



Tri Swim Coach Newsletter

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Tri Swim Fun

Dear Friend,



Although swimming is very technical and can seem overwhelming and frustrating at times, always take the time to have fun with it! The sport you are learning or practicing is meant to be enjoyed. You may never achieve "the perfect stroke", but the process of maximizing your ability will be well worth it.

Today I have included a couple of articles I wrote last year. You may have seen them already, but they are worth reviewing as you may be coming up on a race or two soon.

Lastly, if you still have not ordered the video clips, I am keeping the offer open to order this series of drills and proper full stroke swimming online for \$9.95.

Keep it up and enjoy the newsletter!

Kevin

[For more on ordering the short video clips, click here!](#)

Why Count Strokes?

By Kevin Koskella
www.TriSwimCoach.com

You may have had coaches that make you count strokes throughout the workout, either by mixing it into drill sets, the main set, or at the end of workout. Some coaches recommend making a habit of always keeping track of your stroke count. As a coach of distance swimmers and triathletes, I believe stroke counting is a necessary part of most swimming workouts.



If you stick with it and do it on a consistent basis, stroke counting in swimming is an excellent way to increase your DPS (Distance Per Stroke). The world's best swimmers are faster than you because they travel further with each stroke, not because they are moving their arms faster. Keeping track of the number of

swimmers are faster than you because they travel further with each stroke, not because they are moving their arms faster. Keeping track of the number of strokes you take per length will allow you to begin to lengthen out your stroke, as well as add more speed and distance while keeping your heart rate down and allowing you to save your energy for later in the swim or race.

The goal should be to bring down your average stroke count per length. Great swimmers like Alexander Popov or Ian Thorpe may be able to scoot through the water at record speed while taking 30 strokes per length (50 meters), but this low stroke count does not have to be your golden number for improving your stroke. First, determine what your range is. Try to swim most of the time at the low end of your range or below your lowest stroke count. Don't worry about speed at first- you can influence this later, perhaps as you begin to learn what your "ideal" stroke count is. Here is an example of a set that can help lengthen your stroke, as well as build endurance:

50+100+150+200+200+150+100+50

- Take 10-30 seconds between swims
- Count your strokes each length on the way up.
- Try to maintain or lower your stroke count on the way down while keeping the same pace.

Another fun set that you can play with is free golf. For example:

6x50's Free on 1:05. For each 50, count your strokes AND check your time. Add these 2 numbers together to get your golf score. Try to lower this score through the set. The tricky part is, trying to add speed without adding strokes, or subtracting strokes without sacrificing speed.

Consistently incorporating stroke counting into your workouts will, over time, help you to swim with more stroke length in the water, and use less energy to go the same speed or even faster. And for those that don't consider swimming to be their strength in a triathlon, this saved energy is sure to translate into a better bike and run!

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Wetsuit Considerations

After the bicycle frame and components, purchasing a wetsuit is the largest expense in triathlon.

During the 1980's, triathlon events began to permit the use of wetsuits in competition. Benefits include increased buoyancy, expansion of potential workout and race venues; increased safety, and general comfort.

USAT sanctioned races allow wetsuits for races in water 78 degrees or less. USMS (Masters Swimming) swim events do not permit the use of wetsuits. Racers who decide on wearing wetsuits do so for reasons other than official placing or awards, and may be used by choice.

Why a Wetsuit

Warmth- The neoprene or rubber material traps a layer of water close to the skin that is warmed by core body temperature and delays hypothermia in water less than 80 degrees.

Buoyancy- The wetsuit provides safe and fear-reducing buoyancy, but should not be relied upon as a life preserver. However, increased confidence in the open water can be another benefit.

Speed- Reduction of drag, the effects of providing buoyancy to the hips and legs, and the ease of breathing and sighting all contribute to a 10% or greater reduction in time over an Olympic distance swim (3-5 minutes!)



of breathing and sighting all contribute to a 10% or greater reduction in time over an Olympic distance swim (3-5 minutes!).

Energy Conservation- This should be your goal on the swim, since you still have some biking and running left to do!

Wetsuits come in 3 primary varieties and can be 1 piece or two:

Full Cut- Coverage from head to toe. Made for 50 degree + water temps. \$200+
Sleeveless- i.e. Farmer John, Farmer Jane. Made for 75 degree +. \$125-\$200
Short Cut- Knee length Farmer John. 75 degree +. \$100-150.

Additional Considerations:

1. Open water swimming is often done "double capped" using latex swim caps.
2. Fit of the wetsuit should be "second skin" tight. Legs and arms can be "cut" to length with sharp scissors, if necessary. Fit around chest and arms for ease of movement is the single most important fit consideration.
3. The first time you swim in your wetsuit, it can feel like your breathing is restricted. This diminishes with practice as long as the fit is proper.
4. "Neck rash" is the chafing that can occur around the neck due to the movement associated with breathing. "Rash Guards" are shirts that help prevent this rash and can be obtained at Costco and most surf shops. Also, Vaseline helps prevent this.
5. Wetsuits should be rinsed after each use.
6. Use of "body glide" at the lower legs, neck and wrists can help in suit removal.
7. In a race, start unzipping your suit as you exit the water.

Primary Triathlon-related vendors:

DeSoto
Quintana Roo
Ironman
O'Neil
Orca

Wetsuits Online:

www.trifuel.com/gear/Swim/Triathlon_Wetsuits/index.php
www.nytro.com
www.teamconcept.com
www.ebay.com

[For workouts and the full training plan, click here!](#)

Find a Tri Swim Coach Near You!

If you live in the U.S., Canada, or Japan, there may be a coach in your area that can help accelerate your swimming improvement! Click on the link to see a list.

www.triswimcoach.com

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