



Modular swim sets

One of the problems with swimming, other than the fact that you have to get wet doing it, is that of finding swim sets to do in the pool that are simple enough to remember without having to cart a book around with you or write them on bits of paper that go all soggy. While there are several commercial products like the *Swim in a Binder* books here is a simple alternative that can be printed out on two sides of A4 and laminated to keep in your kit bag for those moments when you simply can't think what to do.

Warm-up session

You have a choice of three warm-ups and these should be swum in a relaxed manner with the emphasis on style and maintaining a consistent form. You should also incorporate stretching and flexibility on poolside into these warm-ups. Keep hydrated throughout the sessions with water or a sports drink.

400m: Swim 200m full stroke, 100m kick and 100m pull

500m: Swim 200m full stroke, 200m pull and 100m kick

700m: Swim 200m full stroke, 100m pull and 50m kick then repeat

Technique sessions

The point of these is to improve, or at least to maintain, stroke form and not stroke rate. Paddles and fins may be used as required. The permitted drills are: one-arm, catch up, ripple, fist-full, kick on side, head touch, head-first sculling and feet-first sculling. Again, there is a choice of three technique sessions.

500m: Swim 50m drill, 100m full, 50m drill, 50m full then repeat

600m: Swim 50m drill, 100m full then repeat three times

800m: Swim 50m drill, 100m full, 50m drill, 50m full, 50m drill, 100m full then repeat

Main set

The main set can be swum either as an endurance set (aerobic pace), a speed set (race threshold pace) or as a mixed set with the second half at a higher pace. During off-season training one speed set per month is adequate but this should increase during the race season. The distance of the main set should be between 1000m and 1,500m for athletes training for events up to standard distance and between 1,500 and 2,500m for more experienced swimmers or those aiming for up to ironman distance. As before, choose one of the three.

Endurance swim

Swim as either one full distance or two half distance with 60 seconds recovery. For example, a single 1,200m effort or two 600m efforts with a minutes rest between them. Swim at fully aerobic pace, ie 5% slower than your target 1,500m race time.

Mixed swim

Break the chosen distance into segments and swim the last part of each segment as a 'build'. For example, a 1,200m swim can be done as three 300m segments with the first 200m swum aerobically and the last 100m of each segment swum at race pace. Rest intervals are 45 seconds between segments. Pace awareness is key here, use the pool clock.

Pace swim

Break the chosen distance into 200m segments, reducing to 100m segments if you are unable to hold the pace. Swim each segment on an interval of +10%: if you swim 100m in 1 minute 40 seconds (100 seconds) at race pace then your interval is 1 minute 50 seconds (110 seconds). Again, use the pool clock to maintain your pace and do not rush the first segments or the last will become a struggle.

Warm down

Swim at least 300m fully relaxed to recover and then repeat the mobility and stretching exercises before showering. Remember that this is also a key time to take on both hydration and nutrition.