



***U.S. MASTERS  
SWIMMING***

# Coaches Handbook

## Coaching Adult Fitness thru Swimming

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Adult aquatic fitness programs are for those individuals who have chosen aquatics as their means of exercise for a healthier lifestyle. U.S. Masters Swimming programs do not discriminate between levels of ability or the individual goals of its members.

Some of the most important services that U.S. Masters Swimming provides to its members are the support, training, and education of its Masters swim coaches. This booklet is designed with the needs of all coaches in mind, to be used as a guide to becoming more knowledgeable in running a practice, club or program. Other resources for coaches included “Running a Successful Swim Program” and “Marketing Manual”, both of which are offered as a free download from the [usms.org](http://usms.org) website. While at the website, be sure to check out “Workout Ideas”, which offers a large amount of information in creating fun and challenging workouts, again, at no cost to our coaches.

Area clinics, convention information, and our Masters Certification Course are excellent additional resources where coaches can become educated, learn applicable coaching techniques, and interact with other Masters coaches in an environment which supports the USMS vision of assisting adults with their fitness goals thru the sport of swimming.

U.S. Masters Swimming Coaches deliberately try to be inclusive to all of its members by creating an environment where individuals feel a sense of belonging. We want athletes to feel comfortable enough to take risks and accept new challenges. We encourage members to set high goals and then monitor their progress. Programs are as diverse in structure and goals, as the members they serve in gender and age.

# Table of Contents

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## Getting Started

Check List.....	5
Registration Needs.....	7
Risk Management.....	8
Occurrence Report Form.....	9

## Coaching

Becoming a Masters Coach.....	11
Developing Your Coaching Style.....	12
Providing Instruction.....	13
Butterfly.....	14
Backstroke.....	15
Breaststroke.....	16
Freestyle.....	17

## Training

Meeting the Needs of All Swimmers.....	19
Designing the Workout.....	20
Coaching Triathlon and Open Water.....	22
Dry Land and Strength Training.....	24

## Events

Swim Meets.....	26
Locating Swim Events.....	27

USMS Contacts.....	28
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SWIMMING***

# Getting Started

# Checklist for Starting a Masters Program

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## **Determine Interest and Identify Target Audience**

- Anyone 18 years and older
- Parents of age-group swimmers are often former swimmers
- Local triathletes
- Post-college swimmers, former high school and age group swimmers in the area

## **Determine Practice Times**

- 5:30 a.m. to 7:00 a.m.
  - Ideal for most working adults
  - Be flexible as many may need to jump out of practice early
- 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.
  - Preferred by Moms after getting kids to school
  - Best for those who work from home or have flex work hours
- 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
  - Used when pool located near workplace
  - Keep to hour in length –swimmers have a limited amount of time
- 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
  - Popular with triathletes
  - Singles or those who have no young kids
- 7:00-8:30 p.m.
  - Allows dinner with family
  - Commute issues
  - Provides daylight hours for run and/or bike workouts prior to swim practice

## **Facility Usage**

- Location
  - Private Sports Club
  - Public Facilities
- Pool time
- Rental Agreement
- Salary Negotiation

## **Club Membership Dues**

- Base fees on pool rentals, lifeguard fees, coach's wages, other expenses
- When determining fees barter services for pool rentals and lifeguards
- Pool rental or facility membership for team practices
- Salary for coach(es)
- U.S. Masters Swimming and LMSC club registration fees
- Printing and mailing a regular newsletter
- Club services (administrative costs, billing, office costs, etc.)
- Website
- Activities (social functions and their costs)
- Club marketing and promotional expenses

## **Establish Credibility**

- Tailor workouts for all Masters swimmers, including competitive, fitness and triathletes
- Be on time for practice and look professional
- Take an interest with each swimmer
- Develop a newsletter and website
- Establish an Brand (Image, Logo, and Mission Statement)

## **Develop Good Relationships**

- Give members ownership in the program by delegating
- Team parties and social events
- Include spouses in group activities
- Newsletter and Website
- Fundraising and Sponsorships

## **Provide Recognition**

- Newsletter and website
- Bulletin board in pool areas
- Local newspaper
- On deck in front of peers
- At team events

## **Program Activities**

- Select meets in the area your program will support with participants and/or volunteers
- Team stroke clinics
- Community Service Projects
- Support other Swimming Activities (high school or local college championships)

## **Fundraising**

Assists in covering team costs - suggestions are:

- Raffles
- Team dinners
- Sell team T-shirts and caps
- Host events (open water swims, triathlons, clinics, etc)

## **Local Swim, Bike, or Run Shop Support**

Partnership provides a win-win for both parties and increases member benefits

- 10% discount for your USMS team members (exchange for supporting their store)
- Include them in all of your activities and brochures, newsletters, etc.

## **Advertising** (please refer to Marketing Manual found in this handbook for more details)

- Word of mouth
- Flyers / Newsletters posted at workout facility
- Community sections of local newspaper are free, contact the Health Editor
- Facebook / Twitter
- Club and USMS Website
- Set up booth at marathons, triathlons, and health fairs
- Provide T-shirts, and caps with your logo

# Registration Needs

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## **Masters Club Registration**

There are close to 700 Masters swim clubs registered with U.S. Masters Swimming through 52 Local Masters Swimming Committees (LMSCs). The annual cost of club membership includes an LMSC fee (varies from one LMSC to another), plus the U.S. Masters Swimming fee. You can register for membership online at [usms.org](http://usms.org) by clicking on the “Join USMS” button and following the simple instructions. Applications for membership can also be obtained from your LMSC Registrar.

As part of the application process, new clubs must choose a name and a four-letter abbreviation. Checking with the LMSC Registrar will determine whether the chosen letter combination is already in use. Clubs re-register each year, between October 1<sup>st</sup> and November 1<sup>st</sup>

A club must be registered before individual swimmers may register with that club. Individuals will register between November 1<sup>st</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup>, so it is important to have every club registered before this time.

## **Benefits**

Membership in U.S. Masters Swimming affords each swimmer many benefits, some of which are:

- A commitment to your health and fitness goals
- Annual subscription to *SWIMMER* magazine
- Coached workouts, clinics, and workshops
- Access to U.S. Masters Swimming ([usms.org](http://usms.org)), which provides an active discussion forum; training, racing, health and fitness information; Places to Swim directory; and tracking of competition results
- Membership allows you to coach others
- Liability coverage and secondary accident insurance coverage
- When you travel, opportunity to swim with other U.S. Masters Swimming programs
- Opportunity to compete in pool, open water, and virtual events
- Access to online fitness programs that offer encouragements
- Leadership opportunities at the local, regional, and national level
- Access to Corporate Partner discount programs

Individual Membership Application Forms are available online at [usms.org](http://usms.org) or from your LMSC Registrar. The cost of membership, in effect through the calendar year, includes a U.S. Masters Swimming fee plus an LMSC fee (varies from one LMSC to another). Only registered U.S. Masters Swimming members may swim for clubs and only members of the same club may officially swim together for relays at meets.

Swimmers register with a Masters club, depending on club procedures, by one of the following ways:

1. Registering online [usms.org](http://usms.org) and clicking on the “Join USMS” button.
2. Completing an application for U.S. Masters Swimming membership and sending it to the club Registrar with the annual fee and club dues, or
3. Sending a completed U.S. Masters Swimming application (stating club membership) directly to the LMSC Registrar and separately signing up with a club.

# Risk Management

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## **Insurance**

As a benefit of membership, the U.S. Masters Swimming insurance program, funded by a portion of the national registration fee, provides secondary accident insurance. In addition, liability coverage is provided for U.S. Masters Swimming members, member clubs, LMSC officials, and volunteers acting on behalf of, and with the approval of, U.S. Masters Swimming.

If the club is using the U.S. Masters Swimming Liability Insurance for its liability coverage, everyone in the workout group must be registered with U.S. Masters Swimming and supervised by a USA Swimming certified coach or a registered U.S. Masters Swimming member.

## **Insured activities include the following**

- Sanctioned meets where all participants are U.S. Masters Swimming members.
- Swimming practices, where all participants are members of U.S. Masters Swimming or USA Swimming, and are under the supervision of a U.S. Masters Swimming member or USA Swimming Certified Coach.
- Learn to Swim programs where all participants are members of U.S. Masters Swimming or USA Swimming under the direction of a U.S. Masters Swimming member or USA Swimming certified coach.
- Swimming Tryouts under active supervision of a U.S. Masters Swimming member or USA Swimming Certified Coach. The tryout period may not last for more than 30 consecutive calendar days in a 12-month period for any one individual. There is no coverage for the non-member participants during the tryout period.
- Closed Competition, a swimming competition between a U.S. Masters Swimming member club and a non-U.S. Masters Swimming club hosted by the U.S. Masters Swimming member club. For U.S. Masters Swimming insurance coverage to be in effect for U.S. Masters Swimming members and member clubs, THE NON-U.S. Masters Swimming MEMBER CLUB MUST PROVIDE A CERTIFICATE OF INSURANCE FROM ITS INSURER/AGENT TO RISK MANAGEMENT SERVICE, INC., and a U.S. Masters Swimming waiver form must be executed by the non-U.S. Masters Swimming club participants.
- Pre-approved social events where alcoholic beverages are not sold
- Pre-approved fund raising activities

If a U.S. Masters Swimming member club is conducting an activity that is not listed above as an insured activity, it is imperative that the club obtain its own additional insurance coverage.

A suggested Occurrence Report is included, but be sure to check with your facility if they provide their own preferred report form to be used for any situation.



# Sample Accident Occurrence Form

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## *U. S. Masters Swimming*

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### **REPORT OF OCCURRENCE** **UNITED STATES MASTERS SWIMMING, INC.**

Injured Person's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Club Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_  
Activity Taking Place at Time of Accident \_\_\_\_\_

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Place Where Accident Occurred \_\_\_\_\_  
(include City/St/Zip) \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Accident \_\_\_\_\_ Day of Week \_\_\_\_\_ Hour \_\_\_\_\_  
Describe Accident \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Person in Charge of the Activity \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
City/St/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Probable Nature of the Injury \_\_\_\_\_  
Who Determined Nature of the Injury \_\_\_\_\_  
What was Done On-Site for Injured \_\_\_\_\_  
Where Taken for Treatment \_\_\_\_\_  
Who Provided Treatment (name) \_\_\_\_\_  
Name and Address of Three Witnesses:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 

Additional Witnesses, List Names and Addresses on Reverse

Remarks \_\_\_\_\_

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Report Submitted By \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
City/St/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please attach any additional accident reports (facility report, newspaper, witnesses' statements). Mail this report to:  
RISK MANAGEMENT SERVICES, INC.

PO BOX 32712  
PHOENIX, AZ 85064-2712  
OR FAX TO 602-274-9138  
E-MAIL [ktate@theriskpeople.com](mailto:ktate@theriskpeople.com)

*You must report all occurrences immediately. Thank you for your time and cooperation.*



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# Coaching

# Becoming a Masters Coach

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Like all swimming coaches, a Masters Swimming Coach must be organized, knowledgeable, and empathetic. When discussing adult swimming, though, we find that Masters Coaches must bring additional skills to the table. Adults do not react the same way that kids (or age-groupers) do to commands, orders, or directives. Adults will engage in discussion. They want to know why you want them to perform a particular drill or workout. They may tell you “not today,” or want to take you out for a latte after practice. Learning how to work with adults is critical for the success of a Masters program and for you as a Masters Coach.

## Traits of a Masters Coach

### **A Masters Coach is Flexible**

The members of your program show up for a number of reasons. A physician may have prescribed swimming for exercise. Swimming may be a new activity they've always wanted to try. In some cases, they're there because they've been swimming on a team since they were 5 years old. Given the varied background of the members a coach cannot expect every swimmer to have perfect turns or strokes when they walk in the door. Therefore, a coach must be flexible with the workouts. Writing practices should include a diversity that targets the mechanics, training systems, and the strengths and weaknesses of both the group and the individual swimmer. The focus should be on improving a swimmer's overall fitness, targeting the body as a whole while helping each athlete to achieve his or her individual goals.

### **A Masters Coach Embraces all Swimmers**

A coach should welcome any and all swimmers. A coach should not be star-struck by the retired Olympian who just decided to join in deference to the five beginner triathletes who walked in at the same time. Pay particular attention to the newer swimmers, as they are often timid about swimming an organized workout. Assure the new swimmers that this is an adult fitness programs, not a competitive team. Explain that it's “ok” to sit out the next 50 and not to worry about the “fast swimmers” on the other side of the pool. Be ready to explain the basics of both strokes and practice etiquette, as many beginning Masters swimmers will need instruction in both. You will find that most are eager to learn something new, and will feel empowered when they learn to do a flip turn, do a breaststroke pullout, or swim butterfly. In adult onset swimmers there are great rewards.

### **The Teacher and Coach**

There are those swimmers who “know it all”. They have been doing it this way since their coach told them back in 1960something, or they did some research on the internet and think it's the only way to go. Accept their knowledge and “expertise” and explain why you are there as the coach. You might ask them when the last time they improved their time or stroke count, or check on previous injuries. An ancient Chinese proverb states, “When the learner is ready the Master will appear.” Challenge these swimmers to “do it differently.”

# Developing Your Coaching Style

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## Developing Your Coaching Philosophy

- Understanding Individual and Group Dynamics: CEO role model, goals, vision, mission, and inspiration
- We have Differences
  - Motivation: Intrinsic
    - Individual: Why are they swimming?
    - Group: Building a culture of winning/support
  - Behavior: How We Act
    - Individual: We act different when we are watched
    - Group: Law of the pack . . . positive and negative
  - Differences: Communication
    - Individual: Easy to check comprehension
    - Group: Message often misunderstood

## Developing Your Coaching Strategy

- What are your coaching goals?
  - Why do you coach?
  - What's your motivation?
  - Your strengths and weaknesses?
  - Use your strengths to improve your weaknesses
- Learn your individual athletes' goals
  - Fitness
  - Competition
  - Traithlon
- Create, as well as understand, your group goals
- Communicate your goals: Individual = Private vs. Group = Public
- Making adjustments to your coaching philosophy, strategy, and style

## Developing the Training Culture

- Form a Positive Environment
- Create a Vision/Mission Statement
  - One that includes all participants
  - Expresses the goals your club wishes to achieve
  - States the core values of your club

# Providing Instruction

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## Teaching Others

- Individual: Relatively easy
- Group: Best achieved with rules and procedures
  - Use your resources: lane captains, established routines, coaching staff
  - Appointing a swimmer buddy to assist a new swimmer
  - Full disclosure
  - Praise in public
  - Constructive criticism in private
  - Set and enforce behavior standards
  - Be positive

## How to Teach

- Set the proper environment
- Use demonstrations and explanations
- Create a challenge
- Create an opportunity to motivate
- Provide timely and accurate feedback
- Overcorrection
- Kinesthetic technique
- Praise and Reward
- Teach and use the swim language

## What to Teach

- Good technique basics
- This is FUN
- Athletes to challenge themselves
- Fitness and health are the rewards
- Goal Setting
- Self Improvement, going beyond comfort zones

## Finding Places to Learn More

- Coaching Certification Courses offered thru USMS and ASCA
- USAS Convention
- ASCA Convention
- SwimFest and other Swim Clinics
- Work with a Mentor
- Talk to other Coaches
- Read USMS publications
- “Streamlines” - Email Newsletter for Coaches
- LMSC Coaches Representatives

# The Construction of Butterfly

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## Building Butterfly

- Body Position
  - Posture, tall with arms shoulder width apart, face down
  - Balance level on the surface of the water
- Kick
  - Recommend to start using fins to provide feel of the kick
  - Start by pressing chest down, followed by ribcage, belly button, hips, legs
  - Torso driven action. (Not by the head)
  - Avoid using only legs from knees down
  - Knees and feet each work together, but do not need to touch
- Arms
  - Both arms work together
  - Proper extension – Entry in front of shoulders, not in front of the head
  - Relaxed recovery / strong anchor with elbows up to get fingertips facing down
  - Follow through the pull phase with the hands pressing through and out the hips
- Timing
  - Rhythm and coordination is critical to a powerful yet relaxed stroke
  - Two kicks per each arm pull
  - First kick at point entry of hands, with second one at exit
  - Press the chest down as hands enter, lifting the hips up
- Breathing
  - Begin lifting head to breathe as hands begin the press of the catch
  - Actual breath will occur as hands pass under ribcage
  - Keep eyes down to avoid lifting head too high
  - Head returns to the water as hands enter in front

## Stroke Basics

- Head position is down at rest
- Symmetrical arms
- Entry at shoulder width
- Length of stroke with relaxed straight arms
- Breath timing started as arms begin catch underwater
- Acceleration through the range of motion
- Steady kick and consistent rhythm

# The Construction of Backstroke

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## Building Backstroke

- Body Position
  - Tall Posture
  - Head in line with spine / eyes look up (not back over the head)
  - Balance on the surface
- Head
  - Lift nose and chin to the sky
  - Drop chin slightly down if water comes over the face
- Kick
  - Toes lift to surface of the water
  - Start with arms resting by side
  - Advance to arms overhead
- Arms
  - Work in opposition
  - Proper extension on the recovery is performed with a straight arm
  - Entry - little finger first
  - Deep catch - anchor the hand
  - Finish underwater pull - hand towards thigh
  - Exit water with the back of the hand - recovery
- Timing: Rhythm and coordination
  - Roll of the torso with arm movement
  - Rotation is initiated by the core
  - Arms in constant motion, no hesitation points
- Breathing
  - Both the inhale and exhale involves rhythm within the stroke
  - Coordinate with timing of the arms

## Stroke Basics

- Body position: Steady head
- Roll: Length & depth of stroke, rotation & importance of the torso
- Alternating arms: Smooth non-stop rotation
- Entry above the shoulder: Recovery and extension
- No splash entry: Deep catch and anchor
- Timing: Acceleration through the range of motion to finish
- Steady Kick: While it does provide propulsion, serves to stabilize and align the body

# The Construction of Breaststroke

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## Building Breaststroke

- Kick
  - Start with arms resting by the side
  - Ankles pull up as close to the butt as possible
  - Ankles turn out so they are facing the side walls
  - Finish with toes pointing at the wall behind the swimmer
  - Advance to kicking with hands in front, pressing the chest down at the completion of each kick
- Arms
  - Hands in front of shoulders, press down and out
  - Keep elbows up as palms press against the water to create catch
  - Hands sweep just outside shoulders and then continue in front of chest
  - Hands trace a tear drop pattern through the pull phase (vs. a triangle)
  - Elbows get pulled in alongside the ribcage
  - Recovery is straight ahead of the body, keeping hands close together
- Putting it All Together
  - Press the hands as they sweep outwards
  - Draw the heels up
  - Accelerate the in-sweep of the hands towards the chest and forward
  - Kick back and quickly snapping the legs in, bringing the feet together
  - Pause with both hands and legs extended for short glide
- Timing of the Breath
  - Hands begin out sweep which creates lift of the torso, giving opportunity to breath
  - Keep eyes facing down to maintain good body position and prevent ‘bobbing’
  - Head does not move up and down. It moves with the shoulders
- Avoiding Drag
  - The greatest drag is on the shoulders, head and chest
  - Reduce front drag by keeping hands from getting too wide during the sweep
  - Reduce front drag by keeping the head in line with the hands during recovery

## Stroke Basics

- One pull, one breath, one kick, one streamline; they work together in that order
- The recovery is when the upper body rests
- Do not let the hands go deeper than 12-inches from water surface on recovery
- Make sure when kicking to point the toes on the finish, this will naturally allow the thighs to get in streamline and the hips to be higher in the water
- Having a streamlined body position to reduce drag is paramount to swimming an effective breaststroke



# The Construction of Freestyle

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## Building Freestyle

- Proper Body Position
  - Head, neck and spine all in alignment
  - Head faces down, with eyes looking slightly ahead along the bottom
- Kick
  - Start with arms relaxed by the side and a good push from the wall
  - Kick is powered by the muscles of the thigh (front and back)
  - Use relaxed hip, knee and ankle joints
  - Feet are extended, slightly pointing the toes
  - Continue this concept by now extending the arms in front of body
- Underwater Phase
  - Start the pull with one arm, while other remains in front of body
  - Begin by pressing the palm against the water by bending the arm at the elbow
  - Continue until fingertips face the bottom of the pool
  - Push hand past your body and exit the water by your hip
- Recovery of the Arm
  - Lift the arm out of the water by raising the elbow
  - Shoulders, forearm and hand are relaxed
  - Use the muscles of the shoulder to continue lifting the arms forward
  - Hands enter the water in front of the body, in line with the shoulder, not the head
- Torso
  - The body rolls ribcage to ribcage while engaged in the stroke
  - Relax enough to feel the turning of the body side to side
- Breathing
  - As the body rolls, continue turning the chin to the side. Do not lift the head
  - Exhale out comfortably through the nose and mouth underwater in between breathes
  - Continue exhaling out, until the mouth is completely out of the water
  - Inhale through the mouth
  - Close the mouth as the head returns to face the bottom of the pool

## Stroke Basics

- Practice a good streamline off the water at the start of each swim
- Steady kick: Provides propulsion and serves to stabilize and align the body
- Length of stroke is important
- Kick is done with heels slightly breaking the surface of the water
- The arm in front should be in line with the shoulder, not the head, with the hand four to six inches below the surface of the water



**U.S. MASTERS  
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# Training

# Meeting the Needs of All Swimmers

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## **Everyone is Important**

Within the swimming ranks, there are those who will never compete, those who will be training for a triathlon, and those who might be training for meets. Because of different workout times and locations (some larger teams have multiple coaches, facilities & workout times), some swimmers may never see each other. The conundrum for the coach is how to make every swimmer feel included.

## **Social Swimmers**

The answers are as diverse as the members themselves. From meet attendance to pot luck socials to zany awards, a coach should encourage swimmers to become involved. Although the workout is the baseline for Masters Swimming, there are a host of activities in which a swimmer can be involved.

## **Fitness Swimmers**

US Masters Swimming offers fitness programs (ie Go the Distance); competitive events (ie swim meets); progress measurements of all kinds (ie Check off Challenge); learning experiences (ie clinics); and multisport opportunities (ie Open Water Swims). The coach must be aware of other opportunities for the swimmers and aid in goal setting. As a Masters Coach, you will want to give each swimmer a reason to keep coming back.

## **Something for Everyone**

Adult swimmers bring all of their experiences, goals, opinions, emotions, and external influences to the pool. Adults will not jump when you tell them, nor will they attend every practice, as a coach, your job will be to not get disgruntled or discouraged. As a Masters Coach you will need to be flexible, knowledgeable, organized and empathetic.

## **Strive to be the Best**

Coaching, like every profession, is enhanced by continuing to learn from others, being aware of current trends or advancements in the sport, and becoming more educated in your field. Take advantage of the numerous local, regional and national certification and coach education courses offered each year.

- Red Cross
- Local Swim Clinics
- Regional Aquatic Conference
- Certification Courses
- SwimFest
- USAS Convention
- ASCA Convention

# Designing Workouts

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The objective for writing workouts is to develop creative, challenging, and motivating practices to attract all levels and interests of Masters swimmers. Inherent in writing workouts is: What are you trying to accomplish and/or what goals are you trying to attain? Where are you taking your team? Do your workouts move your athletes' one step forward on the path that you envision for them? Plan and think about where you want your team to be in one month, six months and a year from now. As a coach you are accountable to your athletes. Your clear vision will contribute to the improvement of their swimming and the growth of your program.

## Creating Goals

The first steps to writing workouts is season planning, then use those ideas to form goals you wish to create for your club, for individual swimmers, and yourself. There are different types of goals. First there are long-range goals, which are geared toward specific events in the future. They can be a measurement of time, achieved distance, or participation in an event. Long range goals may include concepts such as a fitness swimmer able to swim a 500 Free, having 50% of the club attend an event or competition, or the competitive swimmer able to complete a 200 Butterfly. Having a clear sense of your goals for your program, will give purpose to the sets you create and dictate how you present them to your swimmers. They will be motivated and challenged to succeed if they are clear on your goals. They will become encouraged to contribute to the team through participation.

## Development of Mid-Range Goals

Mid-range goals are stepping-stones to the accomplishment of long-range goals. An example of a mid-range goal would be to improve the breathing technique of a triathlete who has the long range goal of completing a half Ironman. Improved stroke technique, overcoming mental anxieties, knowledge of pace and feel in the water, efficiency and overall speed are small steps that can be put together towards the accomplishment of a long range goal. There are numerous components, or basic elements, that you will want to include either seasonally, monthly, or weekly into your workouts. Ideas to consider are

- Base – Muscle memory, stroke technique, endurance
- Pace – Determining effort swim sets are to be performed at
- Speed – Development of going faster
- Mental – An important, yet commonly overlooked, element in all athletic events
- Race Prep – After the work is done, preparation to excel during competition

These building blocks are not to be used in isolation; rather they are woven together throughout the year in your daily workouts. Some days or months will focus more on one area more than others, but it is important to remember that a small component of each area should be addressed often.

## Immediate Goals – The Daily Workout

Immediate goals are the day-to-day workouts that you plan for your swimmers to participate in. Your workout plans should often include drills used for stroke development. Drills offer stroke focus, creativity, and the feel for the water. Explaining the purpose behind the drill, allows the swimmer to become focused on improvement goals for each drill, rather than simply “going through the motions”. Be sure have a connection of the drills or tune-up set to the main set, so your athletes are properly prepared to swim the set you have written for them. Other elements of a good workout are allowing time for an adequate warm up, recovery between sets, the inclusion of kicking, as well as occasional pull sets. Adding variety with an overall goal in mind will keep your workouts fun and focused, bringing your athletes back to your pool deck again and again.

## **Concepts to Achieving a Goal**

To gain the ability to finish a 500 Free the swimmer will need pace work (10 x 100 @ :20 rest), long easy swims (300 straight), and challenging sets to improve their cardio fitness (10 x 50 holding a set goal time). The triathlete's mid-range goal of more relaxed breathing will improve with proper technique provided thru drills (use fins to assist body in a good position in the water) and slow swimming to work on timing of the breath (roll the torso first, and then turn the head to breath while maintaining body alignment). Training for the 200 Butterfly will be done through proper stroke mechanics, short and long distance (distance per stroke) swim combinations, and may even require introduction of strength training outside the pool.

## **Satisfying the Needs of Swimmers**

In any single one workout, there are limits as to matching the needs of every swimmer. Yet, it is possible to fulfill those needs in the course of a week. When creating the workout outline of each week, design a plan for the types of workouts given, so that your swimmers will have a general concept of the workout that will be given on each day. As an example, if Tuesday is IM Day, your competitive pool swimmers will make sure to attend Tuesdays and your triathletes may opt to ride or run instead. And if Wednesdays are Distance practices, your long distance swimmers, postal fitness swimmers and triathletes will attend those workouts, as it best meets the needs of their training, while the sprinters may wish to hit the weight room.

## **Modifying the Main Set**

Make sure to provide options to the original main set to allow each swimmer to be challenged, yet not overwhelmed. Options can be in the form of less repeats with a slower interval, such as if the main set calls for 16 x 100 @ 1:30, give alternatives of 13 x 100 @ 1:50 or 11 x 100 @ 2:10. Everyone's main set will last approx. the same length of time, allowing the team to start and end together. Or, an option may be reducing the distance while keeping the same send off time for the whole group, such as using distances of 200's for the first group, 150's for the middle group and 100's for the third group. Everyone will leave together on a 3:00 send-off time and will repeat their respective distance a total of 10 times. Review the workout options provided and determine how you would modify each workout.

## **Lane Management**

Management of the pool and a successful implementation of the workout each day are keys to a great practice. Lane use is important, as it ensures a pleasurable swimming experience for your athletes. It is recommended, that "like ability" swimmers, swim in the same lane. This gives smooth continuity to the pace that the swimmers are achieving within each lane. Do you have available space to have a sprint or endurance focused lane? If not, be sure to provide opportunities for these specific athletes to train in their focused area sometime each week. Do some swimmers in your group need additional rest or stroke instruction, have a hard time hearing you or seeing the clock? Keeping these swimmers to the outside lanes makes instruction and following the workout easier. Some athletes may be recovering from an injury. You must decide which lane they best fit into and how to modify the workout for each individual. Each swim program is unique and your swimmer's needs will determine how to best set up the lanes.

# Coaching Triathletes and Open Water Swimmers

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## **Multisport Athletes and Your Program**

- Partners in adult aquatics
- Coaching opportunities and growth
- Strategic partners
- Membership opportunities
- Get “athlete exchange” for your existing fitness and competitive swimmers

## **Positives**

- Strong Desire to Learn: Many are new to the sport
- Understand Need for Training: Seek out masters coaches for direction and guidance
- Strong Physical Conditioning: Many present with strong aerobic base
- Financial Stability: Willingness to invest in their training
- Strong Work Ethic: Very driven/focused and goal oriented and they expect the same from their Coach

## **What They Want**

Expert stroke instruction and analysis

- Intense feedback, give it to them!!!
- Be sensitive to their multisport, multi-practice schedule
- Coordination of their Swimming Plan into their Tri or OW Plan
- Understanding different energy systems at play and focus
- Inclusion - Make them part of your overall plan
- Volume and lots of it
- Drills and Skills that relate to open water, sight breathing
- Workouts that cater to their sport such as scheduling an open water practice or group swim

## **Challenges**

- Many triathletes lack competitive swimming background
- Freestyle only concept: many triathletes and OW swimmers focus on only one stroke. Explain the benefits of including other strokes into their training, such as strength and power, balance of muscle development, and simple variety within the workouts
- A bit of knowledge: many triathletes and OW swimmers have knowledge, possibly incorrect, from a variety of other sources. Working with firmly held beliefs is often a challenge.
- Time constraints: the very nature of triathlon or open water swims, athletes need time to work on other disciplines. Be up front with their goals.
- Walls: teaching turns to triathletes and OW swimmers is difficult, as they see very little benefit. Explain that as their turns improve, their overall times in the pool will improve, allowing them to hit tougher intervals, which in turn will lead to moving up within workout groups at practice
- Many triathletes come to the pool with a goal in mind.
- Manage the expectations: Ours is a very technique based and detail oriented sport. It takes a long time to master
- Frustration factor: How long will it take me to . . .
- Relative performance: Expert runners/cyclists often expect to be awesome in the water

## **Working with Other Discipline and Multisport Coaches**

- There are a lot of coaches that work with athletes as well as personal trainers that take on the role of coach.
- Be sure to communicate with these folks. It is best to have a cooperative atmosphere when two or more coaches are working with the same athlete.
- Swimming Coaches can be viewed as specialists in their field, but build trust and a good relationship amongst all the athlete's coaches.
- The guiding principal when dealing with other coaches is doing what is in the best interest of the athlete.

## **Handling “The Plan”**

- Triathlete with a training plan for a particular event will show up and want to do their own thing in your workout according to ‘the plan’
- Communication is key
- Hybrid workouts for triathletes
- Know your athletes

# Dry Land and Strength Training

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## **The Background**

- Benefits: strength, muscular power, balance, injury prevention, flexibility, range of motion, change of pace (variety)
- Physiology: age causes muscle fibers to shrink in numbers/size, as well as causes a decline in strength, coordination, and balance.
- Dry Land Training (weight training and cross training) reverses this process
- Masters Coaches are encouraged to build dry land into their overall training plan

## **Building the Training Plan**

- **# 1:** Require all athletes to undergo a complete medical evaluation
- Seek assistance: Mentor Coach, fellow Coaches, Certified Athletic Trainers, partnerships with dry land programs
- Designed with the individual swimmer in mind
- Include the entire team, provide variety and intensity, and make it fun!

## **Types of Dry Land Training**

- Make it a component of your overall “Training Plan”
- Develop a program for all, measurable and has variety...Think “outside the box”
- Pilates
- Yoga
- Stretch Cords
- Fitness Balls
- Circuit Training
- Cycling
- P90X
- Boot Camp
- CrossFit

## **Where Can I Find More Information?**

- A mentor coach
- [Usaswimming.org/drylandtraining](http://Usaswimming.org/drylandtraining)
- [USMS.org/dryland training](http://USMS.org/drylandtraining)
- Google, Youtube,
- Dryland Training Videos for Swimmers
- Local gym and/or personal trainers
- Strength and Conditioning Certification Courses





***U.S. MASTERS  
SWIMMING***

Events

# Swim Meets

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## Categories and Types of Meets

Swim meets offer club members opportunities to test skills and conditioning in a variety of settings, courses, and distances.

### Mini Meet

The Mini (club, dual) Meet is usually small in size, lasts two to three hours, and may be sanctioned or recognized through the LMSC. Swimmers sign up in advance or deck enter on the day of the meet for up to 5 events (the maximum number of events allowed per day at any U.S. Masters Swimming sanctioned or recognized meet). A minimal entry fee may be charged (e.g., \$3 per event or \$5 per meet). It should be just enough to cover expenses (pool rental and cost, if any, of officials). This type of low-key meet is a good introduction for first time competitors and a learning tool for new meet managers. A social activity is a good follow-up.

### Mid-Sized Meet

The Mid-Sized Meet attracts a greater number of swimmers from a wider geographical area. It offers many events and often relays. It lasts four to six hours. Entries may be mailed in advance for heat sheet listing or deck entered the day of the meet. However, the meet announcement must specify if on-deck (day-of-meet) entry is an option. Deck entrants usually pay a higher fee than pre-entered swimmers (one and one-half the pre-entrant fee is typical). Some meet hosts charge a flat fee (\$15-\$25) that allows each swimmer to swim as many or as few events as allowable. Others prefer to have a meet surcharge (to cover timing system, pool rental, etc., \$5-\$10) plus a per event charge (\$3 to \$5). Ribbons or other suitable forms of recognition are often awarded to the winners several places deep. Sometimes a useful participation award (such as a mug, key chain, water bottle, etc.) is given in lieu of ribbons or medals. A social gathering for participants, families, officials, and meet personnel is always a popular accompaniment.

### Big Meets

The Big (Championship) Meet offers all the official events, plus relays, and takes two or more days with several hundred or more participants. There are no deck entries and participants must sign up two to three weeks before the meet. Typically, a flat fee is charged (\$30-\$45) plus an option of a one event entry (\$10-\$15). This is a great idea for including triathletes in your meet who may wish to only enter the 1500/1650 distance event. In some areas of the country, officials receive payment. In others, officials volunteer their services. Check to see what the policy is in your area. Electronic timing, often interfaced with the computer system, is used. Medals or similar awards are appropriate for at least the first three places.

### Nationals

USMS offers two National pool events each year. Short Course Nationals (SCY- 25 yard pool) is typically held in May with Long Course Nationals (LCM – 50 meter pool) held each August. Bids for teams wishing to be a host team are presented, and selected, at USMS convention each year. Entry forms are posted on the usms.org website as well as published in Swimmer magazine.

# Locating Swim Events

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## Pool Competitions

Check out [usms.org/competition/calendar of events](https://usms.org/competition/calendar-of-events) for a current list. Numerous local, regional and national swim meets are listed. Find something in your own backyard or across the country.

## Postal Challenges

Postal events, which are listed below, are done at your own pool anytime within the posted calendar windows. For event information go to [usms.org/openwater/long distance championships](https://usms.org/openwater/long-distance-championships)

1 Hour Postal Championships

5 and 10 Kilometer Postal Championships (50 meter pools only)

3000/6000 Yard Postal Championships (25 yard or 25 meter pools only)

## Open Water Championships

These events are found at the same link as the postal events [usms.org/openwater/long distance championships](https://usms.org/openwater/long-distance-championships). Open Water Championships are located throughout the country, with bids taken each year for new locations.

1 Mile Open Water/Cable Championships

1 < 3 Mile Open Water Championships

2-Mile Cable Championships

3 < 6 Mile Open Water Championships (5 km)

6 < 9 Mile Open Water Championships (10 km)

9 Mile Open Water Championships (25 km)

## USMS Fitness Events

These events which can be found at [usms.org/health&fitness/fitness events](https://usms.org/health&fitness/fitness-events) will be less competitive in nature, and can be done any time at any pool. You can use an event to set a goal, which will make your time in the pool more interesting, challenging, and fun. Your goals may involve any number of possibilities, such as learning to swim a new stroke, swimming faster, swimming greater distances, or logging your distance over time. Having a goal is an ideal way to enhance your exercise and fitness experience, so consider trying one of the USMS Fitness Events.

## National Office Contacts

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