

GLOSSARY OF SWIMMING TERMS

The swimming vocabulary is somewhat universal in the swimming community around the United States. However, to those of you just starting out, it may sound and look like a foreign language. Here are some terms you should know and help your swimmers learn:

- **Clock/ Pace Clock:** The big clock on the deck. The red hand goes around every minute. The 60 is sometimes referred to as the "TOP" and the 30 as the "bottom" by coaches.
- **Interval / Send-off:** The amount of time given to complete a given distance, plus rest.
- **"25, 50, 100, 200, 500"** Common distance in meters to swim. Each length of the pool is 25 meters, so a 100 is four lengths of the pool.
- **Length and Lap** While there is uniform rule in using these two words, in general, a length is one length of the pool and a lap is two lengths, or one complete circuit of the pool of down and back.
- **Set:** Swim workouts are divided into sets of swims in a particular fashion and distance: kick set, pull set, etc. Sets are given in terms of the distance to swim, which is calculated in meters. Therefore, a "set" of "25's" means swimming one length of the pool before resting. An example of a set is 5x100 FR on 1:45. This means that the swimmer is to swim 100 FR, five times on an interval of one minute forty-five seconds.
- **Circle Swim:** Done when there is two or more swimmer in a lane. Swimmers swim up the right side, staying close to the lane line, and return on the other side in the same fashion. Always stay to the right of the black line. Each swimmer leaves 5 seconds apart so that there is plenty of space between each person in the lane.
- **Stroke:** Any one of the four competitive strokes Butterfly (FLY, FL), Backstroke (BACK, BK), Breaststroke (BREAST, BR), or Freestyle (FREE, FR). When coaches use this term, it usually means an optional stroke other than free.
- **Freestyle, FREE or FR:** Sometimes called the forward crawl. Swimmers choose the crawl or "freestyle" because it is the fastest and most popular stroke. This is also the stroke most used in practices because it allows a steady build up of fitness while maintaining aerobic (with oxygen) workouts.
- **Choice/ CH:** Swimmer's choice to swim any stroke.
- **IM:** Individual medley, all four competitive strokes swum in the order Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Freestyle.
- **Drill:** Variation of a stroke that allows you to work on a specific technical aspect of the stroke.
- **Descend:** Each successive swim of a given set should be faster than the previous one. Note this is not to swim gradually toward the bottom of the pool.
- **Build:** The swimmer "builds" or gains speed within a particular swim (start slow, finish fast). Some coaches will also use the description "progressive" to mean the same thing.
- **Pace:** The swimmer swims at a certain speed that corresponds to a race distance. Thus a swimmer may be swimming at a pace of 1:20 or one minute twenty seconds per 100. Usually the pace is expressed in terms of 100 yards or meters.
- **Easy:** Slow and easy swimming, usually used to recover between hard sets. Easy sets usually mean to swim at a pace that requires little rest between the swims.

- **Sprint:** As fast as you can go. Sprints are useful for training the body to move fast and to get accustomed to oxygen depletion. When these are done, the coach will usually give a lot of rest between the distances that are swum.
- **Split:** The time it takes you to swim a specific distance. This is different than the interval you swim. For instance, with the set 4x50 on 1:00, your splits might be 45; meaning you took 45 seconds to swim 50 yards.
- **Negative Split:** The second half of the swim is swum faster than the first half.
- **Even Split:** The first and second half of a particular swim should be swum in the exact same time.
- **Distance Per Stroke:** Maximize the distance you cover with each stroke.