



8-Week Challenge

Beginner level

1-1.5km event goal

Pool swimming training guide

Welcome to OceanFit's 8-week ocean swim challenge.

In this guide, we're going to look at the pool swimming training component.

Whether you're having a go at your first entry-level ocean swim or you're upping the ante, and going long, we're going to guide you through your training.

While there's no substitute for time spent in the ocean – becoming aware of the ocean environment and developing the necessary skills to navigate the surf zone and open water – it's equally important to ensure you have the swimming base fitness, strength and techniques to underpin your ocean swimming ambitions.

In the pool swimming training section of your challenge you will learn how to train like a swimmer, swim along to our weekly training session plans and we'll help you monitor your progress with regular time trials.

Your pool training includes:

- Simple step-by-step session plans
- Learning about lane swimming
- Testing your fitness at key milestones
- Technique and drill videos
- Learning and practicing ocean swimming techniques in the pool

As part of the pool training component you will:

- Learn how to train like a swimmer
- Learn about lane swimming
- Be guided through each session
- Test your fitness at key milestones
- Learn and practice ocean swimming techniques in the pool

Enjoy your training, and if you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me by email, or in the challenge forum online.

Swim free,



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How to train vs. How to swim

Before we get started it's important that you know that as part of this challenge we're going to guide you through your pool swimming training, we're not going to teach you 'how to swim'.

There's an assumption here that you already know how to swim - that is, you have a basic ability to swim freestyle.

You don't have to be an Olympian, but you'll need an efficient freestyle stroke.

If your stroke is not up to scratch you will struggle to keep up with the challenge as the session intensity and volume increases.

If you think your stroke needs some work, do yourself a favour and get a stroke correction lesson or two before you start this program - and then continue them during the challenge for maximum benefit.

Otherwise, get prepared to train like you've never trained before!

Get your technique sorted

Technique should be the number one focus for beginner swimmers before undertaking a swim training program.

We recommend that you have your stroke assessed by a qualified swim coach before starting this challenge.

A good swim coach will analyse your stroke and provide feedback and exercises to help correct any deficiencies, so you can swim smooth and get the most out your challenge and to be set for event day.

We've made it easy

Swimming training can be as easy or as complicated as you want it to be.

Our pool training program is designed to be as simple as it could possibly be, while still following the basic foundations of a structured swim training program.

We've taken the guesswork out of your training and have designed a program that is incredibly easy to follow - here's why:

- Low number of sets per session
- No complicated set structures
- Choice of rest periods or intervals
- Basic everyday language
- Flexibility to adapt
- Suitable for 25M or 50M pool

If that doesn't make sense, it will soon!

Whether you're swimming at a small local pool, a large aquatic centre or an ocean baths, here's a few things to help you enjoy your experience.

Timing your swim

- Avoid swimming during peak times
- Check the availability of public lanes (check online or ask at reception)

Value for money

- Most pools offer a discount on multi-swim cards.
- Check with your pool for the best value for money on offer.

Clean pools

- Ocean pools are usually emptied and cleaned once a week on schedule. Work out which day is cleaning day and swim within a few days after for the best quality water.
- Public swimming pools will be clean every day, but cleanest in the mornings.

The right gear

The great thing about swimming is that you only need the bare minimum of equipment to get started.

Take your **swimsuit**, **cap** and **goggles** and you're ready to go.

Add a small re-sealable plastic bag for your training session cards and you'll be smiling from end to end.

How to choose goggles

Choosing goggles is all about comfort.

There are hundreds of options out there, but the best goggles are always the ones that fit the best, and don't leak.

Try on a range of goggles before choosing your pair. If you're worried about size choose a pair with an adjustable nose clip.

Clear lens are better for the pool; smoky, tinted or polarized for outdoors.

OceanFit recommends Vorgee goggles, and our favourites are the Missile and Vortech.

Purchase yours from oceanfit.com.au/shop

Pool lengths

The majority of swimming pools will be either 25m long or 50m long (which is the official Olympic length)

There are still some pools around that are 30m or 33m, but they're not very common.

Ocean baths are all different lengths. The pool staff will be able to let you know how long your ocean bath is.

Remember to work out your swimming training according to the length of the pool.

i.e. 100m is equivalent to:

- 4 lengths of a 25m pool, or
- 2 lengths of a 50m pool.

Lane swimming is bathed in unwritten rules that help to regulate lane swimmers and reduce 'lane rage' – yes, it's a real thing!

There's no need to be intimidated though, just follow this simple guide to lane swimming etiquette:

Choose the right lane

Lanes are usually labelled for speed
– SLOW/MEDIUM/FAST.

It's important you observe the speed of each lane before choosing the one that best matches your speed.

If there is more than one lane at your speed, choose the one with the least amount of people swimming in it.

Swim to the left

Always swim to the left of the black line.

Swim as close as you can to the lane rope to avoid colliding into oncoming swimmers.

Turn on the centre of the wall at each end and move to the left as soon as possible.

Swim freestyle

Unless otherwise signposted, you should only swim freestyle.

Short drills (like the ones in this challenge) that involve other strokes are ok, but these should be kept to a minimum and you should always be mindful of where other swimmers are while doing these.

End of lane

During rest periods at the end of the lane, always stand in the left-hand corner to allow other swimmers to turn on the centre of the wall.

Never stop in the middle of a length, or hang off the lane rope.

Merge like a zip

Familiarize yourself with the speed of other swimmers in your lane. Avoid pushing off the wall just in front of a faster swimmer.

Letting faster swimmers through

If a faster swimmer catches you during a length they will tap your foot, in this case you should stop briefly at the next end and let them pass.

Passing slower swimmers

If you catch a slower swimmer during a length, gently tap them on the foot once, this will alert them to your presence and they should let you pass at the next end.

Alternatively you can cut the length by turning ahead of the swimmer while they are at the wall.

If you catch a swimmer early in the length, you can try to pass if you are able to complete the pass before the end of the length. Be mindful of oncoming swimmers.

Every lane pool will have a swim clock, or two, that are used for calculating intervals and/or rest during your session.

The 60-second analogue clock is divided up into 5-second increments and will usually have a black hand and a red hand.

It takes a while to get used to using a clock to manage your swim session, but all sessions are planned around the clock so it's important you know how to read it.

The clock

This is what a classic pool clock looks like.



Timing rest periods

i.e. 20 SECONDS REST

Calculating rest is easy on the clock.

You count the amount of rest in elapsed seconds from the moment you touch the wall.

Rest example:

4 x 50M with 20 SEC rest

Start on the black 60. When you finish your 50M look at the clock and after 20 SEC has elapsed, push off the wall to start your next repetition.

Timing intervals

i.e. ON THE 1 MINUTE

Intervals are fixed times that have the time to cover the set distance and rest build into them.

Calculating intervals is a little harder, it requires that you know the approximate time you take to swim certain distances. 25/50m are easy because they usually come under 60 seconds.

Distances 100m and greater become harder because the second hand on the clock will pass the 60-second mark and start moving around the clock again.

Interval example:

4 x 100M on 2 MIN

Start on the black 60, if you finish your 100M in 1.40 then you will get 20 SEC rest. If you finish on the 1.55 then you only get 5 SEC rest. Leave on the black 60 again.

Know your clock lingo

If you join a swim squad, you might want to become familiar with these references to timing:

- 'Go on the top' – leave on the 60 second
- 'Go on the bottom' – leave on the 30 second
- 'Go on the 60' – leave on the 60 second
- 'Go on the red/black 60' – leave when the red/black hand reaches the 60 second

Each set within this swimming training program is allocated an 'intensity' level which is the amount of effort you are required to put into the set in order to get the most out of it.

Intensity levels are simplified to:

LOW / MEDIUM / HARD / BUILD

Intensity levels are subjective, what is HARD to one person might be LOW to someone else.

Everyone's intensity level should be the same as a % of effort put in, but this may result in different levels of speed/time taken to complete the distance.

Here are three different ways you can determine your intensity levels (in order from easy to hard):

Perceived exertion

Using a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is as easy and slow as you can swim without sinking, and 10 is as hard and fast as you can swim, you self evaluate where each of the intensity levels fall for you.

i.e. LOW = 1-3, MEDIUM = 4-6, HARD = 7-10.

Time

If you are time orientated, then you can base your intensity levels on the time it takes you to swim a set distance.

i.e. if you swim a regular 50M at MEDIUM intensity in 45 SEC, then you can remove 5 SEC for HARD intensity (40 SEC) and add 5 SEC for LOW intensity (50 SEC).

Use the Time Trial in the first week to work out your intensity levels based on time (form in next column).

	Time
1st 50M	
2nd 50M	
3rd 50M	
4th 50M	
Average 50M	Add the 4x 50M times & divide by 4

Find your intensity level using your average time:

	Average time per distance (50M or 100M)							
50M:	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70
100M:	1.30	1.35	1.40	1.45	1.50	1.55	2.00	2.05
Intensity level	HARD	MED	LOW					
		HARD	MED	LOW				
			HARD	MED	LOW			
				HARD	MED	LOW		
					HARD	MED	LOW	
						HARD	MED	LOW

Heart Rate BPM (Beats Per Minute)

If you know how to find your pulse, and can do so during a swim session, then you can use your BPM to find your training intensity.

LOW = 130-150 BPM, MEDIUM = 140-160 BPM, HARD 170-200+ BPM

Build

When the intensity level asks you to BUILD, then you will start your repetition at one intensity level and finish at a higher intensity. i.e. BUILD from LOW to HARD.

Using the *Time* example, if you are required to BUILD your intensity from LOW to HARD through a repetition then you would start the repetition at your 50 SEC pace and finish it at your 40 SEC pace.

Our training sessions have been designed to be easy to read using simple every day language - not technical swimmer talk!

SET

Number of repetitions over a set distance: (i.e. 5 x 100M). Plan is split into sets & numbered 1, 2, 3 etc.

INTENSITY

Amount of effort required to perform the set (LOW, MEDIUM, HARD). BUILD means to increase intensity within distance.

REST

Rest is the elapsed time you take between repetitions (i.e. 20 SEC).

INTERVAL

A set time to swim the required repetition distance (i.e. 100M in 2 MIN. In this case if you swim the 100M in 1.45 you will get 15 SEC rest.) It's a built in work/rest ratio.

DURATION

The approximate amount of time taken to complete the set (i.e. 5-6 MIN)

VOLUME

Distance in km's of the set (i.e. 5 x 100M = 0.5KM)

DRILL

A specialised exercise that allows the swimmer to focus on one or two specific areas of their stroke.

FREE

This part of the set should be completed using a freestyle swimming stroke.

CHOICE

Your choice of stroke. Mix up strokes with kick. Also a chance to practice more drills.

WHEN REQUIRED

Take rest when you need it. However, don't over rest.

NIL

No rest associated with this set.

Acronyms

SEC = Seconds | MIN = Minutes | KM = Kilometres
M = Metres | INT = Interval

Example session plan

	INTENSITY	REST/INTERVAL	DURATION	VOLUME
1	1 X 200M CHOICE			
	LOW	WHEN REQUIRED	4-6 MIN	0.2
	Swim a mixture of strokes / kicking at low intensity.			
DRILL	1 X 100M FREE TO BACK			
	LOW	NIL	2-3 MIN	0.1
	Free to Back: 6 strokes freestyle and roll to 6 strokes backstroke (continuous).			
2	4 X 100M FREE			
	MEDIUM	10-15 SEC	11-15 MIN	0.4
	Focus on maintaining a good smooth stroke throughout the set.			
3	1 X 200M CHOICE			
	LOW	WHEN REQUIRED	4-6 MIN	0.2
	Swim easy & relaxed.			

Training phases

Sessions will increase in volume and intensity as you progress through the challenge. There are three phases of training:

1. PREPARATION (Week 1-3)

Introduction to structured training, prepare the body and mind.

2. BUILD UP (Week 4-5)

Gradually increase the volume and intensity of each training session.

3. ENDURANCE (Week 6-8)

Maintain high vol. and develop aerobic fitness base.

See the 'training volume schedule' below to view how the three phases are apportioned throughout the challenge.

Time trials

Time trials are a benchmark tool designed to test your speed & fitness at a given point in your training.

Your time trial time will let you know whether you are improving during your training.

In week one you will complete your first time trial to set a benchmark time. This will be the hardest time trial you do because you will likely be unfit and unconditioned.

Then, in weeks four and six there are scheduled time trials to test your fitness against your previous benchmark time.

Use your Training Log to record your time trial times.

Tip: Use a digital wrist-watch to time your Time Trial rather than relying on the pool clock.

Drills

Drills are a great way to practice stroke technique and ocean swimming skills.

While the training programs stipulate which drills you should be doing in each session, you are welcome to mix up your drills or practice them in addition to your scheduled training.

At the end of your program you can use these drills along with the maintenance sessions you will be given.

Challenge training volume schedule

