



COACH FRANKS COLD WATER TIPS



When swimming in cold open water, it's important not to let your body experience a sudden "shock" by jumping straight into a training session or race. If possible, enter the water beforehand to begin the gradual acclimation process. Taking a moment to reconcile the impulse caused by cold water with your body's response can make cold-water swimming more comfortable and enjoyable.

Begin by taking a few steps into the water. Pause and notice how the water temperature feels on your feet. Pay attention to how it affects your heart rate and breathing.

Next, walk in a little farther until the waterline is just above waist deep. Stop here and take a moment to check in with yourself—notice if it feels easy or hard to breathe in your wetsuit – or maybe it feels some other way. It might help to regulate the breath by taking a steady, full 4-count inhale, followed by a complete 4-count exhale.

Then, gradually fold at the waist and dip your face into the water before lifting it back out. Repeat this a few times at a slow, comfortable pace. Notice how the water temperature feels on your face. Add a few cycles of full inhales out of the water followed by complete exhales underwater with your face submerged.

Finally, immerse your body fully up to the neck and gently pull the neckline of your wetsuit outward, allowing water to enter. It will feel cold for a few seconds; however, your body temperature will quickly warm the water trapped between your skin and the neoprene, creating an insulating layer.



Tips for a Smooth Cold Open Water Swim



DON'T LEAVE HOME W/O A JUG

A jug or large bottle of hot water poured into your wetsuit and over your head just before entering the water can help jump-start the acclimation process.



DOUBLE UP ON SWIM CAPS

A large percentage of thermal release from the body occurs through the head. To keep a lid on the heat, wear two swim caps. A neoprene hood worn under a swim cap is also a great option.



PRO TIP: If wearing two caps, place your goggles between caps to prevent them being knocked off.



USE EAR PLUGS

Cold water entering the inner ear can cause vertigo or disorientation. Ear plugs help prevent this sensation and allow you to regain your "land legs" more quickly after exiting the water. Silicone ear plugs or Mac's ear plugs (available at most grocery stores) work well.



INTRODUCE COLD EXPOSURE IN SHOWER

Introduce cold water gradually into your shower routine. Start with water that's slightly colder than normal and progressively decrease the temperature over time. The goal is adaptation and developing awareness of how your body responds when first exposed to cold water.



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TRAINING VS RACING CONSIDERATIONS

During races, you may not have the opportunity to gradually enter the water. In these situations, complete your range-of-motion warm-up on land, followed by run drills to help raise body temperature. After entering the water, allow water into your wetsuit at the neckline. Then, adjust the wetsuit as outlined below and swim a few strokes before pausing to assess the fit one final time.



WETSUIT TIPS

USE ANTI-CHAFE PRODUCTS.

Applying Body Glide, Chamois Butt'r Stick, or similar products to the heels, ankles, elbows, neck, and underarms can make getting in and out of your wetsuit much easier and reduce friction-related discomfort. Once the wetsuit passes the knees, it's generally easier to shimmy it up the rest of the way.

A PAIR OF SOCKS on hands and Feet can also help slide through tight openings.

ADJUST YOUR WETSUIT ONCE IN THE WATER.

Swim a few strokes, then stop and fine-tune the fit. The wetsuit will begin to loosen slightly, allowing for better adjustment. Move into a vertical position and gently pull each leg to improve the inseam fit. Adjust the torso as needed to allow freer arm movement and less restricted breathing.

RINSE YOUR WETSUIT AFTER EACH SWIM

Salt, chlorine and lake residue can break down neoprene over time. A quick freshwater rinse helps preserve flexibility, prevent odor, and extend the life of your wetsuit.