



Parents Handbook

ESSDolphins SWIM CLUB INC.

The road to enjoyment and achieving to the best of your ability



The sport of swimming encourages healthy competition, and at training your child will begin to learn about swimming etiquette and how much fun the sport can be.

This is a guide to help you ensure your child is learning from their experiences in the sport of swimming, regardless of whether they end up swimming for Australia or whether they simply swim for fitness or fun. You will also find ways in which you can support your child in becoming the best athlete they can to be.

We look forward to enjoying your child's development and achievements with you.

Developing an “Athletes first, winning second” perspective

Every decision parents make in supporting and directing their child in sport should be based on what is **best for the child first** and what may help the child win second. This perspective of athletes first, winning second can help some children achieve more than they would if they were consumed with the idea of winning. An obsession with winning can create a fear of failure, which may result in less than average performance and an upset child.

Building your child's self esteem

As a parent, you are one of the main influences in your child's life, and one of your most important roles is to build their self-esteem. A child with good self-esteem is more likely to be proud of their personal accomplishments, accept challenges and new tasks and also, help others. On the other hand, children who find their confidence through winning can go through some very hard times when they lose.

It is important that your child knows they can be successful without winning.

If your child is aiming to beat their personal best (PB) for a certain race, and they accomplish that, then they are successful regardless of what place they finish in.

As long as your child puts in their best effort, make them feel like a winner!

Let the Coach, Coach

It is the coach's job to offer a child constructive criticism on their swimming. The Parent's role is to support, encourage and recognise their child's efforts. If a parent attempts to coach their child, the child may get confused with conflicting information, and their coach may be unimpressed.

It is equally important to never undermine the coach in front of the athlete, as this can be extremely harmful to the coach and athlete relationship, which is necessary for success.

If you have any concerns or wish to discuss any issues around your child's swimming development please approach your child's respective coach off pool deck following completion of the training session.

Help and encourage your child in setting realistic goals




The competitive side of swimming is very important to the development of athletes and the sport of swimming. At a junior level, the most important factor is participation, effort and skill development. Beating their PB and learning a new skill are both examples of realistic and attainable goals for a junior swimmer.

Regardless of whether your child will win gold for Australia or whether they are equally happy competing at club events, the sport must be fun to maintain their interest.

Always ensure that your child has their PB recorded and that each time they race, this is what they are trying to beat rather than other people. PB recording ensures the focus is on individual improvement rather than purely on winning or losing. Your child may come 10th in a race, but if they beat their PB, they are a winner.

Communication with your child is important. Talk to them about their training – are they getting along with their squad and most importantly with their coach. If they are not, you may need to assess the situation, and decide on what needs to be done to resolve any issue with the least amount of disruption to your child and the squad.

Ask your child questions after training such as:

-  “What new skill did you learn today?”
-  “What was the best thing that happened today?”
-  “What does your coach think you need to work on?”



Communication with your child also requires your support in telling them how proud you are of them, no matter how they swam. Never be disappointed in your child's swim, keep the focus on how well they did to make it to that point in their swimming career, and where they can go from here.

As parents we all want our children to love swimming and be in the sport for a lifetime, regardless of whether it is as a pool swimmer or whether they branch out into other avenues like water polo, open water swimming, Austswim teaching, coaching or lifesaving. Even after our children have finished their swimming careers, we want them to still love the sport recreationally.

It is important that we don't compare our children with others of the same age, because children progress at different rates as they develop physically and emotionally.

And just as there are times when children can reach plateaus and improvement seems slow, there are also occasions when they can make rapid progress.

We can help mould our children's attitudes while also providing encouragement and being the chauffeur, nutritionist and the banker.

One of the most important roles parents can play is to help their children establish a good rapport with the coach.

A parent's job isn't easy, but if we do it well then our children's enjoyment of the sport will be our reward.

Why? Because we are our child's Number One Fan!

As parents, we obviously want our children to have some success because it can boost their self-esteem and this encourages them to keep swimming. At the same time, however, we need to encourage them and support their dreams without being pushy and in their face or trying to coach them.

In my dual role as a swimmer, swimming parent and a coach, the biggest reason I see for children not wanting to continue swimming is because they are no longer enjoying training or competition. We encourage children to play other sports while they are young and to not just swim, because we want them to find hidden talents, to develop strength and coordination in their bodies by using other muscle groups, and to socialise widely.

50 Things to Help your Child Achieve in Sport



1. **Love** them unconditionally.
2. **Support** their coaches.
3. **Accept** that they cannot win every time they compete.
4. **Allow** them to be kids and have fun.
5. **Help** them to develop as people with character and values.
6. **Turn off** as a sporting parent: don't make sport the one and only topic of conversation at the dinner table, in the car, etc.
7. **Don't introduce** your child as "This is my son/daughter the swimmer." Their sports are something they do, not who they are.
8. **Don't do everything** for them: teach responsibility and self-management.
9. **Reward** frequently for success and effort but make the rewards small, simple, practical and personal. Kids don't need a CD or \$20 just for playing a sport or getting a ribbon.
10. **Reward** them with what they really love: your time!
11. **Be calm**, relaxed and dignified at competitions.
12. **Accept** that progress in any sport takes a long time: at least 7 to 10 years after maturation in most sports for the athlete to reach full potential.
13. **Believe it or not**, kids can learn to pack and unpack their training bags and fill their own water bottles: teach and encourage them to take control of their own sporting careers.
14. **Don't reward** championship performances with **junk food**.
15. **Skills and attitude** are most important. Don't waste money on the latest and greatest equipment or gimmicks, hoping to buy a short cut to success.
16. **Encourage** the same commitment and passion for school and study as you do for sport.
17. **Avoid** relying on or encouraging "sports food" or "sports supplements"-focus on a sensible, balanced diet, which includes a variety of wholesome foods.
18. **Allow** kids to try many sports and activities.
19. **Don't specialize** too early. There is no such thing as a 10-year-old Olympic swimmer.
20. Junk food is OK very occasionally. Don't worry about it, but see #14 above.
21. **Praise** qualities such as effort, attempting new skills and hard work rather than winning.
22. **Love** them unconditionally (worth repeating!!)
23. Have your "**guilt gland**" removed: this will help you avoid phrases like "I've got better things to do with my time" or "do you realize how much we give up so that you can swim?" Everyone loses when you play the guilt game.
24. Encourage activities which build broad, general movement skills like running, catching, throwing, agility, balance, co-ordination, speed and rhythm. These **general skills** can have a positive impact on all sports.
25. Encourage occasional "**down time**"-no school or sport-just time to be kids.
26. Encourage relationships and friendships away from training, competition and school work-it's all about **balance**.
27. Help and support your children to **achieve the goals** they set, then take time to relax, celebrate and enjoy their achievements as a family.

28. Never deny your children sport training as a means of **punishment**.
29. Do another sport **unrelated** to the child's main **sport**. Everyone benefits.
30. **Car pool**. Get to know the other kids and families on the team and in turn you can allow your child to be more independent by doing things with other trusted adults.
31. Attend practice regularly to show that you are **interested** in the effort and process, not just in the win/lose outcome.
32. Help raise money for the team and kids, even if your own child does not directly benefit from the **fundraising**.
33. Tell your children you are **proud** of them for being involved in healthy activities.
34. **Volunteer** your time for the team.
35. Teach your child the importance of **"team"**-where working together and supporting each other are important attributes.
36. Even if you were an athlete and even if you are a trained coach, **resist the temptation to coach** your own child, it rarely works.
37. Be aware that your child's **passion** for a particular sport **may change**.
38. Be aware that **skills** learned in one sport can often **transfer** to another.
39. **Accept "flat spots"** or plateaus-times when your child does not improve. During these times encourage participation for fun, focus on learning skills and help develop perseverance and patience.
40. Believe it or not, Australian kids are unlikely to die from **drinking tap water!**
41. Cheer for your child appropriately. Do not **embarrass** yourself or your child.
42. Make sure that each week includes some family time where you do family things and **talk about family issues**-not about sport.
43. Take a **strong stand against smoking and drug use** (both recreational and performance enhancing.)
44. Set an example with sensible, responsible alcohol use.
45. **Don't look for short cuts** like "miracle sports drinks" or "super supplements"-success comes from consistently practicing skills and developing an attitude where the love of the sport and physical fitness are the real "magic."
46. If one of your children is a champion athlete and the others in the family are not so gifted, ensure that you have just as much **time**, energy and enthusiasm for their activities.
47. Eliminate the phrase "what we did when I was swimming....."
48. Encourage your children to find **strong role models** but try not to let this decision be based on sports only. Look for role models who consistently demonstrate integrity, humility, honesty and the ability to take responsibility for their own actions.
49. Encourage your children to learn **leadership** and practice concepts like sharing, selflessness, teamwork and generosity.
50. **Don't compare** your child's achievement to another other children-good or bad. This creates barriers and resentment,

Swimmer Health

Swimming is an excellent sport for children's health, and a lot of asthmatic children have become very good swimmers. It improves fitness, controls weight, makes children feel better and more energetic, and builds strong muscles and bones.

Swimming is fun for children, especially when they meet new friends and enjoy friendly competition. As children start to perform better the coach often suggests a progression to a higher-level squad. At higher levels of competition swimmers will train more regularly and participate in longer sessions.

Swimming causes a few specific illnesses and early treatment means your child will not miss much training. I hope the following information and advice on this subject enables you to ensure your child maintains excellent health and is able to fully enjoy the swimming experience.

Ear infections are common in young children because the ear canal is narrow.

Swimmer's ear or otitis externa is an infection in the ear canal caused by contaminated water or debris such as wax or dry skin harbouring germs, which thrive in moisture.

Children complain of a sore ear and it hurts when tugged or pressed. Usually the doctor will prescribe some antibiotic drops. You need to see a doctor to make sure there is no debris in the canal, which will lead to a recurrence. Earplugs may help an early return to swimming. Sore ears associated with upper respiratory illness are not caused by water. This condition is called otitis media or middle ear infection. The cause is usually a virus which does not need antibiotics but your doctor can examine the ears, nose and throat before deciding whether medication is needed.

Viral infections require rest as early as possible and children should not go to swimming training if they have symptoms of a viral infection. Virus particles are easily transmitted to other children and highly contagious. Typical symptoms of a respiratory viral infection are unusual tiredness, irritability, headache, runny nose, sore throat, sore muscles and after a couple of days a cough develops. If your child is feeling tired and grumpy, rest them until they have recovered.

Our immune system fights viral infections. If children have late nights, or stress from exams or assignments, or family problems the immune system does not cope as well and children catch infections easily.

Swimmers who have hay fever and asthma are prone to respiratory infections unless their asthma is well controlled. Children need to take their medication regularly even when they are well, and always have a Ventolin puffer in their swimming bag in case they have trouble breathing.

Swimmer's shoulder is the most common injury from swimming and needs early treatment. A sports physician or a GP with an interest in sport should diagnose the problem and arrange appropriate treatment.

Sometimes medication is required. It is not normal to have to swim with sore shoulders and the condition will get worse. Sometimes it is related to posture and physiotherapists can prescribe some exercises to do at home.

It is crucial to get children into healthy hydration habits while they are still young, to ensure they understand their body and why it is so important to keep themselves hydrated. Normally the first sign of dehydration is thirst, and it is important to ensure your child is having regular 'mouthfuls' of fluids throughout training sessions and immediately after each event regardless of feeling thirsty at that time or not. This should also be followed through at school, home and in day-to-day life. Water is the preferable fluid; however, during an event, a sports drink may encourage a larger intake and provide a lift in energy.

The recipe for healthy swimming is simple: get a good night's sleep, eat healthy foods, drink plenty of fluids and stay happy. And the formula for doing well in all sporting endeavours is equally straightforward: peak health + peak fitness = peak performance. Those golden rules apply not just to our advanced swimmers, but to the juniors as well.

Some Simple FAQ's



Where Do I Buy Goggles And What Type Do I Buy?

As we all come in different shapes and sizes, there will be different goggles for everyone. You can buy these most likely at your local pool, and also at any sports store. Goggles should fit snugly around the eye, and you should feel a slight suck. You may need to try on a number of different brands and styles until you find ones that are both comfortable, and watertight on you.

What Is The Best Way To Choose And Care For Swimwear?

Swimwear is probably the most personal choice a child gets in swimming. They can choose any style, colour, and material they want, as long as it is comfortable and suitable for training. Some brands of swimwear use an 'endurance' type material, which can withstand the chemicals of chlorine for much longer than the usual lycra material. They are more expensive, but in the time you have one pair of endurance, you could go through 3 or 4 pairs of Lycra bathers. Caring for your child's swimwear will increase the life of the apparel. The best way to look after swimwear is to rinse them with cold water after training, and hanging them out to drip dry in a shady place.

Swimming In The Winter

As with any skill, not practicing swimming can be detrimental to both the skills and also fitness levels. It is important that swimmers do not lose this simply due to the climate. As a general rule, indoor pools are heated, and therefore if your child is training at an indoor pool, the weather should have a minimal impact on their swimming development. It is, however important to make sure that your child has clean and dry underwear and clothes to change in to after a pool session. Always keeping a spare pair of underwear and socks in their sports bag may be a way to ensure they never walk out wet into the cold weather.

Swimming Lingo

Bilateral Breathing: Most common in freestyle. Breathing to the left side then swimming three strokes and breathing to the right side, then swimming three strokes and breathing to the left side, and so on.

Blocks: The starting platforms located behind each lane. Blocks have a variety of designs and should only be fitted where there is a safe diving depth. Blocks may be permanent or removable, but also incorporate a bar to allow swimmers to perform backstroke starts.

Breaststroke: Arms are moving simultaneously under the water horizontally, with legs doing a frog kick.

Butterfly: Legs move up and down together, and arms move together in an 'up and over' motion.

Circle Swimming: A way of avoiding collisions when there is more than one swimmer in a lane. Swimmers stay to one side of the lane, and then swap to change direction. E.g. always staying on the left side of the lane, similar to driving.

Clock: The big clock on the wall or deck is used for interval training. The red hand goes around every 60 seconds. Swimmers who can read the clock and know their times find it easy to monitor their own progress. Your child's coach will be happy to explain the clock to you.

Deck: The area around the swimming pool. During a meet, only 'authorised people' may be on deck. This includes swimmers, coaches and officials.

Flags: These are suspended over the width of each end of the pool are located 5 metres from the wall, they allow backstroke swimmers to determine where the end of the pool is. It is good practice for all backstroke swimmers to test this distance when competing or training at an unfamiliar pool.

Four Beat Kick: 4 leg movements per arm stroke in freestyle. Similarly 2 and 6 beat kicks may be used.

Freestyle: Another name for the "front crawl" It is called Freestyle, as there is no set technique.

Lane Ropes: the dividers used to set out the lanes in a pool. These are made of individual finned disks strung on a cable, that turn on the cable when hit by a wave, dissipating the wave.

Long Course: Events swum in a 50-metre pool.

Medley: All strokes are used. This can be an individual event, with one person swimming all strokes. Or it can be a relay event with four people, each swimming a different stroke.

Open Water Swimming: Swimming in water other than in a pool, for example the ocean, or a lake.

PB or Personal Best: The best time a swimmer has done so far in a particular stroke/event.

Pull: A drill in where you swim using your arms only. A Pull Buoy is often used to keep swimmers legs together while they pull

Referee: The head official at a swim meet.

Short Course: Events run in a 25-metre pool










Touch Pad: The removable plate (on the end of pools) that is connected to an automatic timing system. A swimmer must properly touch the touch pad to register an official time in a race.

Tumble Turn: Used in freestyle swimming, similar to a somersault under the water upon reaching the pool wall. Is faster than 'touch and go' once technique is mastered.

Warm down: Used by the swimmer to rid the body of excess lactic acid generated during a race.

Warm-up: The practice and loosening session a swimmer does before the meet or their event. The blood flow to the muscles warm up creates is essential to avoid injury.

Attending to a Swim Meet

-  Find out where you're going. Most meet announcements will have directions. If not, check the handbook. Consider car pooling, convoying, and so on.
-  Find out what time warm-ups begin for your swimmer and when the meet begins. Most meets are held in two sessions—morning and afternoon. You need only attend the session in which your swimmer swims. Allow for plenty of time to get where you are going.
-  Wear something cool because pool areas are usually warm and humid
-  Purchase a meet program. You will find all your swimmer's entry information listed in the meet program along with that of all other participants. Use a highlighter to mark all your swimmer's events, as well as those of team members.
-  Parents assist with timing. Swimming meets are normally timed electronically with the assistance of two backup human timers. Each swim club represented at a swim meet is required to provide timers for the entire meet. For large meets, parents will receive a timing roster in advance; they will be notified of these by phone or e-mail. At smaller meets including club events, rosters will also cover the program. All parents are expected to participate, including committee members. It's the best seat in the house. Don't worry about lack of experience. It's simple, and stopwatches are provided.
-  Parents should make sure their swimmer warms up. The swimmer should go down on deck prior to the beginning of the warm-up session and consult with the coach. It is important to follow the recommendation of the coach. After warm-ups, your swimmer should dry off and keep warm. Swimmers should always have their cap and goggles handy including spares.
-  When your swimmer's event is called, he or she should report to the marshalling area. Parents do not go to the marshalling area but rather to the pool to find a seat to enjoy the race.
-  After the race, the swimmer goes immediately to the coach for feedback. If the coach is with another swimmer or watching another team member compete, your swimmer needs to be patient while waiting. A printout of the electronic results will be posted in a specified area near the pool, usually within 15 minutes of the race. Check the results and record your swimmer's time in your program. Later you can record it in your swimmer's logbook.
-  Swimmers are occasionally disqualified (DQed) during their event. Reasons for a DQ range from false starts to performing strokes, turns, or finishes incorrectly. DQs are judgments made by the Swimming officials. The official will explain to the swimmer the reason for the DQ. The coach will reinforce this judgment. Parents should not question the judgment of an official. DQs can be difficult for swimmers and parents to accept, but they do happen to every swimmer sooner or later. It is helpful if the parent accepts the fact that Australian Swimming has high standards and that the same standards apply to every swimmer. Performing the skills of swimming in accordance with Australian Swimming standards is part of the discipline process that makes swimming a character-building sport.

Writing on a Swimmer's Hand
















By writing information in waterproof ink on the back of the swimmer's hand, the swimmer can watch and listen for his or her events to be seeded and remember what the events are. This also allows the swimmer to check whether he or she is in the correct heat and lane.

The information on the hand represents the swimmer's individual events at the meet the swimmer is attending. Make up your own shorthand; for example, "4/3/5 100fr" might mean 100-yard freestyle: event #4, heat #3, lane #5.



Gear to Bring to the Meet

Swimmers are recommended to bring the following:

-  Team Gear
-  Goggles—well-adjusted and leak proof
-  Extra goggles just in case
-  Team swim cap—or two in case one rips
-  Change of clothing
-  Team jacket, if you have one
-  Towels—two or three are needed because the swimmer dries off after warm-ups, between events, and when changing to go home
-  Plastic water bottle and/or drinks in containers other than glass
-  Folding chairs
-  Quiet activities: homework, books, Walkman, playing cards, and so on
-  Highlighter to mark your swim program
-  Ballpoint pen to write on your swimmer's hand
-  Healthy Food – no fried foods to be purchased or consumed !!!!!
-  Money for a program (\$2 to \$10)—they're helpful, but you're not obligated to buy them; equipment is usually for sale
-  For summer meets: sunscreen, insect repellent, hat, sunglasses



Some of these items may seem unnecessary, but when you arrive at your first meet, you will soon understand the value of each and be glad you brought them.

Healthy Tips



Recovery

To ensure that you recover from each training session and can complete the next feeling 100%, good recovery is essential. Not only does this involve stretching, icing and massage etc, but includes nutritional recovery. Nutritional recovery means refuelling and rehydrating.

Refuelling

You should start the recovery process (ie. replenishing your glycogen stores) ASAP after training. Aim to eat 1 gram of carbohydrate per kilogram of your body weight straight away, then follow this up with a high carbohydrate meal. The following list provides examples of the best foods for recovery. Choose 1-2 of these to eat ASAP as they each provide 50 grams of carbohydrate:

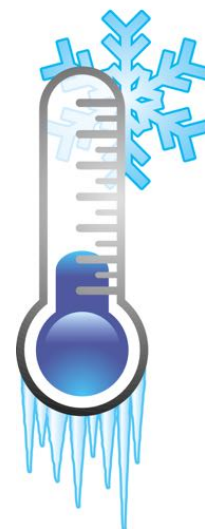
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Staying Healthy through Winter

Athletes are at increased risk of illness (specifically upper respiratory tract infection) during periods of heavy exercise and for 1-2 weeks following competition.

To maximise recovery & minimise risk of infection following exercise:

- 🏊 Manage physical training loads
- 🏊 Reduce stress
- 🏊 Ensure sufficient sleep & rest
- 🏊 Minimise exposure to germs and bugs
- 🏊 Avoid rapid & extreme weight loss
- 🏊 Eat a well balanced and nutritious diet



Eating well:



- 🏊 Eat at least 2 serves of fresh fruit daily. Try to include at least 1 fruit that is rich in vitamin C (e.g. orange, mandarin, kiwi fruit).
- 🏊 Eat at least 5 different vegetables daily. Try to include a wide variety of different coloured vegetables to provide plenty of the various vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. Eat plenty of soups, stews and casseroles with lots of veggies.
- 🏊 Continue to include a protein-rich food at every meal. Try to eat lean red meat at least 2-3 times every week, to provide your body with sufficient iron and zinc.
- 🏊 Ensure that your carbohydrate intake is adequate, basing all meals on a carbohydrate rich food such as bread, breakfast cereal, rice, pasta, noodles, couscous, potato etc.
- 🏊 Don't forget to eat a carbohydrate rich snack immediately after every training session. Remember that you need at least 1 gram of carbohydrate per kilogram of your body weight within the first 30 minutes. Nutritious choices include: fresh fruit and juices, sandwiches, breakfast cereal, milk drink (Sustagen, Up & Go), creamed rice etc

If you have a cold:







- 🏊 stay warm
- 🏊 go to bed and rest
- 🏊 drink plenty of hot fluid that can liquefy the mucus (like soup, tea with lemon and honey)
- 🏊 take paracetamol every four hours
- 🏊 stay away from others to avoid spreading the virus
- 🏊 if you're not better in 2 or 3 days, see your doctor.

Natural remedies









There's no cure for the common cold but these old-fashioned remedies relieve symptoms and can shorten its duration:















-  **Vitamin C** - Try 1000 mg when you first notice symptoms and then 500mg every day until you're well.
-  **Zinc** - An immune system enhancer. Over winter, keep up your intake of lean red meat (3-4 times a week), seafood, nuts and legumes.

Breakfast

-  Most important meal of the day
-  Kick starts the metabolism (after an overnight fast)
-  Tops up blood sugar levels, providing an energy boost
-  Fuels the muscles for training
-  Enhances concentration and focus
-  Provides essential nutrients









Tips:

-  Prepare the night before
-  Choose foods that you will enjoy
-  Allow an extra 5 minutes in the morning
-  Eat it on the way to the pool
-  Have part before training and the rest afterwards
-  Take to training to eat ASAP after getting out of the pool for recovery
-  Use drinks like Sustagen and smoothies, when you are not hungry or are rushed
-  Try to include a carb. (cereal) plus protein (milk) and fruit/veg.












-  Breakfast cereal with skim/low fat milk and banana or canned peaches
-  Porridge made with skim/low fat milk and sultanas, stewed apple or sliced banana
-  Fruit salad and low fat yoghurt
-  Toast with poached eggs and tomato
-  English muffins with melted cheese, plus a glass of freshly squeezed juice
-  Baked beans on toast or in a jaffle
-  Spaghetti on toast
-  Omelette
-  Smoothie – low fat milk, yoghurt, fruit, bran and honey
-  Breakfast/cereal bar with fresh fruit
-  Drinking yoghurt and tub of fruit
-  Milk drink eg Up & Go or Sustagen with fruit
-  Fruit loaf or fruit bun with juice
-  Toast, muffins, crumpets etc with a spread



Snacks

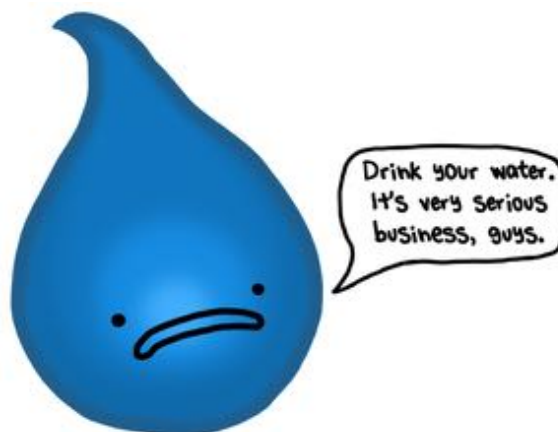
-  Fresh fruit
-  Fruit canned in natural juice
-  Dried fruit - apple, apricots, sultanas, raisins, dates
-  Muesli/Breakfast bars:
 - Mother Earth wholemeal fruit bars
 - Uncle Tobys breakfast bars & oven baked fruit bars
 - Kelloggs cereal bars
 - Sanitarium Fruity Bix bars
 - Lowan muesli bars
-  Low fat yoghurt
-  Light Fruche
-  Low fat drinking yoghurt
-  Low fat milk smoothie/milkshake



-  Rice pudding/creamy rice (eg. Delico)
-  Crispbread, dry biscuits or rice cakes with a spread
-  Fruit loaf/bun
-  Muffin or crumpet with a spread
-  Vegetable sticks with a dip (Salsa or tzaziki)
-  Rice crackers
-  Pretzels
-  Low fat sweet biscuits (Freedom Foods cookies, Paradise Lites cookies, Arnott's Snack Right fruit slice)
-  Low fat fruit muffin
-  Canned spaghetti or baked beans
-  Noodles

Hydration

Dehydration occurs when there is a mismatch between your fluid losses and fluid intake. Any degree of dehydration will affect your training and performance and can do so in several ways. Firstly it will reduce your muscle endurance and aerobic capacity. It will also affect your mental functioning and impair your body's temperature regulation. At its most extreme, severe heat stress can cause permanent physical damage and can be life threatening.



Sweating - the body's cooling mechanism

Did you know that 75% of the energy expended during exercise is released as heat? This heat must be dissipated to avoid hyperthermia or overheating. When your body temperature increases, blood flow to the skin also increases, transferring the heat to the skin, resulting in sweating. It is the evaporation of this sweat that cools your body down. When the climate is humid, the moisture content in the air is increased. This means that your sweat will not be evaporated, and hence your body will be unable to cool itself adequately.

Sweating is a very individual thing. Everyone sweats to varying degrees. You may have noticed that some people seem to sweat profusely in conditions where someone else appears to hardly sweat at all. Sweat rates depend on several factors, including: the size of the swimmer, the degree of acclimatisation, the intensity of the exercise and obviously the environmental conditions. Sweat rates can vary from 0.5 litres per hour during exercise, to as much as 1 to 2 litres per hour in extreme conditions.

A good guide to determine your fluid losses from sweat is to weigh yourself before and after training. Every kilogram of weight that you have lost is equivalent to one litre of fluid.

Signs and symptoms of dehydration

It is important to be aware of the signs and symptoms of dehydration, so that you can detect if you are suffering from it, before its too late.

Early warning signs of dehydration include:




- a dry mouth
- nausea
- feeling hot
- tiredness
- muscle cramps
- headache
- poor concentration

As dehydration worsens, signs may include:









- dizziness
- incoherence
- disorientation
- hot, dry skin (due to sweating stopping)

Hydration Strategies







Prior to training:

-  Ensure that you are well hydrated before training.
-  Drink 1-2 cups of fluid at your pre-training meal or snack.
-  Drink another cup of fluid just before training.

During training:

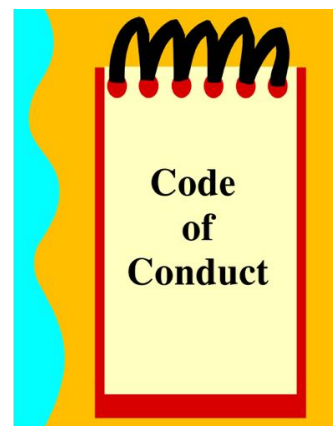
-  Do not rely on your thirst as an indicator that you need to drink. By the time you are thirsty you are already partially dehydrated. So make sure you start drinking well before that happens.
-  Commence drinking early in training. Don't wait until half way through before having your first drink. Your stomach empties fluids very slowly when you are already dehydrated, which will leave them sloshing around in your stomach. Those of you who have experienced this will know how uncomfortable it is.
-  Aim to have several sips of fluid every 15-20 minutes during training.
-  Keep your drink bottle nearby at all times.
-  Where possible drink cool fluids, as these empty faster from the stomach and are more palatable.
-  Excellent drinks to consume during training include water or a sports drink. Avoid cordial, soft drinks and fruit juices, because they contain too much carbohydrate, which means that they empty more slowly from the stomach, and therefore do not rehydrate you quickly enough.
-  If you struggle to drink enough, try a flavoured drink. Studies show that people drink more of a flavoured drink, such as a sports drink, than they do of non-flavoured drinks, such as water.
-  If you get tired towards the end of training you may benefit from a sports drink containing carbohydrate, to delay fatigue.

After training:













-  Most athletes only replace half of their sweat losses during training. Therefore you need to replace the rest afterwards. So make sure that you have a rehydration plan.
-  Remember to use the scales as a guide to your fluid losses. But realise that you will need to drink more than the existing fluid deficit because you will continue to sweat for some time after you finish training, until your body temperature returns to normal levels.
-  When your urine is dilute in colour and copious in volume you will know that you are well hydrated.
-  Water or sports drinks are excellent fluids for rehydration after training. Sports drinks offer the added bonus of carbohydrate to replenish your glycogen (muscle carbohydrate) stores, and sodium, which helps you to retain the fluid.
-  Avoid tea, coffee and cola based drinks when trying to rehydrate as these fluids are diuretics and will only dehydrate you further.
-  Avoid spas and saunas as a means of relaxing and recovering after training, as these will cause further sweating and hence fluid losses.












Code of Conduct








Code of Conduct for Swimmers

-  Be a good sport.
-  Compete for enjoyment.
-  Compete by the competition conditions and rules.
-  Never argue with the Judge, or Referee's decision.
-  Control your behaviour. No criticism by word or gesture.
-  Work hard for yourself and your team.
-  Encourage and support your own team members.
-  Be friendly to all participants and treat them as you enjoy being treated yourself.
-  Respect and co-operate with your coach, team mates and officials.
-  Show respect for your opponents, their skills and improvement.
-  Keeping late hours prior to a competition will affect your own and your team's performance.
-  Smoking, drinking of alcoholic beverages, or taking of non-prescribed drugs is strictly forbidden.

For Parents

-  Encourage participation by your children
-  You are a role model for your children and the other children in the swim club. Your behaviour in the swimming environment will never go unnoticed. Deal with any outcomes and experiences in a mature and controlled manner.
-  Be courteous in your communication with swimmers, officials and administrators. All officials are volunteers and must be respected at all times.
-  Make any new parents feel welcome and respect all members on all occasions .
-  Do not interfere with the conduct of any event.
-  Ensure non-swimmers or siblings remain in the viewing area and do not interfere with the coaching program.
-  Respect the pool environment and surrounding infrastructure and environment
-  Respect the coach and the coaching program.
-  Ensure close adherence to the Club Constitution is maintained at all times.

For Spectators

-  Demonstrate appropriate social behaviour.
-  Children compete for enjoyment. Don't let your behaviour detract from their enjoyment.
-  Let officials conduct events without interference.
-  Support skilled performances and team play with generous applause.
-  Demonstrate respect for other competitors and their supporters.