

Open water swimmer's checklist

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#yhdessä

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Preparations for your open water swim

TRAINING

- Maintain your endurance and muscular strength
 - Take part in an open water swimming course or train with an experienced open water swimmer. Learn the following skills:
 - How to swim in a straight line and navigate in open water
 - How to cope with changing weather conditions and chilly water
 - Low effort kicking in freestyle
 - Relaxed and efficient freestyle stroke
 - High breathing position in freestyle
 - Relaxed neck position and long glide in breaststroke
 - How to swim in wetsuit
- Warm up before your swim

SAFETY

- Inform yourself of the water conditions, tides, (rip) currents and boat routes beforehand
- Check weather forecast and blue-green algae alert of the area
- Never swim alone, always swim with a friend or a group.
- Ask somebody to escort your swim with a canoe, kayak or SUP board
- Get used to contact with weeds and jellyfish in the sea (remedy for stings is cold water and antihistamine)
- Learn how you to calm yourself when faced with something unexpected in the water
- Take a (warm) drink and snacks for during your swim and for recovery afterwards
- Download a smart phone emergency application, which allows for direct and geographically pinged emergency calls



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Before your open water swim

Eating and drinking

- Drink just before your swim to prevent muscle cramps
- Eat suitably before your swim so you have enough energy to swim and maintain your body temperature

Using swim kit

- Wear a brightly coloured swim hat
- Wear goggles – a tinted pair is useful even on a cloudy day
- Use a tow-float or a dry-bag
- For longer swims, pack your dry-bag with:
 - A drinking bottle and an energy bar
 - Flippers, towel or clothes
 - A mobile phone or navigation device
 - Medicine you might need, i.e. an inhaler for asthma
- Use waterproof sun block cream
- Use neoprene accessories and a wetsuit if you are not used to chilly water
- Don't leave your clothes or any other things on the beach

Informing

- Tell a family member or friend how long and where you are going to swim
- Tell people on the beach how long and where you are going to swim

During your open water swim

Start gradually

- Enter the water slowly
- Splash your face and neck to get used to the water temperature
- Swim a few strokes with your head out of the water and control your breathing
- Introduce your head into the water gradually

Sighting

- Swim along a shoreline or along a marked swim route
- Keep your direction by sighting buoys and landmarks
- Avoid swimming in boat routes

Resting and feeding

- Rest by supporting yourself with your tow-float
- Drink at least every half an hour
- Eat snacks or gels to maintain energy levels

- Keep feed stops short in order to avoid getting cold

Be ready to

- Wait and help other swimmers
- Go on shore and call for help
- Finish your swim, when you still have energy left to continue swimming

After your open water swim

Exit the water carefully, your muscles can be stiff after swimming in chilly water

- Wrap a towel around you, drink a warm drink and warm up slowly
- Take off your wetsuit and swimsuit and put on warm clothes
- Inform your family member/friend and people on the beach that you have finished your swim
- You can feel dizzy after your swim, especially after a long distance swim or a swim in cold water. Using earplugs could prevent these symptoms
- Your open water swim is over only when you have recovered well after your swim

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