



Chief Coach Advice Notes: Warming Up

Learn the Facts with Chief Coach, Bill Penny

Warming up - A good warm up has both physical and mental benefits. It prepares the circulatory system to deliver more oxygen to the muscles and prepares the muscles to use that oxygen more rapidly. The warm-up stretches the joints and muscles, increasing their range of movement so the swimmer can perform more efficiently and skillfully immediately the race begins. It also reduces the possibility of muscle and joint injuries. Swimmers can mentally rehearse their races during the warm up, plan their races and focus on aspects which will lead to success, such as pace, stroke and rhythm. They can also become accustomed to their surroundings as each pool has a different feel which can affect starts, turns etc.



Suggested warm up procedures

1. Stretching - before entering the water, swimmers should spend 10-15 minutes doing gentle mobile flexibility exercises, particularly the shoulders, legs and lower back. Skipping is also ideal.
2. Easy swimming for 10-15 minutes, including drills, is your next step, until you feel loose, efficient and powerful in the water. It is also a good time to rehearse your race mentally.
3. Pace and sprint swims come next. A set of 4x 25's are ideal for 50's and 100's races and 50's for 200 and further, incorporating stroke count and turns. Do a couple of 25 sprints to practice your starts.
4. Swim long and easy for 3 - 5 minutes.
5. Re-enter the water and swim easy for 10 minutes if you are having a long wait for your race.

Swimming down

One of the most important and most often neglected procedures for swimmers is swimming down. Swimmers should swim easy for 10 - 20 minutes, if possible, after a race. They will recover much faster if they do. Studies have shown they will recover twice as fast by swimming easy rather than just resting. Mild continuous exercise helps remove lactic acid from the muscles to the blood where it can be removed more rapidly by the heart, liver and other muscles. Mild exercise also permits faster recovery by removing carbon dioxide from the muscles to the lungs and delivering oxygen back to the muscles at a faster rate. This is just as important in our training sessions which I structure to allow a period of easy swimming, pulling or kicking to recover after a hard endurance set. (threshold, heart rate or MV_{O_2}). After a small set of sprints with which we often conclude our sessions, it is not so important to have a long swim down unless the particular set has been longer and more demanding, in which case we do.

Understand how your body works and do the simple things well to help your continued progression.