



# Swimming – Guidelines & Etiquette

We have 2 primary objectives for our swim sessions:

1. The sessions should provide suitable training benefit to all
2. They should be safe & enjoyable

We would respectfully ask all PACTRAC members to read and acquaint themselves with the guidelines & swimming etiquette below.

## Introduction

Swimming with others is a great way to build fitness and have fun. Sharing the workload is much easier than 'going it alone', and nothing beats a poolside coach for feedback and advice on how to improve. Swimming with swimmers of a different ability is a sure-fire way to drive you forward and up a lane!

At PACTRAC, we will always aim to provide relevant sessions for the sport of triathlon. However, as with all sports, in order to improve we must measure, and push ourselves. To that effect, at different times of the year the sessions may have a different focus or objective. Your coach will determine this according to the periodization plan they have set out. We will also test ourselves using time trials at key stages through the year. These sessions should not be avoided or 'feared' and no judgment or criticism will be shown from these times. They are simply used to benchmark performance to allow the coaches to structure their sessions correctly moving forwards. They also allow the coaches to ensure that all athletes are in the correct lane for their ability.

BTF have partnered with Swim Smooth as their partner for swim coaching. Where possible, PACTRAC will aim to follow the BTF/Swim Smooth coaching model. Whilst it is important to recognise that there are multiple coaching methods available and our experienced swim coaches may employ different techniques during their sessions, as a general rule PACTRAC will try to base the swim developments and skills around the Swim Smooth framework.

Our structured pool-based swim sessions suit all abilities of swimmer. For our Monday and Friday sessions, we recommend that you are able to swim 200mtr/200yd continuous front crawl to get the maximum benefit from these sessions. For our Wednesday technique session, the recommendation is a minimum of 100mtr/100yd continuous front crawl. If you are unable to swim these distances, please see a member of our coaching team for further advice.

If you are unsure about which level you are, please make yourself known to the poolside coach before the start of the session and discuss this with them. If in doubt, swim in one of the slower lanes to start with. After watching you swim for a session our coaches will be able to guide you as to your current level/lane.

Different sessions throughout the week are targeted at a different focus. To get the maximum results from the sessions, a mix of technique, speed and endurance is required, we aim to deliver this through the 3 weekly sessions.



## What will be provided?

- 1 or 2 coaches depending on the number of lanes/type of session
- Lifeguard cover
- A structured session plan
- Pace clock: Each venue has a large pool side clock to time work/rest intervals

## What do you need to bring?

- Swim trunks / costume
- Goggles
- Towel
- Swim cap: Only required for those with long hair
- Sports watch: For timing on longer sets if you can't use the pace clock
- Training aids: Pull buoy, hand paddles, kickboard, ankle band, training fins
- 1 x 750ml drink (as a minimum)
- Ideal: Knowledge of your current swimming ability. E.g. 400m time, 750m time, etc.

## Swim Training Etiquette

To make sure everyone gets the most out of our swim training sessions we ask all members to make themselves aware of our swim training etiquette. It may look like there is a lot to take in but most of it is common sense. Check anything you don't understand with the coach at the start of the session. Not all of these will apply in all of our sessions, but it is good to have an understanding of pool etiquette in case you are swimming in other sessions, or with other groups.

### When You Arrive

**Arrive** at least 10 minutes before the start of the session so you are ready to sign-in and begin the warm-up on time.

**Shower** before entering the swimming pool. This is particularly important if you have arrived at the pool after a day's work, cycled, run or completed another training session immediately prior to the swim.

**Remove plasters** or dressings before swimming to avoid them falling off in the water.

**Do not swim** if you have any scabs or open wounds.

**Swimmers with long hair** are encouraged to put on a swimming cap before entering the water.

**Remove all jewelry** before entering the pool. If you require a watch for timing information during the session make sure it is a sports watch and that it has no sharp edges.

**If you arrive late** you speak to the coach before entering the water. If they say it is ok for you to join in, you must complete an appropriate warm-up before joining in with the main set. This must be done without causing interference with other athletes. If this is not possible you will not be allowed to join in the session.



## General Awareness

**Do not run** on pool side.

**Notify the coach** before entering / leaving the pool mid-session

**Swimmers should observe and respect** the pace and workout routines of other swimmers in their lane - especially when circle swimming - avoiding actions that are likely to interfere with those routines. Examples include:

**Slower swimmers** starting a set should wait to push off the wall until faster swimmers have passed (i.e. don't push off right in front of a faster swimmer who's coming into the wall about to turn, as this blocks the faster swimmer). Slower swimmers should push off almost immediately behind a faster individual or group, thus extending the time until they are lapped again and need to stop.

**Faster swimmers** starting a set should give slower swimmers as much "running room" as possible before pushing off, (rather than jumping right behind and immediately tapping their toes to move over.)

**Swimmers resting** or otherwise waiting at the wall should stay far to one side of the lane, (preferably at the left from the perspective of an approaching swimmer, or the right from their own perspective looking back up the pool). Resting swimmers should specifically avoid standing or floating in the middle of the lane as this interferes with swimmers "swimming through" who need to tag or flip at the wall. If the lane is crowded, other swimmers may need to rest out away from the wall along either side of the lane.

**When circle swimming**, swimmers should never stop in the middle of a length (e.g., to adjust goggles), as this may cause a trailing swimmer to run into them. Unless one is swimming in 'split' format or alone, it's best to continue to the wall and stop there. If the loss of a contact lens is at stake, it's easy enough to close one or both eyes for a few strokes and swim by 'feel' to the wall.

**A swimmer entering** an open lane, or joining one person in a lane that's designated differently from their expected pace (i.e. a faster swimmer in a "Slow" lane, or slower swimmer in a "Fast" lane), should stay aware of arriving swimmers, and be prepared to move to a more appropriate lane if/when other swimmers join them. That is, the lane speed designation takes precedence over the pace of incumbent swimmers who simply happen to be swimming there.

## When Passing

**An overtaking swimmer** should gently but distinctly touch the feet of the swimmer being overtaken. It may take two or three touches, but overtaking swimmers should not need to repeatedly slap or grab at the legs of a slower swimmer to politely make their presence known.

**Swimmers enjoying** a draft behind a strong lead swimmer, but who are just barely able to hold that pace should think twice before tagging the leader's toes and requesting to move ahead. In such situations, it's highly unlikely that the (formerly) trailing swimmer will be able to hold the same pace for very long when leading without the draft. This can lead to repeated "leap-frogging" and unnecessary contact, which can be annoying and disruptive for everyone in the lane.

**Drafting swimmers** not wishing to pass should swim far enough back from a lead swimmer that they don't inadvertently touch the lead swimmer's toes.

**Overtaking swimmers** should not attempt to swim "wide" past a slower swimmer unless they are the only two swimmers in the lane, since in most cases this presents a hazard to other oncoming swimmer(s), forcing them to pull over to get out of the way.



**In the rare case** that a passing swimmer does swim wide, s/he should be confident in his/her ability to sprint into the field of vision of the lead swimmer well before s/he gets to the wall. Otherwise, this sets up for a collision at the wall as both swimmers attempt to turn on top of one another. In the case of any ambiguity at the wall, the swimmer whose head is behind should give way to the swimmer whose head is in front.

**In the equally rare case** that a strong swimmer finds him or herself at the back of a line of several slower swimmers in circle format, it is acceptable (after looking carefully) to move to the other side of the lane mid-length and proceed in the opposite direction, somewhat ahead of the line s/he had been trailing. This should only be done in cases where the lane is relatively crowded, where there are no other lanes moving at a more suitable pace, and where the process of tapping several swimmers in succession would be overly disruptive. For anal-retentive swimmers fond of keeping detailed training logs, this move has the unfortunate disadvantage of completely messing up one's lap counts by introducing fractions.

## **When Being Passed**

**A lead swimmer**, who feels a touch on the feet from an overtaking swimmer, should continue to the next wall, then stop in the corner of the lane to let faster swimmer(s) past. A single light touch may be accidental and can be ignored, but two or more distinct touches should be regarded almost universally as a request to swim through.

**A swimmer** who has been touched on the feet should move to a corner of the lane as soon as they get to the next wall in order to make way for passing swimmers turning there. It's best if the touched/stopping swimmer moves immediately to the far left corner (from the perspective of an approaching swimmer), which would be the far right corner (from their own perspective looking back up the pool). This routine applies as well to swimmers stopping of their own accord, (i.e., even if they haven't been tagged on the toes), since another swimmer who hasn't seen fit to touch toes may be right behind.

**In circle format**, swimmers should always stay aware of the gap behind them to the next swimmer, and try to anticipate when that swimmer (if s/he is faster) is likely to overtake him/her. This is easily accomplished by looking back just before or during each turn, (whether 'flip' or 'open').

**A lead swimmer** who sees another swimmer coming up close behind as s/he turns at the wall should consider stopping and moving over immediately at that wall in order to let the faster swimmer past - rather than blocking that swimmer for an entire length to the next wall, creating a situation where toe-touching becomes necessary.

**Swimmers being** overtaken should never stop in the middle of the pool, nor should they continue beyond the next wall (e.g. back to the shallow end) after being "tagged" on the feet. Instead, they should stop at the next wall, at the corner of the lane.

**If more than one swimmer** is bunched close behind, the swimmer being overtaken should allow the entire group of faster swimmers to pass before pushing off the wall again (i.e. don't push off right in front of someone else who's also obviously faster.)

**Swimmers** being overtaken should not attempt to speed up (or slow down) once "tagged", nor should they jump in and "tag back" the new lead swimmer on the next lap.

**If two or more swimmers** are sharing a lane and are closely matched in pace they should either position themselves at opposite ends of a lane (endless pursuit) or agree on how to share the lead.