

## **Race Day Swim Tips** **Swim Swami, SVTC**

*The objective of the swim is to finish fast enough so that you are performing to potential, but efficiently enough so that you are prepared for the race ahead. What follows are some pre-race, Swim, and post-race suggestions to enjoy yourself and work at your potential.*

### **Pre-Race**

- 1) Nutrition: 2 ½ Hours before the race, Begin the fueling process with a meal that is high in carbohydrates, low on fat and has low to moderate protein. Your body will use the carbohydrates primarily for the next hours, and this is the essential nutrient to absorb. 10 kcal per 100kg (1000+ for a 200 pound person) is a benchmark.
- 2) Hydration: 30 Minutes before the race you should have reached your hydration saturation level. Urine is clear, carbohydrates in the form of Glycogen Stores, have been “topped off”, and solid food is safely beyond the “uncomfortable level”.
- 3) Warm-Up: Frequently little swim warm up is available. Your warm-up routine is highly personal, however, stretching should be done after you have been able to exercise your muscles with a brisk walk or run, or some bike spinning. Within 15 minutes before the race, you should elevate your heart rate high into the aerobic zone as a method to prepare yourself for stretching.
- 4) Equipment: Wetsuit goes on after you have emptied your bladder and bowels—those port a potties are tight for wiggling out of your ORCA! Goggles should be in place under your cap, for security, particularly for mass starts or jumping starts (Wildflower or Alcatraz, respectively).
- 5) Plan for transition: Determine if you are wearing your race number under your wetsuit, whether you need a rash guard or if you will wear a tri-top underneath. “Timing Chip” should be firmly in place around your ankle, according to the directions given (Tri-cal requires “left ankle”). Leave your transition area 5 minutes before your wave with everything where you want it.
- 6) Enjoy your peeps---This is the time to enjoy the camaraderie you share with the others in your wave—“The Hay is in the Barn” and visualizing yourself moving effortlessly through the race is wonderful. The sun is rising! The environment is beautiful! You’re a Triathlete!

### **Race**

- 1) Seed yourself according to your ability and race strategy. Do you want to be on the outside and head across the field into the first turn? Do you want to be at the front and swim to stay in the lead? Do you like to be in the middle and mind your own business looking for your rhythm?
- 2) Pace Yourself and BREATHE DEEPLY- The start is an adrenaline rush. Don’t let the start knock you out of your race plan—Get your HIPS UP!!! Get your head down (head an extension of the spine, Water at the middle of the head, not forehead)
- 3) Sighting--- You don’t need to site for a couple of minutes---Swim to freedom first---get some space.
- 4) Relax in the middle of the “TORNADO”—A Mass start of 100-200 athletes can be frightening. You will bump into, be bumped into, swim over, and be vaulted by many swimmers. Do not get distracted. There is nothing to fear. BREATHE DEEPLY. The start is like swimming in a washing machine—This phase will be over in 60 seconds or less.
- 5) Develop a rhythm—Your rhythm. Keep your head down, and give your body a chance to swim.
- 6) Sight---After the first 200-400 yards sight every 6 - 8 stroke cycles. Keep your hips up and use your buoyancy to pick your head up at the beginning of or at the end of your breathing cycle. When possible, use a surf-lifeguard or shoreline---they are at “eye level” and provide an easy gauge to direction.
- 7) Kick for balance---Longer than a sprint, kick only for balance not propulsion—Kicking employs large muscles which heat you up and tire you out.

### Swim Finish

- 1) Before you know it, you will be done! Rats---this has been the fun part!☺ Finish with 30-60 seconds of strong kicks—get blood to your legs and feet
- 2) Visualize the transition--- Youll need to know how to get out of your wetsuit, you will need to find your bike, there are stairs or a beach to climb—Think through calmly how you want to do it!
- 3) **GET THE TWO PEOPLE IN FRONT OF YOU**---HOW? You will swim all the way until your hand touches the bottom—that is approximately knee length or under. You can only run after you are at knee length water. You will make up positions by swimming to the end. While you “run” lift your toes by flexing your ankle---this is called “ankling” and allows you to clear the water better and earlier---You **DO** want to run, but you **DO** want to wait until you can lift your feet out of the water in water shallow enough to do so
- 4) Pull your wetsuit zipper—some pull theirs while in the water, but as you come out of the water, grab that zipper, run to the ramp and get your **HUGE** shoulders out of that suit. Grab your cap and goggles quickly and remove them

*And as Becky Gibbs-Lavelle told us during our March Meeting: look good for the photographs as you leave the water and begin to go to the next phase of your race.*

**DON'T BE**



**DO BE**

