Swimming Workouts & Practices

This section is a combination of specific sets to do, and some self-coaching ideas. You know your swim better than I do, and should feel free to do more or less drills, more or less yards, more or less repetitions. Focus on improving your flaws, try to improve at least one thing by the end of each practice...fitness comes as a bonus to this dedicated work. Improvement may mean: Better execution of a movement, improved coordination of body working together, faster paces at given RPE, lower SPL at a given pace, or a faster pace at the same SPL.

Warmups:

All swims should start with a warmup of 5-15 minutes including 1 or 2 essential drills with specific element of the stroke in mind, and some continuous swimming focusing on the same element.

Example:
Warmup Set A (500)

This warmup set of 500 yards should take 10-15 minutes in no rush. Combine 1 or 2 drills with 1 or 2 focal points. See Focal Point Menu and Drill Menu for suggestions.

4 x 25 of Skate, alternating Right Skate with Left Skate. Focal point “Wide Tracks”.
2 x 25 of Spear switch, maintaining focal point of “wide track”
2 x 25 of full stroke swimming, continue same focal point
2 x 50 Spear skate x 25 then swim x 25
2 x 50 Swim full stroke.
1 x 100 Swim full stroke

Drill Sets:

Drill sets can be done at the beginning, the middle and at the end of your practice, even on days designated testing, endurance or speed. Here is an example of a drill set:

Drill Sets
A: 25 Spear Switch, 50 swim, 25 Spear switch. Focal point, limit body rotation (or increase to optimum). Repeat 3-5 times with same or different focuses (300-500)
B: 25 Spear Switch, 25 Swing Switch, 25 Swim. Focal Point, relaxed supported head. Repeat 4 times (300)
C: Superman Glide x 4 pushoffs, then stand. Focal point, Streamlined legs. Followed immediately by Superman Glide to Swim while holding focal point.
Repeat 4 times (200)

The warmup posted is also an example of a drill set. On **form** or **recovery** days, try to do at least 3 distinct drill sets between swimming. You can use the same or different focal points throughout the practice, but try to limit new thoughts to only 2 or 3 per day. Keeping a focus of the same small handful of drills or focal points for a week or more is a good way to not get overwhelmed.

On **Endurance** Days, do a drill set at warmup, and at the middle or end if you feel your stroke falling apart. On **Speed** and **Race Pace** days, be certain to finish with a drill set, or even do 2 x 25 of a targeted drill between sets of speed work to reinforce best form. Remember...everyday is a form day. We work specific intentions around your best form to improve overall performance.

For best results pair a drill below with a focal point from the focal point menu. Not all focal points will be matches for each drill.

Some examples of pairings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drill</th>
<th>Focal Point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skating</td>
<td>“Wide Tracks”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spear Switch</td>
<td>Spear to wide target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swing Skate</td>
<td>Show the Armpit (stretches the lats)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nodding</td>
<td>“Whale Eye” (one eye above water)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Full demonstrations of the drills can be seen on the Total Immersion Videos Easy Freestyle or the 10 Lesson Perpetual Motion Freestyle Series. (Discount code of 10% is “coachsuzanne” from totalimmersion.net). You can also find drill demonstrations on the Youtube TriMastery Channel, Total Immersion channel and a general search on Youtube for “Total Immersion + ‘drill name’”

**Drill Menu:**

This is a partial list of drill ideas, not meant to be exhaustive, but to demonstrate the wide variety of possibilities. When you combine these with the focal point list, your options for pool time improvement are unlimited.

**Superman Series**

Superman Glide -> Pushoff to glide (5-10 feet)
Superman Flutter -> Pushoff to flutter (5-20 feet)
Superman Glide -> Skate, no kick (5-10 feet)
Superman Flutter -> Skate, with kick (10 feet-25 yards)
Superman Glide -> Swim (4-6 strokes non breathing)
Superman Glide -> Swim (1 breath cycle)
Superman Glide -> Swim (Full length of pool)

Core Rotation Series
Torpedo (core) Rotation -> 5-10 Feet
Torpedo Rotation to Back -> 5-10 Feet
Torpedo Rotation to back, breath, torpedo rotation (one or more cycles)

Skating Series
Skating (10 feet - 25 yards)
Skate -> 3 stroke -> Skate (one or more cycles with breath between each)
Skate -> Sweet spot breath (one cycle, finish in sweet spot)
Skate -> Sweet spot -> Skate (one or more cycles)
Skate -> Interrupted breath -> Skate (one or more cycles)
Skate -> Swim

Spearing Series
Spear Switch -> Single
Spear Switch -> Multiple
Spear Switch x 3 -> Sweet spot breath (one or more cycles)
Spear Switch x 3 -> Interrupted Breath (one or more cycles)
Spear Switch x 3 -> Continuous Breath (one or more cycles)

Swing Series
Swing Skate Rehearsal (5-10 yards, no breath)
Swing Skate (10-25 yards) (with sweet spot breath)
Swing Switch (Single)
Swing Switch (Multiple)
Swing Switch x 3 -> Sweet spot breath (one or more cycles)
Swing Switch x 3 -> Interrupted Breath (one or more cycles)
Swing Switch x 3 -> Continuous Breath (one or more cycles)
Swing Switch Transition (Elbow, Forearm, Wrist, Knuckles, Ear Hop) (25 yards)
Swing Switch -> Swim

Breathing Drills
Core Rotation to back or off-back
Skating to Sweet Spot
Skating with Nodding
Swim with Nodding
Swim alternating Nod with Breathing
Focal Point Menu
This is a small list of focal points. These are the cool little tricks and thoughts you hear coaches and experience swimmers share. Choose only one thought at a time for full stroke swimming or drilling. Reading any of the coach’s blogs on Total Immersion or Terry Laughlin’s blog will reveal more focal points. You may also pick up focal points while talking to fellow swimmers or interviews with elite swimmers. Create your own collection to fall back on.

Try to categorize your stroke thoughts. Balance & Streamline thoughts reduce drag and improve relaxation. Propulsion thoughts move you forward against minimal resistance.

Balancing Thoughts
Hang your Head
Have a weightless Head
Release Tension in your neck
Bore a Hole through the water with the crown of your head
Spear the water deeper, feel your hips rise
Open your armpits and lean into them

Streamlining Thoughts
Extend a weightless arm in front of you
Part the water molecules with your hand
Reach a few millimeters further with each stroke
Watch for bubbles, minimize them.
Listen for bubbles, minimize them
Let your legs draft behind your torso
Kick smaller
Kick smaller still

Propelling thoughts
Relax your hand
Relax your wrist
Tip your fingers down toward the bottom of the pool
Pause for a nanosecond before starting your catch
Feel the thickness of the water behind your hand
Restart your stroke slowly
Gather moonbeams with your catch
Press the water behind you
Swimming Test Sets:

From the test set options in the section on intensity, Measure pace, overall time and SPL range for your tests. Pace per 100 is your “R-pace” (Race effort pace) and your corresponding SPL is your “R-SPL”. At paces slower than R-Pace, SPL should be LOWER than R-SPL. At paces faster than R-pace, SPL may be higher than R-Pace, but not necessarily. Long fast strokes = fast swimming.

Even if your test distance is shorter than your upcoming race distance, we will still use the term R-pace as the test should be done at a race effort for that distance (as fast as you can while remaining under control)

Form Based Sets (Recovery & Awareness)

Form should be a focus in every practice, but specific form days should be easy to moderate effort, sustainable paces and focus on executing proper movements regardless of speed or distance. On these days the only reason to swim longer or more is to repeat excellent focused execution, rather than to swim a set yardage.

Start with a Drill Set, Perform the Main Set, Finish with a cool down or Drill Set. Choose 1-3 focal points maximum

Main sets:
A: 10 x 100 Perfect Pace. SPL should be 2-3 less than Race-SPL (1000)
B: 200 + 2 x 100 Perfect pace 200s, Slightly faster for 100s. 2 Rounds (800)
C: 100 Perfect, 300 Cruise, 200 perfect, 300 Cruise. (900) SPL remains low, but may climb 1 or 2 for the “faster” sets. Faster should be still at least 10 seconds slower than T-Pace.
D: 4x25, 3x50, 2x75, 1x100, Repeat in Reverse (1000). Perfect Pace.
E: Repeat 5 times: 1x100, 2x50 100s perfect pace, 50s Cruise pace hold SPL. (1000)
F: 200 Cruise, 4 x 25 Drill, 4 Rounds. Focus on successive improvements in SPL after each Drill set.
G: 400, 300, 200, 100. Choose 2 focal points. Even lengths focus #1, Odd lengths Focus #2. (1000)
H: 4 x 75, 1 x 300, 4 x 75, 1 x 300. Choose 3 focal points. Rotate by 25s for the 75s, rotate by 100s for the 300s. (1200)

Endurance Based Sets (Sustainability)

Endurance based sets are done below R-pace and at or below R-SPL.

A: 10 x 50 (10") Cruise pace, count SPL. 5 x 100 (10") @ SPL-1 (1000)
B: 3 Rounds of: (5 x 100) First round Cruise pace, 2nd Round Brisk Pace, 3rd
Round Race pace. If possible hold SPL steady each round while increasing pace. Don’t allow SPL to climb above R-SPL from testing (1500).

C: 5 x 200 Cruise Pace. 6 x 50 Fast. 1 x 300 Cruise. Keep SPL in 2-3 count range. 1400

D: 50 + 100 + 200 + 400. Start at Cruise effort. Try to sustain SPL thru 400. Descend ladder 400 + 200 + 100 + 50 at slightly faster pace. Hold SPL if possible. (1500)

E: 5 x 400 Cruise. Sustain SPL in narrow range (2000)

F: 300 + 6x50 (30”rest). 4 Rounds. 300s at Cruise pace, 50s at Race pace. Maintain SPL for cruise pace throughout final Round. (2400)

G: 6 x 200 Start at Perfect pace and descend each 200 to Cruise pace. Repeat once. (2400)

H: 5 x 500 First half of each 500 at Cruise pace, 2nd half Brisk pace. (2500)

I: 400 + 8 x 200 + 400. 400s @ Cruise, 200s at Brisk pace (2400)

J: 400 + 2 x 200 + 4 x 100. Repeat once. Hold SPL steady. Descend 2nd half of each repeat. (2400)

K: 300 + 2 x 150 + 4 x 75 3 Rounds total. Each round increase pace (2700)

L: 4 x 600. Build each 600 by 1/3rs (each 200 slightly faster). (2400)

M: 3 x 800. Steady bilateral breathing. Hold pace & SPL steady (2400)

**Speed Based Sets (Strength Endurance)**

A: 5 Rounds of: (1x100, 2x50) 100s perfect pace, 50s Cruise pace hold SPL. (1000)

B: 10 x 100 Descend each 100 by 1-2 seconds each. Count SPL & try to hold throughout set. (1000)

C: 200 Cruise, 4 x 25 fast. 4 Rounds. (1200)

D: 200 Cruise pace, 100 Brisk, 200 Cruise, 50 Race Plus. Rest 2 minutes repeat (1100)

E: 400 Steady. 8x25 fast. 400 Steady. 4 x 50 fast. 400 Steady. 2 x 100 Fast. Rest 2 minutes. 100 all out. 200 Easy. (2300)

F: 8 x 200 as 50 Cruise, 100 Race, 50 Cruise. Keep SPL steady (1600)

G: Fast 50s: Do an Endurance Set from above. Rest for 2 minutes & finish with 4-10 x Fast 50s on 90 seconds.

H: Tabata 25s: Finish any set with 8 x 25 sprint, 10 seconds rest. stop if SPL climbs more than 3 from the.

**Race Specific Sets (Speed-Endurance)**

A: Time trial Repeats of 500 (1-3 repeats, increase as race distance gets closer)

B: Time trial Repeats of 800 (1-3 repeats, increase as race distance gets closer)
C: Time trial Repeats of 1000 (1-2 repeats)
D: Time trial repeat of 1500.