

# HOW TO BUILDING AN OPEN WATER FEEDING POLE

## Materials

1. DRINK CADDY
2. SCISSORS
3. TELESCOPING POLE
4. SCREWDRIVER
5. DUCT TAPE

1. DRINK CADDY - Before leaving for OW Nationals you need to purchase your cup holder. An easy-to-find and inexpensive cup holder is the [Liquid Caddy](#). This Caddy is easily found on Amazon and can be shipped quickly. You can also find a caddy of your choosing at a local store with recreational merchandise.



- a. It is recommended that you use scissors to cut out the cup's gripping foam straps from the inside of the cup. TIP- Only cut the straps; keep the cup lining intact. This will allow the swimmer an easier time removing their feed during the race. You should work with your swimmer to establish what type of cup or bottle you will use and customize your Caddy to the swimmer's preference.
- b. Once you remove the foam straps, a full drink will push the bottom of the Caddy down. Duct tape the bottom so that the drink sits higher in the Caddy for easy access by the swimmer.
- c. Make sure to leave the drain hole in the bottom of the Caddy exposed so any liquid can drain out.

2. TELESCOPING POLE - the most easily accessible telescoping pole is a telescoping painter's pole. An easy and inexpensive pole brand to purchase is the [Mr. LongArm 3212 Pro-Pole Extension Pole 6-to-12 Foot](#).



- a. This brand is light weight and easy to use.
- b. As you can review in the USA Open Water Meet Information, a feed pole is not to exceed 5 meters in length when extended. 5 meters is approximately 16 feet so this Mr. LongArm will meet those requirements. There is also a 6-18 foot pole available on Amazon, so make sure to get the 6-12 Foot version so you will be compliant with the rules.
- c. TIP - you may run into some trouble trying to travel with these poles at some airports.
  - i. You can find a telescoping painter's pole at a local hardware store once you arrive at OW Nationals. Be sure to check, in advance, to make sure what you want is in stock at the hardware store you choose.
  - ii. Any painters pole will work for a feeding stick, but this brand is inexpensive and light weight. TIP - When you are holding the pole for your swimmer and it is supporting a full drink a light weight pole is ideal.
- d. Attach the Caddy to the feed pole. You will need a screw driver to attach the caddy to your feed pole. Once the caddy is attached, reinforce the cup to the pole using duct tape.
- e. As you can read in the OW National Meet announcement "No objects, rope or wire may hang off of feed poles except banners or flags, but may not exceed the size of 30 cm x 20 cm."
  - i. It is wise to mark your feed pole so that your swimmer can easily find their feed during the race.

3. DUCT TAPE - always have extra duct tape with you while at OW Nationals. Your feed pole or Caddy may break or come apart during the race, YOU CAN FIX ANYTHING WITH DUCT TAPE!!!



TIP - You should practice feeding at your home pool before arriving at OW Nationals. The timing and communication for both the swimmer and coach is important to rehearse.  
Setting up your feed pole at home will give you time to figure out what works for you and your swimmer.

*Thank you to Open Water Development Committee Member Norm Wright for providing this document. If you have additional questions, contact Norm at [coachnorm@novaswim.org](mailto:coachnorm@novaswim.org).*