) or rest	Develop your aerobic capacity by cross training. Walk at a brisk pace.





Week 2 - Getting Started

Training		Training Notes
Mon	Swim	Warm up for 5 minutes walking the length of the pool, return to the side of the pool and stretch your arms above your head and lean to your left. Repeat stretch to the right. Swim for 10 minutes (using your preferred stroke). Stretch in the water or a 5 minute cool-down.
Tues	REST	-
Wed	REST	-
Thurs	Swim	10 minute light swim using breast stroke followed by 5 minute light swim using front crawl. Warm up and cool down as previous.
Fri	REST	-
Sat	Swim	10 minute light swim using breast stroke followed by 5 minute light swim using front crawl. Warm up and cool down as previous.
Sun	Brisk walk 20 mins (optional) or rest	Develop your aerobic capacity by cross training. Walk at a brisk pace + STRETCH.

Week 3 - Building

Training		Training Notes
Mon	Swim	Swim x 15 lengths in front crawl. Try to swim continuously but rest if needed. Warm up and warm down as previous.
Tues	REST	-
Wed	REST	-
Thurs	Swim	Swim x 20 lengths in front crawl. Try to swim continuously but rest if needed. Warm up and down as previous.
Fri	REST	-
Sat	Swim	Swim x 15 lengths in front crawl. Try to swim continuously but rest if needed. Warm up and warm down as previous.
Sun	Brisk walk 25 mins (optional) or rest	Develop your aerobic capacity by cross training. Walk at a brisk pace + STRETCH.



Week 4 - Building

Training		Training Notes
Mon	Swim	Swim x 24 lengths in front crawl. Try to swim continuously but rest if needed. Warm up and warm down as previous.
Tues	REST	-
Wed	REST	-
Thurs	Swim	Swim x 28 lengths in front crawl. Try to swim continuously but rest if needed. Warm up and down as previous.
Fri	REST	-
Sat	Swim	Swim x 24 lengths in front crawl. Try to swim continuously but rest if needed. Warm up and warm down as previous.
Sun	Brisk walk 25 mins (optional) or rest	Develop your aerobic capacity by cross training. Walk at a brisk pace + STRETCH.

Week 5 - Easy week

Training		Training Notes
Mon	Swim	Then Swim x 15 lengths in front crawl. Try to swim continuously but rest if needed. Warm up and warm down as previous.
Tues	REST	-
Wed	REST	-
Thurs	Swim	Swim x 18 lengths in front crawl. Try to swim continuously but rest if needed. Warm up and down as previous.
Fri	REST	-
Sat	Swim	Swim x 15 lengths in front crawl. Try to swim continuously but rest if needed. Warm up and warm down as previous.
Sun	Easy walk (or rest)	Go for an easy walk in the park or with friends



Week 6 - Introduce Drills

Training		Training Notes
Mon	Drills/swim	Two lengths of each of the 4 drills outlined in training plan. Swim x 20 lengths in front crawl. Swim continuously (with a rest of 1 minute at 15 lengths if needed). Warm up and warm down as previous.
Tues	REST	-
Wed	REST	-
Thurs	Swim	Swim x 30 lengths in front crawl. Swim continuously but rest if needed. Warm up and down as previous.
Fri	REST	-
Sat	Swim	Swim x 20 lengths in front crawl. Try to swim continuously but rest if needed. Warm up and warm down as previous.
Sun	Brisk walk 30 mins (optional) or rest	Develop your aerobic capacity by cross training. Walk at a brisk pace + STRETCH.

Week 7 - Increase Volume

Training		Training Notes
Mon	Drills/swim	Two lengths of each of the 4 drills outlined in training plan. Swim x 38 lengths in front crawl. Swim continuously but rest if needed. Warm up and warm down as previous.
Tues	REST	-
Wed	REST	-
Thurs	Swim	Swim x 44 lengths in front crawl. Swim continuously but rest if needed. Warm up and down as previous.
Fri	REST	-
Sat	Swim	Swim x 10 lengths front crawl non-stop, then 4 x 6 lengths (interval based sprints) with 2 minutes rest inbetween.
Sun	Brisk walk 30 mins (optional) or rest	Develop your aerobic capacity by cross training. Walk at a brisk pace + STRETCH.



Week 8

Training		Training Notes
Mon	Drills/swim	Two lengths of each of the 4 drills outlined in training plan. Swim x 45 lengths in front crawl. Swim continuously but rest if needed. Warm up and warm down as previous.
Tues	REST	-
Wed	REST	-
Thurs	Swim	Swim x 50 lengths in front crawl. Swim continuously but rest if needed. Warm up and down as previous.
Fri	REST	-
Sat	Swim	Swim x 10 lengths front crawl non-stop, then 4 x 8 lengths (interval based sprints) with 2 minutes rest inbetween.
Sun	Brisk walk 35 mins (optional) or rest	Develop your aerobic capacity by cross training. Walk at a brisk pace + STRETCH.

Week 9

Training		Training Notes
Mon	Drills/swim	Two lengths of each of the 4 drills outlined in training plan. Swim x 50 lengths in front crawl. Try to swim continuously but rest if needed. Warm up and warm down as previous.
Tues	REST	-
Wed	REST	-
Thurs	Swim	Swim x 56 lengths in front crawl. Try to swim continuously but rest if needed. Warm up and down as previous.
Fri	REST	-
Sat	Swim	Swim x 10 lengths front crawl non-stop, then 4 x 10 lengths (interval based sprints) with 2 minutes rest inbetween.
Sun	Brisk walk 35 mins (optional) or rest	Develop your aerobic capacity by cross training. Walk at a brisk pace + STRETCH.



Week 10

Training		Training Notes
Mon	Swim	Swim x 58 lengths in front crawl. Swim continuously but rest if needed. Warm up and warm down as previous.
Tues	REST	-
Wed	REST	-
Thurs	Swim	Swim x 64 lengths in front crawl. Swim continuously but rest if needed. Warm up and down as previous.
Fri	REST	-
Sat	Swim	Swim x 10 lengths front crawl non-stop, then 4 x 12 lengths (interval based sprints) with 2 minutes rest inbetween.
Sun	Brisk walk 40 mins (optional) or rest	Develop your aerobic capacity by cross training. Walk at a brisk pace + STRETCH.

Week 11 - Taper

Training		Training Notes
Mon	Swim	Swim x 44 lengths in front crawl. Swim continuously. Warm up and warm down as previous.
Tues	REST	-
Wed	REST	-
Thurs	Swim	Swim x 48 lengths in front crawl. Swim continuously but rest if needed. Warm up and down as previous.
Fri	REST	-
Sat	Swim	Swim x 44 lengths in front crawl. Swim continuously but rest if needed. Warm up and warm down as previous.
Sun	Easy walk 30 mins (optional) or rest	Easy walk and stretch.



Week 12

Training		Training Notes
Mon	Swim	Swim 30 easy lengths in front crawl. Swim continuously. Warm up and down as previous
Tues	REST	Rest completely
Wed	REST	-
Thurs	Swim	Swim 20 easy lengths in front crawl. Swim continuously. Warm up and down as previous.
Fri	REST	Hydrate and sleep well
Sat	REST	Hydrate and sleep well and don't do any strenuous activity e.g. housework
Sun	RACE DAY	Enjoy!





Intermediate Training Programmes

The following is based on a 2 mile training programme (in a 25m pool), adjust accordingly based on your race distance.

Week 1 - Getting Started

Training		Training Notes
Mon	Swim	Easy 5 minute warm up (any stroke) followed by 15 minute light swim, rest when required, plus cool down and stretch
Tues	REST	-
Wed	Swim	Easy 5 minute warm up (any stroke) followed by 20 minute light swim, 20 sec rest each length if required, plus cool down and stretch
Thurs	Core & Stretch	Try 2-3 core exercises at home (15 minutes) including 3 x 12 abdominal raises, 3 x 12 glutes squeezes and perform a timed plank + 10-15 minutes whole body stretching
Fri	REST	-
Sat	Swim	Easy 5 minute warm up (any stroke) followed by 25 minute light swim, 20 sec rest each length if required, plus cool down and stretch
Sun	Jog-walk	Develop your aerobic capacity by cross training. Jog for 2 minutes, walk for 1 minute, repeat for 12 mins + STRETCH





Week 2 - Getting Started

Training		Training Notes
Mon	Swim	Easy 5 minute warm up (breast stroke) followed by 20 minute (front crawl) light swim, rest for 10 sec each length if required, plus cool down and stretch
Tues	REST	-
Wed	Swim	Easy 5 minute warm up (using breast stroke) followed by 25 minute light swim (front crawl), 10 sec rest each length if required, plus cool down and stretch
Thurs	Core & Stretch	Try 2-3 core exercises at home (15 minutes) including 3 x 12 abdominal raises, 3 x 12 glutes squeezes and perform a timed plank + 10-15 minutes whole body stretching
Fri	REST	-
Sat	Swim	Easy 5 minute warm up (using breast stroke) followed by 20 minute light swim (front crawl) 10 sec rest each length if required, plus cool down and stretch
Sun	Jog-walk	Develop your aerobic capacity by cross training. Jog for 3 minutes, walk for 1 minute, repeat for 16 mins + STRETCH

Week 3 - Build

Training		Training Notes
Mon	Swim	Easy 5 minute warm up (any stroke) followed by 8 lengths of drills (2 lengths of each 4 drills) followed by 15 lengths continuous front crawl, plus cool down and stretch
Tues	REST	-
Wed	Swim	Easy 5 minute warm up (any stroke) followed by 24 lengths continuous front crawl, plus cool down and stretch
Thurs	Core & Stretch	Try 2-3 core exercises at home (15 minutes) including 3 x 12 abdominal raises, 3 x 12 glutes squeezes and perform a timed plank + 10-15 minutes whole body stretching
Fri	REST	-
Sat	Swim	Easy 5 minute warm up (any stroke) followed by 24 lengths continuous front crawl, plus cool down and stretch
Sun	Jog-walk	Develop your aerobic capacity by cross training. Jog for 3 minutes, walk for 30 secs, repeat for 21 mins + STRETCH



Week 4 - Build

Training		Training Notes
Mon	Swim	Easy 5 minute warm up (any stroke). Your target is 40 lengths continuous front crawl in total. Perform 8 lengths drills (2 lengths x 4 drills), followed by 32 lengths continuous swimming. Cool down and stretch
Tues	REST	-
Wed	Swim	Easy 5 minute warm up (any stroke) followed by 42 lengths continuous front crawl. Perform 42 lengths continuously at a steady pace with no rest.
Thurs	Core & Stretch	Try 2-3 core exercises at home (15 minutes) including 3 x 12 abdominal raises, 3 x 12 glutes squeezes and perform a timed plank + 10-15 minutes whole body stretching
Fri	REST	-
Sat	Swim	Easy 5 minute warm up (any stroke). Your target is 50. Complete 30 lengths continuously and rest. Complete 10 sets of 2 lengths at a 'sprint' pace with 2-3 minute recoveries inbetween. You should allow yourself to recover inbetween sprints.
Sun	Easy Jog	Develop your aerobic capacity jogging continuously for 10 minutes and 5 minute walking warm down

Week 5 - Build

Training		Training Notes
Mon	Swim	Easy 5 minute warm up (any stroke). Your target is 60 lengths continuous front crawl in total. Perform 8 lengths of drills (2 lengths of 4 drills) and then two sets of 28 lengths, with 2-3 minutes max inbetween each set. Ensure you hydrate yourself between sets. Cool down and stretch
Tues	REST	-
Wed	Swim	Easy 5 minute warm up (any stroke) followed by 64 lengths continuous front crawl. Perform 64 lengths continuously at a steady pace with no rest.
Thurs	Core & Stretch	Try 2-3 core exercises at home (15 minutes) including 3 x 12 abdominal raises, 3 x 12 glutes squeezes and perform a timed plank + 10-15 minutes whole body stretching
Fri	REST	-
Sat	Swim	Easy 5 minute warm up (any stroke). Your target is 60. Complete 40 lengths continuously and rest. Complete 10 sets of 2 lengths at a 'sprint' pace with 2-3 minute recoveries inbetween. You should allow yourself to recover inbetween sprints.
Sun	Easy Jog	Develop your aerobic capacity jogging continuously for 12 minutes and 5 minute walk warm down



Week 6 - Easy Week

Training		Training Notes
Mon	Swim	Easy 5 minute warm up (any stroke) followed by 8 lengths of drills (2 lengths each drill) plus 15 minute light swim plus cool down and stretch
Tues	REST	-
Wed	Swim	Easy 5 minute warm up (any stroke) followed by 8 lengths of drills (2 lengths each drill) plus 20 minute light swim plus cool down and stretch
Thurs	Core & Stretch	Try 2-3 core exercises at home (15 minutes) including 3 x 12 abdominal raises, 3 x 12 glutes squeezes and perform a timed plank + 10-15 minutes whole body stretching
Fri	REST	-
Sat	Swim	Easy 5 minute warm up (any stroke) followed by 8 lengths of drills (2 lengths each drill) plus 20 minute light swim plus cool down and stretch
Sun	Easy Jog	Develop your aerobic capacity jogging continuously for 15 minutes and 5 minute walk warm down

Week 7

Training		Training Notes
Mon	Swim	Easy 5 minute warm up (any stroke). Your target is 74 lengths front crawl in total. Perform 8 lengths of drills (2 lengths of 4 drills) followed by two sets of 33 lengths, with 2-3 minutes max inbetween each set. Ensure you hydrate yourself between sets. Cool down and stretch
Tues	REST	-
Wed	Swim	Easy 5 minute warm up (any stroke) followed by 74 lengths continuous front crawl. Perform 74 lengths continuously at a steady pace with no rest.
Thurs	Core & Stretch	Try 2-3 core exercises at home (15 minutes) including 3 x 12 abdominal raises, 3 x 12 glutes squeezes and perform a timed plank + 10-15 minutes whole body stretching
Fri	REST	-
Sat	Swim	Complete 10 lengths of easy front crawl. Increase your interval'sprint' sets to 5 sets of 2 lengths and warm down with 10 lengths. Allow yourself 2-3 minute recoveries inbetween sprints.
Sun	Easy Jog	Develop your aerobic capacity jogging continuously for 18 minutes and 5 minute walk warm down



Week 8

Training		Training Notes
Mon	Swim	Easy 5 minute warm up (any stroke). Your target is 88 lengths front crawl in total. Perform 8 lengths of drills (2 lengths of 4 drills) followed by two sets of 40 lengths, with 2-3 minutes max inbetween each set. Ensure you hydrate yourself between sets. Cool down and stretch
Tues	REST	-
Wed	Swim	Easy 5 minute warm up (any stroke) followed by 88 lengths continuous front crawl. Perform 88 lengths continuously at a steady pace with no rest.
Thurs	Core & Stretch	Try 2-3 core exercises at home (15 minutes) including 3 x 16 abdominal raises, 3 x 12 glutes squeezes and perform a timed plank + 10-15 minutes whole body stretching
Fri	REST	-
Sat	Swim	Complete 10 lengths of easy front crawl. Increase your interval 'sprint' sets to 5 sets of 2 lengths and warm down with 10 lengths. Allow yourself a 2 minute recovery between sprints.
Sun	Easy Jog	Develop your aerobic capacity jogging continuously for 20 minutes and 5 minute walk warm down

Week 9

Training		Training Notes
Mon	Swim	Easy 5 minute warm up (any stroke). Your target is 100 lengths front crawl in total. Perform 16 lengths of drills (4 lengths of 4 drills) followed by three sets of 28 lengths, with 2-3 minutes max inbetween each set. Ensure you hydrate yourself between sets. Cool down and stretch
Tues	REST	-
Wed	Swim	Easy 5 minute warm up (any stroke) followed by 100 lengths continuous front crawl. Perform 100 lengths continuously at a steady pace with no rest.
Thurs	Core & Stretch	Try 2-3 core exercises at home (15 minutes) including 3 x 16 abdominal raises, 3 x 12 glutes squeezes and perform a timed plank + 10-15 minutes whole body stretching
Fri	REST	-
Sat	Swim	Complete 20 lengths of easy front crawl. Increase your interval 'sprint' sets to 8 sets of 2 lengths and warm down with 10 lengths. Allow yourself a 2 minute recovery between sprints.
Sun	Easy Jog	Develop your aerobic capacity jogging continuously for 22 minutes and 5 minute walk warm down



Week 10

Training		Training Notes
Mon	Swim	Easy 5 minute warm up (any stroke). Your target is 115 lengths front crawl in total. Perform 16 lengths of drills (4 lengths of 4 drills) followed by three sets of 33 lengths, with 2-3 minutes max inbetween each set. Ensure you hydrate yourself between sets. Cool down and stretch
Tues	REST	-
Wed	Swim	Easy 5 minute warm up (any stroke) followed by 116 lengths continuous front crawl. Perform 116 lengths continuously at a steady pace with no rest.
Thurs	Core & Stretch	Try 2-3 core exercises at home (15 minutes) including 3 x 16 abdominal raises, 3 x 12 glutes squeezes and perform a timed plank + 10-15 minutes whole body stretching
Fri	REST	-
Sat	Swim	Complete 30 lengths of easy front crawl. Increase your interval'sprint' sets to 8 sets of 2 lengths and warm down with 20 lengths. Allow yourself a 2 minute recovery between sprints.
Sun	Easy Jog	Develop your aerobic capacity jogging continuously for 24 minutes and 5 minute walk warm down

Week 11

Training		Training Notes
Mon	Swim	Easy 5 minute warm up (any stroke). Your target is 60 lengths front crawl in total. Perform 16 lengths of drills (4 lengths of 4 drills) followed by two sets of 22 lengths, with 2-3 minutes max inbetween each set. Ensure you hydrate yourself between sets. Cool down and stretch
Tues	REST	-
Wed	Swim	Easy 5 minute warm up (any stroke). Your target is 128 lengths in total. Perform 2 sets of 64 with a 2-3 minute rest between sets.
Thurs	Core & Stretch	Try 2-3 core exercises at home (15 minutes) including 3 x 16 abdominal raises, 3 x 12 glutes squeezes and perform a timed plank + 10-15 minutes whole body stretching
Fri	REST	-
Sat	Swim	Warm up and perform 128 lengths continuously at your threshold pace
Sun	Easy Jog	Develop your aerobic capacity jogging continuously for 25 minutes and 5 minute walk warm down



Week 12 - Taper

Training		Training Notes
Mon	Easy Swim	Easy 5 minute warm up (any stroke) followed by 15 minute light swim, rest when required, plus cool down and stretch
Tues	REST	-
Wed	Easy Swim	Easy swim for 15-20 minutes
Thurs	Core & Stretch	Focus additional effort on stretching, hydration and good quality sleep
Fri	REST	As above
Sat	REST	Ensure good hydration and sleep
Sun	Race Day	Enjoy!





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