



Tri Swim Coach Newsletter

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Open Water

Happy St. Patrick's Day!



This issue will be covering some important aspects of open water swimming. If you are training for a triathlon, it is essential that you not only train in the pool, but also in a lake, ocean, river, or whatever body of water you have access to.

Enjoy,
Kevin

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8 Tips to Training the Open Water

So you're ready to get out there and do some open water swimming to prepare for your next triathlon? Before you go dipping into your local body of water, keep these tips in mind:

1. Never swim alone. For safety purposes, always swim with a group or bring along a friend. Given the unknown elements, a dangerous situation may arise such as fog, currents, boats, etc. where you will be in much better shape with others around.
2. Adjust to cold water. If the water you are training in is cold, below 66 degrees fahrenheit, be prepared. Wetsuits are necessary. Wearing a swim cap and earplugs can help keep your head warm. Get in the water slowly and only get in for 5-20 minutes the first time out, gradually increasing your time in the water with each swim.
4. Upon exit of your cold water swim, drink warm fluids, take off your wetsuit, and dress warmly.
3. On sunny days, apply sunscreen 30 minutes before getting in (especially for those with light skin!).



4. Be careful of the fog. It is easy to get lost in foggy weather and lose sight of the shore.
5. Watch the seaweed. If you are ocean swimming and come across seaweed, stay high in the water and do not kick. The seaweed can wrap around you if your legs are kicking.
6. Never swim in a lightning storm.
7. Open water swimming can cause chaffing. Use petroleum jelly if this is a problem.
8. Goggle color. Use dark lenses on sunny days, blue lenses on cloudy days.

Open water swimming can be challenging, but for many it is FUN and a nice change from "following the black line" at the bottom of the pool. Enjoy, and remember, "when in doubt, get out."

[For the COMPLETE guide, click here!](#)

Characteristics of Rivers, Lakes, and Oceans

It is of course important to be familiar with your surroundings before you get out into the open water. Here are some differences of rivers, lakes and oceans to help prepare you:

Rivers- The center of the river moves the fastest. Watch for eddies near the shore. Back eddies will flow the opposite direction of the river, and the water is moving backwards.

Lakes- Can also have a current flow. Wind will affect movement. Keep in mind that the fresh water will feel slightly colder than ocean salt water at the same temperature. A 60 degree lake may feel more like 55 feels in the ocean.

Oceans- Tides, currents, and winds all affect an ocean swim. Learn to read tide charts and practice swims in the waves. Marine life is also out there. Even though everybody's biggest fear is sharks, rarely is there an attack on a swimmer. In fact, to my knowledge there has never been a shark attack on a swimmer during any major open water competition or triathlon. Swimming in groups scares the sharks away. Jellyfish can be near the surface on sunny days. They are purple and white in color and their stings will leave a welt. In the 70's, jellyfish were commonplace, but their population has declined more recently. The best way to deal with them is to adjust your stroke and avoid if you spot one.

[For the COMPLETE guide, click here!](#)



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