



## Safety from a swimmers point of view

### Warming up

Swimming requires preparation just like any other sport, warming up before competition begins is important because it prepares my body for the race (it increases your heart rate, core temperature, and blood flow to your muscles) it also reduces the risk of muscle and joint injury. At the same time I also get to feel the water and determine how many strokes from the overhead flags to the wall, I also notice some walls may slip more than others. Some swimmers enjoy getting in later when it's closer to their race, I have also done this; just remember the risk for injury goes up if you're not warming up.

- No warm-up pool? Then do some other gentle activity to increase blood circulation and raise the temperature of your muscles, do that slight, gentle stretching, then get up and swim fast!

### Cool down

In the past cooling down was optional for me, although recently I've started to get into the habit of getting it done. At the big meets the cool down pool gets very crowded, it's nice to have two lanes but it's not always possible. As a reminder; following the race do a cool down swim, it's important to do a few slow paced laps to bring your body back to its normal state. The slow laps will help you prevent the likes of cramps and injuries and help regulate your breathing again.

Additional benefits of a cool down include:

- Aid in the dissipation of waste products - including lactic acid
- Reduce the potential for Delayed Onset of Muscle Soreness (DOMS)
- Reduce the chances of dizziness or fainting caused by the pooling of venous blood at the extremities
- Reduce the level of adrenaline in the blood
- Allows the heart rate to return to its resting rate

### Food and water are a must

I don't know if it's because I'm nervous or not, but I shake, and I get jittery, I know I need to have something to eat and drink. My favorite food choices are bagels, muffins and fruit; when it's cold I love to have "cup of noodles". Between races I like something small so I won't feel sick if I get nervous before a race. It's also important to make sure swim meets have food and drink available, especially at an affordable price. Even though I disagree, be aware not all swim facilities allow you to bring in your own food or drink.

- Always remember to keep well hydrated at the meet, this helps regulate the body during and after the swim.

### Getting to my race on time

Being able to get to my race on time is important. At times the pool area gets crowded with parents and friends and it gets hard to maneuver and get around everyone. I understand everyone wants to cheer on their son/daughter or friend. But not having to maneuver around them reduces my stress of being late or missing a heat. Also it minimizes the chance of swimmers running on deck.

As a reminder there's no running on deck:

- Some decks are very slick when wet
- In some cases electrical cords even though taped down can become a tripping hazard

### Winning or losing the Race

When I win, I feel excited but usually exhausted. If I win but don't beat my time, then I'm kind of mad at myself for a little bit. When I don't win, it depends on if I beat my time or not. I'm usually really upset. But I get over it and focus that energy on my next race.

### Training Summer/Winter

I train 5 days a week for an hour and a half during school time, winter break is usually 2-2 1/2 hours, and in the summer it's 2 hours in the morning. But I go by what my coach says, he basically says that he can train us for 3 hours a day, twice a day, but if we work and give 100% at each practice, we will get more out of that than going for 3 hours a day. Summer swimming is coming up soon and I believe you should take a break if you're not feeling well from the heat, notify your coach, drink cold water and get in the shade. If there's a grassy area with shade go there and away from concrete.

As a reminder:

- It's important to hydrated, don't wait until you're thirsty, drink before you start swimming and though out the practice or swim meet.
- Remember to protect yourself from the sun
- Get plenty of rest so you can perform at your peak
- If you become overheated notify someone; coach, lifeguard, official, or parent

**Sure getting up early in the SUMMER is hard but I believe it's worth it in the end.**

This information is provided to you by the IES Safety Committee