

PROPOSED WINTER/SPRING TRAINING PROGRAM
BY – KERRY SKIDMORE

- 1) After speaking to various coaches and using the power of the internet, I wish to put forward a proposed training schedule with various set options that are geared towards the active people who have a natural swimming ability, are self-trained, for those who may not necessarily be efficient swimmers, for past/present pool swimmers, water polo players and surfers.

- 2) The growth in participation in open water swimming and triathlon events has led to increased awareness of the benefits of swimming as a form of daily exercise. Furthermore, increased accessibility to heated indoor pools has significantly added to people's enjoyment of swimming, while also extending the traditional summer swimming season into a year-long activity.

While the health benefits of participating in all aerobic sports are obvious (i.e. weight control and lower blood pressure/cholesterol levels), swimming is particularly attractive because of the low-impact nature of the sport. Consequently, you can participate in swimming on a daily basis well into physical maturity, maintaining good muscle tone and enhancing your aerobic capacity. (Aerobic capacity is the ability to release energy through the breaking down of fats and carbohydrates with the aid of oxygen).

A unique aspect of swimming is each person's skill at interpreting his or her ability to move efficiently through the water. This is the challenge that preoccupies the aspiring swimmer, how to reduce the body's resistance to oncoming water (streamline) while concentrating on gaining the maximum forward momentum with each hand/arm cycle (distance per stroke). Any improvement in technical ability should then be matched by further fitness training and engineering of the individual's strength-to-weight ratio in water.

Thus, any training programme should begin with an assessment of the individual's affinity for, and ease of movement in, the water. Such an assessment should be conducted by a professional swim coach (registered with Swim SA) and should take no longer than one hour. After this assessment, the swimmer should have an understanding of aspects such as "feel" for the water, "catch", stroke pattern, acceleration, timing, body position and rhythm. Of primary importance is the correct instruction of the breathing techniques. Gains in fitness and strength in the pool will only be achieved once a certain level of proficiency has been reached.

3) Training Schedule:

First 2 – 6 weeks. During the first 2-4 weeks adapt to extended kicking sets and sculling with drill sets. Stroke count is an important measure of efficiency. Try to do the following sets 2-3 times a week.

SET 1 – 1800M			
1	400m	Alternate:- 50m swim / 50m kick	With fins.
2	24 x 25m @ 40 Sec	Repeat 6 times	1)25m left arm only 2)25m right arm only 3) 25m catch-up freestyle 4) 25m slow recovery
3	12 x 50m@ 90 sec		
4	200m		Continuous easy

SET 2 – 1600M			
1	4 X 75M	Repeat 4 times 30 Sec rest between sets	1)25m left arm only 2)25m right arm only 3)25m catch-up freestyle
2	4 x (4x25m@40sec)	Various sculls – own discretion	40 sec rest
3	4 x 200m	Consistent stroke count 1 min rest between sets	1)8 x 25m @ 30sec 2)4 x 50m @ 1 min 3)2 x 100m @ 2 min 4)200 under 3min30sec
4	100m		Continuous easy

SET 3 – 1900M			
1	200 M	Alternate:- 25m dog paddle / 25m catch-up crawl	
2	16 x 25m @ 45 sec	Kick	
3	20 x 50m	20 sec rest	Rest after each 50m
4	8 x 25m @ 60 sec	Sprint	
5	100 m		Continuous easy

Weeks 7 – 16

SET 1 – 2800M			
1	600m	Alternate:50m swim/50m kick/50m with pool buoy	
2	12 x 50m @ 80 sec	Kick	
3	3 x 200m @ 4 min	Alternate: 25m dog paddle/25m stroke count freestyle	Repeat 4 times to make up 200m.
4	16 x 50m @ 55 sec	With pool buoy	
5	4 x 25m @ 60 sec	Sprint	
6	100 m		Continuous easy

SET 2 – 3400M			
1	24 X 50m @ 40 sec	Drill sequence	
2	3 x (6 x 100m@ 1min 45)	60 sec rest between sets	
3	200m	Continuous kick	
4	4 x 25 m @ 50	Sprint kick	
5	100 m		Continuous easy

SET 3 – 2400m			
1	8 x 100m @ 2 min 15	Alternate: 50m swim / 50m kick	
2	800m	Continuous swim	With fins
3	24 x 25m @ 40 sec		1)15m sprint, 10m easy 2)20m sprint, 5 m easy 3)25m sprint 4)25m easy
4	200m		Continuous easy

Glossary

The training programmes contain a number of terms that may require explanation.

8 x 25m @ 50sec	This means swimming 8 lengths of 25m, taking 50 seconds for each 25 m. If you swim the 25m in less than 50 sec, then wait until the 50 sec are up before you start the next length.
Stroke count	The "stroke count" is the number of swimming strokes required to swim one length of a pool.
Scull	To scull is to move your hands laterally inwards and outwards with straight arms.
Front scull	To scull with your arms stretched forwards shoulders and with relatively straight arms.
Push scull	To scull with your arms facing backwards and hands facing upwards (next to your hips)
Catch	"Catch" is the first portion of "doggy-paddle", until your hand extends vertically downwards.
1 st and 2 nd phase dog paddle	1 st and 2 nd phase dog paddle means doggy paddle with the hands moving out in front and down to an angle of about 90 degrees (under the chest).
6 Beat kick	Swimming with a 6 beat kick means kicking six times to every arm stroke.
Recovery	Recovery is the portion of the arm stroke from when the hand leaves the water until it is again placed into the water in front of the swimmer.
Finger drag	During recovery, the fingers of the hand just skim the surface of the water.
Catch-up freestyle	With catch-up freestyle the hands both meet in front of the swimmer prior to the one hand moving downwards in the water.
Front quadrant crawl	When swimming crawl, the left and right hands pass each other forwards of the shoulder line.

This is only an example of a proposed training program and Amakhosi Masters swimmers can be individually coached by Vionne Skinner or Joe Hilstroom, to help with tailor made training programs.