



NEWPORT SLSC'S OCEAN SWIM

Ocean Swimming should be about Fun, Fitness and Achievement

At Newport Surf Club, we have always believed that ocean swimming is about fun, fitness and achievement. If you are the competitive type you will want to complete the course in the best possible time and be up with the leaders.

But a lot of us are average swimmers who simply want to keep fit and get that great feeling of achievement when you complete the course.

The good thing about ocean swimming is that you can continue right into your eighties and, because we are living longer, we will see swimmers in their nineties!

At the Newport Pool to Peak ocean swims we give you a choice of an 800m course or a 2km course. Some do both because they have reached that level of fitness.

We want you to enjoy our swims, whichever one you choose, and complete them safely.

At the various ocean swims, you get to meet other swimmers with similar ideals and there is a lot of camaraderie amongst the swimmers.



At the finish of our swims you get to enjoy the juicy Harris Farm Markets fruit and a bottle of water for free!

And, you get the chance to win one of the many great prizes we draw regardless of your swim time.

We hope these ocean swim tips are helpful and you become a competent ocean swimmer.

Leading up to the swims

- ✓ Make sure you are medically fit as ocean swimming can be arduous. When you enter the ocean swim you agree that you have trained for the event and you are responsible for your own fitness.
- ✓ If you have a medical condition check with your doctor if it is okay to take on a demanding sport. Remember it is your responsibility to be fit enough to do the swim.
- ✓ Set yourself a training programme three months out from your first swim. The fitter you are the more you will enjoy the experience.
- ✓ When lap swimming in a pool, make sure you can at least swim the distance you plan to swim in the ocean, preferably more than say three times a week.
- ✓ Practise swimming out through the surf break and back in to shore as many times as possible.
- ✓ Consider using weights for upper body strength. They don't have to be heavy weights just enough to work your upper body muscles.
- ✓ Get all your gear together including swim goggles (good idea to have a spare pair) and sun block.
- ✓ Make sure you eat plenty of energy foods and work towards building your fitness by the way you eat.

The Day Before the Swim

- ✓ Make sure you get a good night's rest.
- ✓ Load up on bananas or a similar energy food.
- ✓ Look at the weather/sea forecasts to get an idea what the next day might be like.
- ✓ Don't drink alcohol.



- ✓ Have a healthy breakfast such as oats, muesli and fruit. Give yourself time to digest breakfast before you swim, say two hours, and make sure you are well hydrated.
- ✓ Get all your gear together such as goggles (including a spare set), sun block, towel and other personal gear. Most swims these days have security baggage stations.

On the Day

- ✓ Put your sun block on early so that it is most effective.
- ✓ Remember to take your gear.
- ✓ Make sure you get to the beach early so that you can check out the conditions. Be aware if it is high tide you will have to start swimming earlier.
- ✓ Take note of any rips or tricky areas, currents, tides, wind direction and strength as well as the size of the waves. If you are not sure ask the Patrol on duty.
- ✓ Understand that if you think the conditions are too tough for you today **it is quite okay not to swim**. It's meant to be fun, so if you think you can't do it - don't enter.
- ✓ Make sure you understand the course you will be swimming. Again, ask if you are not sure. Check if you will be swimming clockwise or anti-clockwise around the buoys. Check the colour of the buoys, sharpness of turns and any stationary boats.
- ✓ Try to pick out landmarks that will help you find your way. **The swimmer in front of you does not necessarily know the way.**
- ✓ Once you have registered, make sure you choose a spot out of the hot sun while you wait for your starting wave.
- ✓ Listen for any special instructions from the life savers on the beach before the start and if they give you instructions during the swim.
- ✓ They may tell you to keep away from an area where there is a bad rip and when you are coming in to shore, they may tell you not to catch a wave because it is dumping.
- ✓ Remember the organisers are always thinking of your safety and they know the local conditions so follow their instructions.



- ✓ Always keep an eye on the sea conditions as they may change dramatically in a short time.
- ✓ Go for a warm-up swim before your start. Check your goggles are sealing okay and feel the conditions in the break so that you know what to expect.
- ✓ Do some stretching and possibly some calming yoga exercises/breathing to keep your pulse rate down. We will show you some of these exercises.
- ✓ Make sure you are well covered with sun block because you will be out there for a fair length of time.

The Start

- ✓ At the start decide where you are going to enter the water. Check the conditions again.
- ✓ When the starters horn goes make your way steadily through the break at a rate you know you can sustain. This is the toughest part of an ocean swim so make sure settle in to your rhythm as soon as possible.
- ✓ Be aware, if there is a sandbank there are often holes you may fall into. Don't panic, get your footing again and continue wading. If the sandbank has ended start swimming out to sea.
- ✓ Wade in the water up to thigh deep. Lift knees to each side (hurdle style) and land your heel on the water. Use arms to counterbalance, swing hips in time. Check for rocks/corrugation.
- ✓ Generally, the quicker you start swimming the better as the whole idea is to get out through the break to the open sea where there are no waves to pound you.
- ✓ Be prepared to go under waves then come up again and settle down to your rhythm again before the next wave. When you go under a wave, go deep enough, probably down to the sand, so that the wave does not drag you backwards. Move like a porpoise, plant your feet and repeat in a smooth wave motion.
- ✓ Time your porpoises to avoid surface waves that will push you backwards.
- ✓ Don't dive too sharply to avoid neck injuries.
- ✓ Use the last jump to explode into the surface swimming stroke.



- ✓ You might find as you go out the break that your mind will tell you that "you can't do this". Just think of your training, stay positive, keep your head down and steadily make your way out. Once you get out through the break you will be more comfortable.
- ✓ Good steady strokes at this stage are best. When you get out through the break you can lift the rate to your comfort zone.
- ✓ If you are not a fast swimmer, don't try to keep up with the leaders at the expense of a good rhythm and steady breathing. It's not an Olympic race.
- ✓ You will feel more confident once you are through the break and you can then settle into your normal stroke as your fitness allows.
- ✓ If at any stage, you feel you are struggling it's okay to stop and get your breath back. It's amazing how after a while your breathing will become more regular. Note: it is considered etiquette to avoid breaststroke (as one of your legs may accidentally hit someone in the pack).
- ✓ However, if you are struggling and worried that **you can't make it put your hand up to be picked up by one of the water craft**. Many ocean swimmers have done this and there is no shame involved. You get to swim another day and it is part of the experience.
- ✓ If you are lacking air when you get out, you can stop and let your pulse rate slow down. Then restart swimming at a very slow rate until you find your rhythm again.
- ✓ Remember the course landmarks you checked out before you started. Then as you go around the course count the number of buoys as you pass them.
- ✓ It can be congested swimming around the turning buoys. Don't panic just get around as best you can and make sure you get back into your rhythm.
- ✓ There might be swimmers who will try and swim over the top of you or scratch you. Just keep swimming and you will get around okay.
- ✓ If it is choppy adjust your tempo to suit the conditions. Breathe normally and use your buoyancy for smooth body carriage. Go with it don't fight it. Keep your elbows high and attack the water to cut through.

Coming in Around the Last Buoy and The Finish

- ✓ It's a good feeling to know you have just about completed your swim. Remember at this stage what the conditions were like in the finish area when you first arrived.



- ✓ Make sure you don't swim into any rips you had noticed but if you forget, swim across the rip not directly against it.
- ✓ Take notice of what the safety people in the water are telling you. If some big waves come up, turn around and go down deep under them to avoid being dragged all over the place or dumped.
- ✓ With the smaller waves, you can either catch them or let them knock you towards the shore helping you reach the finish.
- ✓ Again, if you are in trouble, put your hand up and the safety crew will help you.
- ✓ When swimming to shore reach down and when your fingers touch the sand it's time to start to porpoise or wade and then run to the finish.
- ✓ Remember as you walk or run across the sand bank coming that there may be holes you will fall into.
- ✓ Make sure you cross the finish line regardless of whether you finish through your own efforts or you are picked up by the safety crew.
- ✓ As you cross the finish line say to yourself "I did it".
- ✓ Make sure you have your timing tag cut off by the swim volunteers.
- ✓ Have your photo taken to record the event.

Then you can enjoy our hospitality, courtesy of Harris Farm Markets!

