

# The Handbook of the Okanagan Masters Swim Club



## Intro

A very big welcome from the Okanagan Masters Swim Club!

This handbook is a collection of information that you, the prospective member / new member / renewing member can use to get an idea of what Okanagan Masters Swim Club is all about.

The OMSC family would like to ensure that joining or renewing with OMSC will prove to be one the best decisions you've ever taken!

As a member of the club there are a number of things you should know, that can help you become one of the team, an active participant in Masters swimming, and to reach your full potential. Every swim club has its own style and circumstances, so even if you're a seasoned Masters swimmer, there are still things to learn about our set-up, how we try to keep it interesting and entertaining, and the things we like to do.

We also want to make it easier for you to understand how we fit into the Okanagan aquatic scene, and for you to get the highest level of satisfaction and benefit from your association with OMSC.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact any member of the executive. We live by the Masters swimming mantra "*Fun, Fitness, Friendship and Participation*" and promise to help make your transition from new member to swimming colleague and friend, as enjoyable as possible.

You can reach any member of the executive committee at any time. Our contact information is posted our website at [www.okmasters.com](http://www.okmasters.com) under 'Contact Us'.

Thanks for choosing OMSC as your new swimming home!

Yours in swimming

**OMSC Board**

[president@okmasters.com](mailto:president@okmasters.com)

[www.okmasters.com](http://www.okmasters.com)

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## Membership

Membership varies from season to season and year to year. Some swimmers train all year round, others take time off during Summer, and some head for a warmer climate during our winter. We plan our swim program and lane requests to match member requirements as closely as possible.

OMSC is the largest year-round tenant club at our home pool, the H<sub>2</sub>O Adventure & Fitness Centre, and has been since it first opened in April 2009. Membership includes all ages from 18 and above.

We offer one of the most attractive Masters programs available. Membership and usage patterns at the H<sub>2</sub>O have started to stabilise over time. We have developed a good feel for what our members appreciate most about our club, and have developed our seasonal program accordingly.

It wouldn't make sense to put exact membership headcounts into a handbook (we'd have to adjust it every week), but the following will give you a feel for the club profile as it stood in May 2011:

OMSC members registered with MSABC for financial year Sep 2010- Aug 2011	130+
Number of members on Executive	12
Total number of active swimmers	90+
Total number of out of town members	30+
Number of coaches	5-6
Age range of membership	18-80
Gender profile of membership	typically 60% female: 40% male

OMSC takes a commitment for pool usage several months ahead of the start of the season, based on historical usage patterns and lane availability. Lane space is shared with other users of the pool. We have to commit to lane times and annual expenses well ahead of receiving fee income from our members. We therefore encourage our members to sign up early for the annual season, and offer the lowest monthly fees to members who commit for the long term. This helps the club to develop a healthy financial position to the benefit of all its members. Visit our [website](#) to view our [membership categories and current fee structure](#).

## OMSC the society

Okanagan Masters Swim Club was registered as a Society with the BC Registrar of Companies on December 30, 2004 – reg. number S48521. The club's home pool from 2004 to 2009 was the Athans facility in Rutland ("Rutland Family Y"). In April 2009 the H<sub>2</sub>O Adventure & Fitness Centre opened its doors and OMSC moved across to become its first adult swim club tenant.

OMSC is managed as a going concern and funded by membership fees. We occasionally raise funds through competitive swim meets, open water swims and other related activities, and manage the affairs of the club with an Executive committee of up to 12 volunteers.

## OMSC the family

Okanagan Masters Swim Club is a collection of swimmers who have joined a club for many different reasons. Our Constitution gives the purposes of the society as:

- To promote fun, fitness, health, fellowship, and participation among adult swimmers.
- To give guidance and leadership in the direction, development and execution of programs for non-competitive and competitive adult swimmers in the Okanagan.
- To encourage the development and use of facilities for swimming, in general, and for Masters swimming in particular.

## Swim Program

We have distinct swimming seasons during the year:

Fall	mid Sep to Dec 23	} Annual Season Sept to June
Winter	Jan 2 to Mar 31	
Spring	Apr 1 to Jun 30	
Summer	Jul 1 to Aug 31	Summer Season

Our annual season runs from early September through June 30. We also offer a light summer program during July and August, involving four indoor swim sessions per week plus open water sessions in Okanagan Lake on Fridays or over the weekend.

### Sharing

The H<sub>2</sub>O Adventure & Fitness Centre has understandably become popular with many aquatic clubs in Kelowna. Lane space is valuable and there will be days when OMSC will not have access to a scheduled session, as another swim club or group has reserved space well in advance for a special event.

The H<sub>2</sub>O schedule is planned in advance. We will communicate with our members by email if a scheduled OMSC session is not available in the next week or two.

### Communication

Our primary form of communication with members is by email, so please make sure you keep your address current and your eyes open for emails from the club. These are distinctive and OMSC branded, so they won't be easy to miss.

## Facilities



The “H<sub>2</sub>O” is an asset of the City of Kelowna, residents and taxpayers. It is operated by the YMCA-YWCA under contract to the City. Usage guidelines are established by the Aquatic Advisory Committee.

The pool is 50m long and eight lanes wide with two moveable bulkheads. During certain periods it is set up as a long course pool (50m), mostly as two short course (25m) tanks, and occasionally as three tanks (12.5m, 25m and 12.5m). The Aquatic facility also has a river run, water slides, wave rider, wave pool, hot tub and gym.

Okanagan Masters Swim Club rents lane space from the H<sub>2</sub>O Adventure and Fitness Centre on a commercial basis in accordance with an agreed schedule, as do other clubs and youth groups.

## Swimming in the Okanagan



Photo courtesy” “Across The Lake Swim” website:  
<http://acrossthelakeswim.com>

The Okanagan enjoys one of the most pleasant summers in Canada. Daytime temperatures often reach the high 30’s during July and August.

OMSC includes an open water element into its Summer program that includes weekly swims in

Okanagan Lake.

Together with a scaled back indoor program during the summer season, members can keep swimming fit throughout the year, while making use of the natural open water swimming opportunities during the warmer months.

## Open Water Swimming and Triathlon

Our members have varied interests including competitive swimming, triathlon and open water swimming. Since many of our members compete across all three mediums, our coaching program caters for skills levels from developmental through to advanced competitive, including a focus on the type of training needed as we approach various provincial and national events.

## Set-up and Equipment

We advise our members to purchase certain equipment for personal use:

1. Swim suit
2. Goggles
3. Water bottle
4. Paddles
5. Swim cap\*
6. Mesh bag for swim kit
7. Fins\*\*
8. Pull Buoys\*\*
9. Kickboard\*\*

\* We will hand you a fashionable and sought-after, complimentary OMSC branded swim cap when you join our club.

\*\* The last 3 items may be available at the pool. The H<sub>2</sub>O provides certain swimming equipment for public and general use, which many clubs make use of. However there is no guarantee you will find the right size or fit, or that this equipment will be available when you might need it.

Most serious Masters swimmers have their own fins, pull buoys, paddles and mesh bag. All of the equipment listed above can be purchased at leading swimming goods outlets. OMSC also has a club account with [Team Aquatic Supplies](http://www.team-aquatic.com), a Canadian-owned supplier, for the benefit of its members.

Equipment can be purchased directly online from [Team Aquatic Supplies](http://www.team-aquatic.com) at an OMSC *team, family and friends* club discount, by entering the following user name and access code:

Website: <https://www.team-aquatic.com/store>

Username: **okmasters**

Code: **h20pool**



Paddles



Fins



Pull Buoys



Kickboard

## Swim Club Clothing

OMSC has also designed some great-looking OMSC branded clothing (jackets, hoodies, extra swim caps) that members can order through the club. Exec member Carmelle Guidi-Swan will let members know when we're going to place the next bulk order.

## Workout Hieroglyphs

The following list may help you make sense of some swimming lingo and the swim workout. The coach is there to help you understand the terminology, but please familiarize yourself with the following terms:

### The Pool

**SC**= short course (25m lane length)

**LC**= long course (50m lane length)

### The Workout

**Fr** = freestyle

**Fr** = front crawl

**Bk** = backstroke

**Br** = breaststroke

**Fl** = fly

a x b (a = number of times, b = distance, e.g. 5 x 100m free)

The pool is 25 metres long at most workouts and 50m long at other times

To swim 100 metres you would swim 4 lengths. 5 x 100 means you would swim 4 lengths, take a rest and repeat this another 4 times.

**Ch** = choice (your choice of stroke other than Front Crawl: i.e. Fly, Backstroke or Breaststroke)

**Dr** = drill (focuses on specific aspects of a stroke)

**K** = kick (kick only, no pulling with arms)

**P** = pull (swim with Pull Buoy, arms only, no kick)

**10 sec** = 10 seconds rest

**SC** = stroke count. The number of full strokes to swim a lap (25m or 50m)

**IM** = Individual Medley, swim fly, followed by backstroke, breaststroke and front crawl for the total distance indicated

**RIM** = Reverse-order Individual Medley, swim front crawl, followed by breaststroke, backstroke and fly for the total distance indicated

**Build** = get progressively faster in the swim

↓ = Descending (descending lap time, increasing speed, same as build)

↑ = Ascending (ascending lap time, decreasing speed) [*you won't see this very often*]

**Warm-up** = the period of the workout where you get your body warmed up

**Cool-down** = the period of the workout where you slow your body down to finish the workout

## Lane Etiquette

It's a strange fact that guidelines for lane etiquette are often not written or well communicated to members of Masters swim clubs. It makes life easier when we're all aware of what's expected and what constitutes 'good manners' in Masters swimming. To assist members, we've decided to add a **website article on lane etiquette**.



OMSC has anywhere from 15 to 40 swimmers swimming at workouts. With 2 to 8 lanes this means up to 5 swimmers per SC (25m lane) and up to 8 swimmers per LC (50 m lane). There must be some order to how people swim together. Usually the developmental or slower swimmers are in the lanes with the lower numbers (1,2,3 or 4) and gradually progress to the faster lanes with improved technique. If you are not sure where you should swim or have not swum for a while, talk with the coach, who will assist you to select a lane compatible with your speed and fitness level.

Remember: we were all beginners at some point. There's nothing to be embarrassed about if you start in a slower lane or have to ask questions. Our coaches are there to help get you to your prime again, and your fellow swimmers will be happy to help a new member of the family.

Many of the rules of swimming etiquette are unwritten, which can be really awkward, especially if you're unknowingly breaking any of the important ones. You've heard of '**road rage**', well there's also something called '**lane rage**', and you can avoid it by following some important guidelines and rules.

1. When you enter the water, **never dive, jump, or push off into oncoming swimmers**. Wait until they have made the turn and pushed off the wall;
2. **Introduce yourself to the people in your lane.**



This is the social part of our club. People in your lane become your friends, can help you decipher the workout and encourage you along your fitness track.

3. **Lane Directions**
  - If there are two swimmers in a lane, you can agree whether one keeps to one side of the lane and the other to the opposite side, or whether you want to circle swim.
  - If there are three or more swimmers in a lane, they must circle swim, and the custom is to stay to the right, that is to swim counter-clockwise (Australians think differently, but we're in Canada).
  - If one lane is swimming counter-clockwise, the next lane should swim in the opposite direction. This will help reduce the incidence of "colliding" arms.
4. **Make sure everyone understands the section of the workout** before you start out.

Each lane develops its own leaders, usually determined by the speed of the individual swimmers. Each person has their own stroke strengths and weaknesses. It will take you a

few sessions to figure out where everyone belongs. Don't get discouraged, you will work it out.

5. **If you arrive late** at workout it is up to you to determine where your swim mates are in the workout and join in at that point.

It is disruptive for someone to show up late and break the rhythm of the swim already in progress. It's also discourteous to the coach and fellow swimmers to arrive late, or to leave early, so try to avoid doing it if you can.

6. If you do arrive late, wait until the swimmers are resting at the wall to **announce your arrival**.

Do not surprise them by just hopping in and swimming behind them. This often leads to collisions.

7. **Passing:** If you need to pass a swimmer, pass on the left. Preferably tap the foot of the person in front of you before passing. If you are being overtaken at the turn, stop, and wait until the other swimmer has pushed off. **It is best to make the pass at the wall rather than in the middle of the laps**, as follows:

- *Passer:* Gently taps feet of Passeur;
- *Passeur:* At the next turn, pulls over to the Right Corner and stops;
- *Passer:* Makes flip turn at Left Corner of wall;
- *Passeur:* Starts swimming again, behind the Passer.

8. If you need to stop for a rest / clear your goggles / adjust your fins / gasp for air etc, **squeeze into the corner to the right** of incoming swimmers, so they will have sufficient room to turn on the left.

9. **Don't leave early from the wall.**

If the lane is going 5 seconds or 10 seconds apart, do not leave 3 seconds back. In no time at all, you will be on the feet of the swimmer in front, and that is annoying.

10. **Allow others to finish their set** by moving to the corner of the lane.

Usually the way this works is at the end of a set the first person touches in on the far left side of the lane. The second person touches in the centre, and remains there. The third person touches to the far right, and then immediately moves away from the wall to the centre of the lane. Now the fourth person can touch in on the far right. It seems complicated, but it works if everyone plays along. With more than four swimmers, each additional person needs to move to the centre of the lane after they touch in on the right. NB: it is annoying for a swimmer coming in to finish, if there is no space for him/her to touch the wall. Touching the wall is part of the finish.

11. **At all times be aware of what is going on within your lane.** Try not to kick or swing your arms into another lane or across your own lane especially when near to another swimmer.

12. Keep your toenails and fingernails **trimmed**.

13. Do not stand in front of the **pace clock** when others are still doing the swim set.

## Competitive Swim Meets

One thing you will enjoy more than you thought possible, is to participate in a competitive swim meet together with your OMSC friends. It's true: we've all had stage fright and a hundred and one excuses why there shouldn't even be a 'first time'. You're worried that you're not fit enough, fast enough or slim enough to compete. Fact: Masters swim heats are seeded according to swim pace (estimated times), so you will swim with people of similar speed. Masters offers an opportunity for everyone to have fun and participate. Once you've swum one competition with us, you'll be back for more.

Here are a few of the highlight swim meets you could pencil into your Agenda:

### **MSABC BC Provincials - April**

The BC Provincials Masters Swim championship is a three-day meet held every year around the third week in April. Our club hosted the very successful 2011 Provincials (short course) meet at the H<sub>2</sub>O Adventure & Fitness Centre from April 15-17. This attracted 230 swimmers from BC and further afield. It was also the third time OMSC has hosted the BC Provincials.

### **CMSC Canadian Masters Swim Championships - May**

The CMSC is a four-day meet held every year on the May long weekend. Masters Swimming Canada tries to have the meet held in western Canada every other year. In 2011 it is being held in Montreal. OMSC is co-host to the 2012 CMSC short-course meet at the H<sub>2</sub>O together with two other local clubs.

### **ATLS Across The Lake Swim - July**

This is the longest running annual open water race in British Columbia, ATLS attracts participants from all over, to undertake the 2.1km open water crossing, hosted by the ATLS Society. It's a great event, and worthwhile training for. Read up on it at <http://www.acrossthelakeswim.com>

### **OMSC Open Water Invitational - August**

OMSC hosts the 1.5km and 5.0km open water invitational meet at Tugboat Beach, Kelowna during the same week-end as the Kelowna Apple Triathlon. OMSC also coordinates all of the swim elements of the Kelowna Apple triathlon events on behalf of KATS (the Kelowna Apple Triathlon Society).

### **Kelowna Apple Triathlon – August**

The Kelowna Apple has been held every year since 1983. It is hosted by the Kelowna Apple Triathlon Society and sanctioned by the International Triathlon Union to host the Kelowna Pan American Cup Elite Race as well as the Canadian National Championships for Elite, Junior Elite and Age Group Sprint and Olympic races. The three day event offers entry level, Sprint and Olympic distance triathlons

### **OMSC Fright-Fest - October**

OMSC hosts a one-day sanctioned meet late in October for Okanagan clubs and swimmers at the H<sub>2</sub>O. Close to Halloween, the meet is a great opportunity to 'dip your toes' into the competitive pool, with a smaller crowd of 40-70 swimmers. Dress scary. Take part in a couple of fun relays.

### **YMCA/YWCA Strong Kids 100x100's - December**

The YMCA Strong Kids Campaign raises financial support for children, teens and families who are unable to afford the full cost of participation in a YMCA program or activity. The H<sub>2</sub>O event is held annually and is hosted by OMSC. Participants challenge themselves to swim any combination of 100's: 25 sets of 100m (2.5km); 50 sets (5.0km) and the ultimate 100 sets (10.0km). Participants donate any amount they're comfortable with. A pledge of \$100 will help a child learn to swim and develop water safety skills. \$500 keeps two children from a low income family active and healthy with a Y membership for one year, and \$1,500 is all that's needed to send eight kids aged 5-12 to one week of Y Summer Day Camp. To learn more about the Y's Strong Kids Campaign, visit [www.ymcastrongkids.ca](http://www.ymcastrongkids.ca)

## Million Metre Challenge

The Million Metre Challenge is a Masters Swimming Canada program designed to promote swimming for health and fitness. The program encourages regular participation through tracking of cumulative distance swum and recognition as the swimmer reaches various milestones. Registered swimmers record the distance swum in each workout and the system tracks their overall progress and calculates various statistics. When a swimmer reaches a milestone distance they receive the award for that distance. Awards include a certificate and swim cap at the 100,000m mark, a certificate, swim cap and pin at the 250,000m and 500,000m marks, and badge, pin and swim cap at the 1,000,000m mark. Register online at <http://mymsc.ca/SwimmerForm.jsp>

## Social

Masters swimmers around the world have been known to eat heartily, drink beer and wine, and have a seriously good party. We're no different in that respect. We try to arrange social events from time to time, so members can get to meet each other outside of the pool environment. We're creatures of habit: you'd be surprised how many members have never met 'the other half' of the club. This is because roughly half of us swim mainly in the mornings and half of us like to swim in the evenings. The other half ... well, who knows what they do! A social event is a way to bridge that gap, so we would encourage you to join the party any time we arrange one.

## Regular Events

We meet for breakfast the last Sunday of the month (except December, July, August) at 10:00am after the Sunday swim. The get-together is at Creekside Pub and Grill on Lakeshore, or elsewhere as arranged. Everyone is welcome to join. No need to have swum on that day. We usually email a reminder the week before.

## Communications

We send out regular emails to members, advising of important events and happenings, swim meets and other events that might interest our members. We also keep our website updated regularly at [www.okmasters.com](http://www.okmasters.com)

We hold our Annual General Meeting in the fall, usually late October. We'd encourage all the members to attend and find out about the club and what we're up to. This is also a good time to put your name forward to serve as a volunteer member of the executive, going forward.

## Reference Websites and Bodies

<Ctrl> Click on the links below, to view the websites.

[MSC](#)

Masters Swimming Canada

[MSABC](#)

Masters Swimming Association of British Columbia

[MyMSC](#)

[Million Metre challenge](#)

[SwimBC](#)