

OPEN WATER SWIM – ADVICE

This plan includes a variety of different sessions with a mixture of techniques to work on throughout your training. It is important to incorporate some of the key open-water skills that can be replicated and practised in a pool as well as building your endurance. The various techniques will help strengthen your weaker areas of your swimming whilst improving your fitness. It will also aim to recreate the fatigue you may encounter during the event.

Although being a great pool swimmer is beneficial, it is also important to get used to the open water, so you need to practice – complete at least 1 session a week in open water if you can.

For open water sessions, you may have to adapt to the set-up at your local venue or estimate distances based on swimming time. For example, if the training session is 3 x 500m and the total loop length of your training venue is 1,500m round loop, then estimate 1/3 and then 2/3 of the distance – and then take your rests at those points (tread water to rest).

How is outdoor swimming different?

Firstly, being comfortable in open water and being able to quickly relax into your stroke will have a huge impact on the success, and most importantly, the enjoyment of your experience.



Water Temperature:

Indoor temperature range between 26-31 celsius

Outside can go as low as 0 – although September is unlikely to be as cold as this, even in higher temperatures, open water in the UK is cooler than a swimming pool.



Visibility:

Manmade, muddy bottomed lakes may also have poor visibility – you often can't see the bottom. Low visibility in water can be disorientating if you're not used to it, therefore, sighting is an important open water skill to learn (see training plan). Remember, you don't need to be able to see underwater to be able to swim.

Other Open Water Swimming Advice



Good wetsuit:

In the cold water it is essential to wear a wetsuit. They will not only help with the cold, but will make you more streamline in the water. It's important to consider the fit of a wetsuit, especially if it's new to you. Too loose, and it will fill up with water, too tight and it'll restrict your breathing. The arms should fit well above the wrist with a few ruckles under the arm pit to allow the shoulder to move freely and the neck should be low enough to limit neck rub. A good wetsuit should be unnoticeable in the water – check out this [Zone 3 wetsuits](#) for wetsuit recommendations and hire. Please note: The hire service gets disabled over the winter months and then reinstated again before the season starts in the New Year. Therefore, at present, suits aren't listed for hire but the information on the link will give all the details about duration of hire and costs depending on the suit you choose



Ear Plugs:

These are another great addition to open water swimming to build your confidence, reduce irritation and increase insulation – you can hear everything while wearing them but the water can't get in – check out (**SwimEars**).



Swim Hat:

Dream Challenges will provide every swimmer with a swimming hat, this will ensure all participants are visible to other participants and the event medical crew. The swimming hat will be a specific colour depending on the distance you have signed up for.



Cross Training:

You should incorporate some strength and conditioning sessions within your training, focusing on whole body sessions. Any strengthening exercise is good, but technique is still important as it is how you translate strength into the water. It is good to include some core and flexibility work as swimming is all about mobility and by improving your range of motion, this will help your technique.