

Swimming Safety, Jargon, & Etiquette



Introduction and Orientation

Welcome to Masters Swimming. A better name might be "Adult" swimming. Whether swimming with Maui Masters (MMSC) or Valley Isle Masters (VIMS), both clubs "*promote a lifetime of fitness [and fun] through swimming.*" Whether you'd like to improve your swimming, swim for fitness, train for triathlons, train for competitive swimming in the ocean or pools - at a local or national level - or if you'd just like to swim for a social way to keep active and fit exercising your whole body without beating it up - swimming might be for you. So, **no matter your ability, welcome.** It's great to see you—you're in the right place. www.swimmaui.com and www.mastersswimmaui.org

PLEASE ASK our coaches if you'd like help with strokes, etc. Our coaches are knowledgeable in swimming technique, ocean & pool racing, and much more. For demonstrations and other help, they will sometimes ask our more advanced swimmers to help (because they like to help too ... and maybe get out of a set for a few minutes ;-)

Pool Safety

Safety is the number one concern around the pool. Better fitness is pointless if someone gets hurt doing something silly. *The pool can be a dangerous place ... slipping, drowning, hitting your head, other people not paying attention...*

- **BE AWARE** of your surroundings.
- **BE AWARE** of those around you.
- **Watch and BE AWARE what happens in your lane!**
- There is **no running on deck** - decks are slippery, and a fall into or near the pool can be deadly.
- There is **no diving** - except when supervised in racing starts by one of the coaches or a trained USMS member. You may NOT dive to get in at the beginning of workout (or during a swim meet), and there is no diving in shallow water (less than 9 feet deep).
- Please **get into the water** in a **controlled** feet-first entry preferably by sliding in - when no one else is in nearby. *The biggest causes of accidents at pools is from people accidentally diving or jumping and either hitting bottom, or another swimmer.*

- **NEVER swim under the bulkheads** that separate 50 meter pools into two 25-yard pools. *If you hit your head, we may not see you until it's too late.*
- Always obey the coach's & lifeguard instructions.
- Part of safety, and part of pool etiquette (training standards) includes circle vs. straight swimming; and the backstroke flags.
 - **Circle vs. Straight Swimming:** To prevent head on collisions (literally) when swimming in practice, there are two standard ways to "share" a lane. If alone, or if only two people are in a lane, swim "**straight**" - staying in the middle (alone), or split the lane and stay **on one side**. If 3 or more swimmers are in the lane, "**circle**" swimming is like driving a car – you're always on the **right side of the lane** as you face forward. [Counter-clockwise in the lane] Note: a "head on collision" in the pool can actually knock you unconscious, can mess up your neck or spine, and definitely hurts.
- **Backstroke Flags** are normally set up with 5 yards to go before the wall. They should coincide with a change in lane line color. If you see either of these two things when swimming backstroke – be aware the pool wall is coming up – prepare and don't crash your head into it!

More Pool Etiquette

Repeating and enhancing Lane Protocols:

- Select a lane with swimmers your speed. Ask the coach which lane might be best.
- If a lane is empty, use that lane unless directed.
- If lanes are being used, get the attention of the swimmer(s) in the lane before just starting to swim and assuming circle or straight swimming. Give the first person the choice of sides or circle swimming. If the 3rd person, make sure both swimmers know you're going to start circle swimming.
- Slower swimmers in a lane yield to faster swimmers. If changing strokes so you swim slower, either go to the back of the line or consider changing lanes.
- When stopped, don't stand in the middle – move to a "corner" so other swimmers can do their turns.
- Don't borrow other people's kickboards or pull buoys without asking first.

Swimming Jargon

Pulling. Swim with pull buoy high between your legs (for flotation without kicking) - some people also use paddles on their hands to strengthen pulling muscles and make sure hands are pitched (or angled) correctly on entry, during the pull and on exit.

Kicking. Do your laps - with or without a "kick board" - use your legs only for propulsion. Some, especially beginners, use fins to teach better kicking technique (kick from the hips with less bend in the knees) and develop kicking muscles. One should never use fins for breaststroke (aka whip or frog) kick.

The proper way to hold a kickboard is with your arms stretched over and laying on the kickboard and your hands wrapped around the round end. One normally uses a kickboard for all kicks but backstroke.

Lap or Length. These terms both mean one length of the pool - not down & back.

Repeats. This is a series of swims (a "set") usually of the same distance. ("Repeats" can be increasing speed, decreasing speed, easy, fast, descend (below), different strokes, etc.)

E.g.; "8 x 50s on the minute" means you do a 2 length (50 yard) [1 length in a 50m pool] leaving every minute. If it takes you 53 seconds to swim your first one, you get 7 seconds rest, then leave again. If your second one takes 58 seconds, you get 2 seconds rest, etc. Also called

Interval Training.

Descending. Each repeat is faster than the one before. (Each swim maintains one speed.)

Build Up: Get faster as you go through a single repeat. (Start each repeat slow and end fast.)

Negative Split: Make the second half of the swim faster than the first. (Like building.)

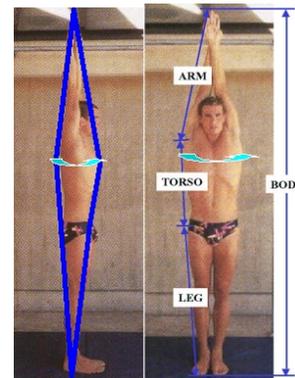
Alternate breathing: breathe every 3 arm pulls - this helps balance your stroke and increase your breath control. When pulling, sometimes you'll breathe every 5 or 7 strokes to help you swim more relaxed and long.

Flip turns: These are advanced methods for turning quickly in races (and practice) when swimming Freestyle and Backstroke by throwing your legs overhead and into the wall without touching with your hands. There's no need to work on these until you've mastered a streamlined underwater push off.

Sculling. This is a back and forth (side to side, **not** front pulling back) motion with your hands held at ~45° angle to the direction you're moving your hands and the direction you want to go. Wrists should always be held (while sculling or swimming) near straight as an extension of your forearm - not cocked one way or another - and not moving all over.

Side Glide Freestyle & backstroke drill: 6 kicks on your side lower hand forward, then 3 long strokes to change sides.

Streamlining. A MAJOR part of swimming is learning NOT to fight the water. The more streamlined you are on push offs and while swimming, the easier and faster you'll go for the same effort. Pool races are 20-30% swum streamlined underwater - the



fastest way a person can move in the water! Put one hand on top of the other, wrapping the top hand's thumb around the pinky side of the other hand, and then straighten the elbows squeezing your *ears* between your shoulders -don't look up (i.e.; forward), don't put your chin to your chest - look straight ahead (i.e.; down) and squeeze your ears. Push offs should be done ~1 foot under water until you slow down enough to come up and start swimming. Flutter kick and/or "dolphin" kicks (aka butterfly kicks) will stabilize your body and can extend a push off for freestyle, backstroke and butterfly tremendously for the minor cost of holding your breath a little longer!

Staying warm

Unfortunately, the pool heaters on Maui break regularly ... when it's cold. Pool temperatures routinely drop to 73F. Ocean water in winter drops to 74-76F. **Hot Tips: (1)** Water sucks the heat from your body 25x faster than dry air. It's best to wear a thick & soft silicone cap to keep in the heat - or two latex caps (can be uncomfortably tight on your head). You lose ~10% of your heat through your head, but ironically heat loss through a wet head increases your body core cooling rate by ~42%. [click](#) **(2)** Lycra tops do NOT keep you warm - they make you **colder** by keeping you wet and wicking away core body heat. If you have to wear a top, make sure it allows full shoulder movement, has a tight fit on the body, a high neck, and preferably reflects heat back in like a Titanium™ top.

Notes on Yards, Meters, Short Course, Long Course, Miles etc. For those who count, a mile is 1760 yards (1609.3m) or 70.4 lengths in a 25y pool & 32.2 lengths in a 50m pool. A standard "competition" mile is 1650 yards (66 lengths) or 1500m (30 lengths of 50m pool = 1640.4yds).

The 50m Pukalani pool is divided by a bulkhead into a shallow 25 yd and deep 29.68 yd (27.14m) sides. A "mile" in the deep end is 59.3 lengths.

Lahaina, Sakamoto and Kihei Pools usually swim "long course" (50m) March-August during the Maui Age Group long course season. Short course (25y) is from September-February during the Maui Age Group & High School season.