

SWIM TIPS FOR COLD OPEN WATER SWIMS

Cold water acclimation is a good habit to form. Don't allow your body to be "shocked" with cold water by making your first encounter the starting gun. Enter the water prior to the start of a race to begin the process of acclimation. Notice how the water temp feels against your body. Notice how it elevates your heart and breathing rates. Take a moment to check-in and notice how your chest feels when breathing in a wetsuit. Begin to make each breath a "full" inhale giving extra attention to a "complete" exhale. Next, put your face in the water: slowly lower yourself close enough to allow your face into the water and back out. Do this a few times at a nice, slow pace. Lastly immerse your body in the water while pulling the neck line of the wetsuit out water enters the wetsuit. For a few brief seconds it will be cold but your body temperature will warm up the water that is now trapped between the neoprene and your body. This will provide an insulating layer between you and the water.

EXTRA EQUIPMENT

❑ **Don't leave home without your jug.** A gallon milk jug or 2L plastic bottle of hot water poured into your wetsuit and over your head just before entering the water will help the acclimation process.

❑ **An extra latex swim or a silicone cap will help to keep in the heat.** Most thermal release from the body happens from the top of the head. To keep a lid on the heat double up latex caps or one silicone which is thicker. Place your race cap over the silicone or another latex cap. A neoprene hood under a swim cap is also a great option. Extra tip: If wearing two swim caps, place your goggles between caps to prevent them being knocked off.

❑ **Ear plugs will help prevent the feeling of vertigo** that can be caused by cold water entering the inner ear. The disorientation can make you run in every-direction-but-straight as you struggle to get your land legs. A pair of silicone ear plugs work great or a package of Mac's which are available at most grocery stores.

❑ **Body Glide or Chamois Butt'r Go Stik** applied on heels, ankles and elbows will greatly assist in wetsuit removal. When applied to neck and underarms it can help eliminate body discomfort at points of friction.

❑ **Use a plastic shopping bag!** When placed around your foot it'll make sliding the wetsuit up your leg go much smoother and quicker. You can also place one around your hand if necessary. Once the wetsuit gets passed the knee area it's easier to shimmy up the remaining distance.

RACE DAY

- Get into your wetsuit.

- Gather your cap, goggles, ear plugs and water jug and head to the water for W/U

- 1st trip into the water**-follow the **cold water acclimation** steps above.

- Exit the water and do some range of motion activities and a few run drills to elevate heart rate and begin the W/U process

- 2nd trip into the water**-swim 400 to 600m to continue ramping up physical activity. While swimming check-in and notice your surroundings from presence.

- The wetsuit should start to loosen up a bit so it can be adjusted. Rotate into a vertical position and pull up the legs more so the inseam area can fit more snug. You should be able to adjust the torso area to allow freer arm movement and less restricted breathing.

- Exit the water again and immediately put on a jacket with a knitted skull cap or a sweatshirt with a hood. Also keep your hands warm if necessary by using gloves or keeping them in your pocket. Keep your body warm and even hot to the point of sweating if possible (keep a source of hydration close).

- 3rd trip into the water (Race Start!)**-Now you're fully acclimated and entering the water won't be a source of anxiety. Arrive at your swim corral early enough to take a moment to become present. Notice sights and sounds that surround you such as: the landscape, event structures, other athletes, where you enter the water, the announcer's voice, music, crafts on the water, etc.