



Why Masters Swimming?

More and more of us realize that regular exercise contributes to good physical and mental health, whatever age. Swimming is one of the safest and best ways to exercise. It doesn't abuse the joints with sudden shocks and pounding and benefits the cardio-vascular system, reduces cholesterol and positively influences muscle tone, endurance and emotional well-being.

Besides, it's fun! Masters swimming provides excellent opportunities to exercise with others, to improve swimming skills and stamina, and to enjoy doing it.

Who Are the Masters?

Women and men, young and old: If you are 18, you are old enough to join. Even if you are over 90, you can continue to be an important

and active member of Masters Swimming.

Swimmers at all levels of ability: Your wanting to swim is what matters. How fast or slow you swim may or may not be important to you.

Most will be trying to enhance their swimming with improved skills, strength and stamina.

Swimmers in health or rehabilitation: It is better to enjoy good health whenever you swim, but you don't have to be 100% fit or free of ailments to swim. Swimming has helped many feel better while still hampered, to partially recover from ailments or even fully regain their health.

We have coaches for every kind of swimmer, including developmental through to

advanced competitive swimmers. The basic requirement for developmental swimmers joining OMSC is that they are capable of swimming at least four 25m lengths.



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Our OMSC Coaches

*Pascal Sutherland
Monday/ Wednesday/
Friday evenings*

I began swimming at 6 in Ontario as a summer swimmer in Port Credit. After completing the summer circuit I decided to abandon baseball and soccer and focus primarily on swimming. I swam competitively with Tomac in Mississauga before moving to Vancouver at the age of 12 and swimming for the Vancouver Dolphins. I swam with them until just after my 14th birthday when I strained a ligament during the Provincial 200 backstroke final. It was there that my age group career ended. I went to a small high school in the US where I turned my attention to golf and tennis.

I became a born again swimmer in Nanaimo at the age of 25 with a masters group that ran out of Frontrunners. Seven years and seven masters clubs later I continue to enjoy swimming both for social and competitive pursuits. I have also been competing in triathlons for the past two years ago and have



completed distances ranging from Olympic to Ironman. In 2010, I was the 1st male in the

30-34 age group out of the water at Ironman Canada.

I have been coached by some high profile coaches including Tom Johnson and Graham Smith

and am a strong believer in establishing good technique and working with each swimmer individually to develop the style of stroke that they are best suited to.

I look forward to helping our OMSC members achieve their goals in their upcoming year.

*Eli Dimitrov-Tuesday and
Thursday morning*



Eli's entire life has revolved around the world of swimming. Eli started swimming at the age of 7 and she went on to be a member

of the Bulgarian National Swim team. With over 15 years of competitive swimming experience she has been a swim coach since 1985, when she worked for five years with kindergarten and pre-competitive swimmers at the Sofia Sport Development centre in Bulgaria. In 1990, she moved to Canada and coached with the Milton Marlins in Ontario before proceeding to coach with the University of Calgary swim club. Eli is also a qualified massage therapist. The Dimitrov's moved to Kelowna in 2009. Eli's husband Emil is also a top Canadian coach. Their two sons, George and David, are also nationally and internationally ranked swimmers.

Eli does not believe in 'swimming for appetite'. You either do it right or you do it over. She always finds a way for her swimmers to challenge and push themselves to new heights and they love her for that.

Battling cancer for a number of years, Eli has been the inspiration for OMSC's Elena Dimitrov Award for Courage and Determination and was also the recipient of the 2011 Jan Morrow award at Kelowna's Across the Lake Swim.

Sue Morrison- Thursday and Friday mornings



Sue has decades of coaching experience with swimmers and triathletes of all levels (recreational to competitive) and ages (children to over 85 years of age). Sue also serves as Chair of the Central Okanagan Aquatic Society (COAS). COAS served a critical advocacy role in galvanizing community support for the new H2O Adventure and Fitness Centre. Sue's credentials include: NCCP Level 3- Swimming, Level 2 -Athletics - Distance Running and Level 1 -Triathlon.

Sue has also coached triathlon for a more than 20 years and has devoted much of her time to the Iron distance with age group finishers to overall age group winners, top three Clydesdale finishes and Age Group winners.

*"You can't put a limit on anything. The more you dream, the farther you get".
~Michael Phelps~*

Nelson Chapman- Tuesday morning

I began coaching Y Masters at the Kelowna Family YMCA about three and a half years ago. Without having a competitive swimming background, my coaching philosophy was mainly influenced by my lifeguarding and swimming-lesson teaching experience and, funny enough, my essay writing skills from university. I like to think of each workout as a well structured essay. I start with a 'thesis' and work from there to unpack that focus throughout the workout. Each part in the workout should serve to introduce, explain, support, or reinforce the main purpose/focus of the workout.



While I was taught swimming lessons, when possible I preferred to use the discovery-method of teaching (i.e., provide a foundation and guided questions to allow the swimmers to explore from the ground up what/how to do what the skill is). This influences my coaching in

that I like to break specific swimming skills down and allow swimmers to experience working through each 'building-block' of the overall skill or technical element as opposed to a "describe, demonstrate, do" approach. (Although there are times for that too.)

When I'm not coaching, I am working to pass the time (and feed/shelter myself) until I write the LSAT in December, in preparation for law-school in September 2011 (hopefully). In June 2010 I graduated from UBCO with a B.A. majoring in Psychology. When I'm not working I like to play volleyball, watch movies and read, bike and run, and even swim occasionally - although it's a goal of mine to be doing this more regularly!

Jon Smirl-Monday, Wednesday evening, Sunday morning

I am a transplant to Kelowna by way of Victoria, arriving here in 2008 to work on attaining my M.Sc. and Ph.D. degrees in Human Kinetics and am currently trying to get into the Med program here at UBC. Eventually I would like to establish a

career working in the rehabilitation, medicine or sports medicine fields.

Over the course of my 17-year coaching career, I have been privileged to have worked with many different swimmers and triathletes ranging in age from 3 years old to 80+, introductory

swimmers to national level competitors, try-a-tri participants, Ironman champions and every-where in between.

As a coach, I am a firm believer in quality over quantity. As such I like to devote a great deal of time working with swimmers and triathletes on their improving their technique and try to help them develop a solid technical foundation. My experiences have shown that this is the key to becoming a successful swimmer.

When I'm not on the deck at practice or hitting the books at UBC Okanagan, I am hoping to be able to get a few training rides in and maybe even hit up the occasional triathlon. In 2010 I was a finisher of Ironman Canada, and have aspirations

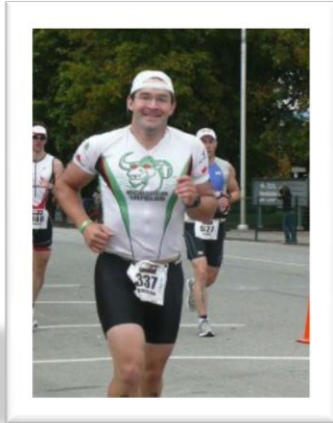
of racing it again in the future.

Over the course of my competitive swimming

career I have set numerous club, regional and provincial records in both Summer Club and Masters

swimming. I also spent three years on the UVic Varsity swim team. Over the past 3 years, I have thoroughly enjoyed working with the Okanagan Masters Swim Club, and hope that all of our members continue to enjoy their training.

"When I go out and race, I'm not trying to beat opponents, I'm trying to beat what I have done ... to beat myself, basically. People find that hard to believe because we've had such a bias to always strive to win things. If you win something and you haven't put everything into it, you haven't actually achieved anything at all. When you've had to work hard for something and you've got the best you can out of yourself on that given day, that's where you get satisfaction from." ~ Ian Thorpe ~



What to expect for the Beginner

First Practice

Since you are new to swimming, the coaches will use their best initial estimate of your ability and set up in the appropriate lane. For OMSC, the lane closest to the wall (lane 1) is typically for the less speedy swimmers and the furthest lane from the wall is for the fastest swimmers (lane 6).

After setting you up in your lane the coaches will introduce you to your new lane-mates and begin to work with you on improving the most important fundamental in swimming - having good body position in the water. Most of the first practice will be spent trying to develop this skill and enhance your comfort level in the water. Typically this will be done by working on improving your kicking skills with and without a kick-board, with an end goal of enabling you to maintain a near horizontal position close to the surface of the water. This provides many benefits for making swimming much easier down the road as it 1) reduces the amount of drag you need to overcome to



move through the water and

2) let's you stay higher in the water and thus making it much easier to breathe.

Also, please remember that swimming can be a tough sport in many ways

that other sports are not, because we are dealing with a much different environment than other sports and oxygen is not always readily available. So if you find that you are feeling more tired than expected, this is completely normal. Just take a few minutes extra rest to relax and chat with the other swimmers in your lane.

If you have any questions, during any workout, feel free to talk to your coach at any time during practice as we are there to help you. Have a great swim!

First Month

Throughout the first month, expect to spend most of your time continuing to build your endurance and improve your body position in the water. As you get more and more

comfortable in the water, your confidence will grow and your endurance will improve. Alongside the improved confidence level that you have developed, you will also find that you have an added skill that is vital to swimming effectively — the ability to relax in the water. When you begin to relax more and more, you will find that you no longer need to fight against the



"Once upon a time there was a little boy who was afraid of water. His father, concerned that this hydrophobia might impact on to other aspects of his son's life insisted that he went to the local swimming pool and learned how to swim. The frightened little boy grew up to be Alexander Popov, widely recognized to be one of the greatest sprint freestyle swimmers of all time." <http://www.worldinsport.com/2010/10/100-greatest-sports-stars-number-94.html>

"The water is your friend.....you don't have to fight with water, just share the same spirit as the water, and it will help you move". ~Alexander Popov ~

water to move forward but you are able to work with it.

Again, a lot of time in this first month of swimming will

be working on improving your kicking skills as they hold the key to making swimming easier in the long run.

Slowly you will be introduced into more and more technical skills and drills that are specifically designed to enhance your technique. And again, if you are feeling tired during workout it is okay to listen to your body and take some extra rest.

At the End of the First Six Months

Over the course of your first six months with the team, expect to spend most of the time working on learning freestyle and backstroke. You will find that as you make gains on your endurance and stamina, your co-ordination and strength will also greatly improve. Things that you thought were impossible just a few months prior will become common for you to accomplish regularly in practices.

Also, as you become more and more comfortable in the water, the coaches will encourage you to develop an even better feel in the water by having you learn the other two strokes: breaststroke and butterfly, and some more advanced techniques such as dives and flip turns.

These new skills will seem awkward at first, but just remember where you started just a few months ago and how much progress you have made on your Free and Back. In time these new skills will become just as easy to perform.

Take some time to reflect on where you were six months ago and where you are now. Congrats, you are a SWIMMER!!

“Whether you think that you can, or that you can't, you are usually right.”

~Henry Ford ~



The basics of Swimming



The main goal of swimming is to maintain a horizontal position while using as little energy as possible to move us forward by displacing the most water rearwards.

The narrowest boat with the widest paddle is the most efficient. If your feet are dangling, you are effectively trying to shove a body twice the thickness of yours through the water.

Be Efficient

With very few exceptions, the best swimmers tend to take fewer strokes.

A fast stroke turnover is only effective if each stroke efficiently presses back the maximum amount of water. So the early goals of swimming shouldn't be placed on how fast you can move through the water but how efficient you are with those strokes.

Spend some time counting how many strokes it takes you to get from one end of the pool to the other and slowly try to chip away at this number until it is comfortably below 20.

Overall your pull should feel somewhat like climbing a rope, you are able to hold onto your place in the water with one hand while going forward with the other.

Try to concentrate on maintaining a steady pull without losing your attention and letting the water just slip by.

Stay Relaxed

If you don't need it, don't use it.

You don't need neck muscles to swim, so let them go and keep a neutral body position. Our body position in swimming should be very

similar to how we walk, quite comfortable. If you hold your head too high, your hips will sink and swimming will become more work and if you hold your head too low you will start to plough through the water. Try to keep it somewhere in between and you will feel much better.

Momentum will get your arm out of the water, then let your arm go quite limp until it re-enters the water. Think about flicking your hand out and gently lifting it forward, if you can stay relaxed during this phase of the stroke you will save yourself a whole lot of energy which can be put to a much better use in your vigorous pull.

Overall swimming should be a fun sport to enjoy and allow you some time to unwind. Also one of the few sports that fathers and daughters can do together!



Pool Etiquette Tips

Arrive at practice early so you can stretch and get ready for the workout. A late swimmer disrupts the practice, interrupts other swimmers, and risks injury since there is no opportunity to properly warm up.

Pick up a kick board and a pull buoy (and fins, if requested by the coaches), prior to starting to swim.

Select a lane that suits your speed, even if you can't complete the sets (take more rest).

If your lane is crowded, a faster swimmer should move up a lane for the session.

If you are consistently the



fastest or slowest in your lane, consider moving up or down a lane.

Swim in order of speed - e.g. fastest backstroker may be slowest in breast, or longer distance.

Follow the workout - that's the reason why you have a coach!

Use the pace clock.

Leave 5 or 10 seconds between swimmers to avoid crowding, allow for turns and track your time.

If you want to pass the



swimmer in front of you, touch his/her foot 10m before the turn.

If the swimmer behind you touches your foot, let him/her pass at the next turn.

When at the wall, move over! Leave the end of the lane open for swimmers to turn or finish. The 'T' is for turning on, not standing in front of.

When turning, push off the return side of the lane to avoid on-coming swimmers.

Swim in straight lines by following the line on the pool bottom, or the ceiling tiles.

If you skip a set to rest, sit out on the deck; don't hang

"Being your best is not so much about overcoming the barriers other people place in front of you as it is about overcoming the barriers we place in front of ourselves. It has nothing to do with how many times you win or lose. It has no relation to where you finish in a race or whether you break world records. But it does have everything to do with having the vision to dream, the courage to recover from adversity and the determination never to be shifted from your goals."

~Kieren Perkins ~

onto the wall if that would obstruct other swimmers.

If you arrive late, tailor your warm-up so you don't impede swimmers doing the workout (find out at what point on the workout the other swimmers are, and start swimming at the same point, after making your presence known).

If you join a lane after the workout has started, make your presence known. Unexpected newcomers can cause collisions.

Don't clear your nose or throat in the pool.

Don't hang off or climb on the lane ropes - it can damage them.

Help out! Assist with putting away the kick boards, pull buoys and other swimming equipment at the end of the workout.

Getting to know the different Strokes

FREESTYLE

Push off the wall, straight and narrow. Be patient. When you slow down in a few seconds, kick narrowly, using your hips to flop your feet, letting the water bend your knees slightly.



Arms straight in front of you and hands flat. Leave shoulder to elbow on the surface while your hand drops down until it's below your elbow. Now start pulling not very hard with your whole arm. Sense what you're doing, trying to feel the pressure of the water along your whole arm, not just your hand. Your arm now looks like a boomerang as you switch from pull to push and increase the pressure. When you think you've completed the push, go another six inches forcefully.

Let the momentum take your elbow out of the water,

hand dangling behind. Your shoulder swings your arm effortlessly all the way straight in front of you. Don't rush, but let the other arm begin its cycle when you're at least halfway through the recovery of the first arm.

There is much acceptable

variation in this timing. Breathe in the trough your head makes, so you won't need to lift your

head at all. Even keel is precisely what you want to maintain from your head to toe, keeping your spine quite rigid as your torso rotates with each stroke, but your head holding steady.

Rotation is subtle, but it might help you to think that your hand, when passing by your hip is pushing it out of the way. Not really of course, but that's the timing. All the movements from your head and arms travel down your body and, if not allowed to continue into a rotation, will instead cause your hips and legs to wave and snake. Have someone watch you. If you're not snaking, you're okay;

otherwise you need to rotate your hips more.

BACKSTROKE



Backstroke is the stroke of choice for beginners because you can breathe whenever and however you want although you'll doubtless form a pattern and stick to it without thinking about it.

Again, push off the wall streamlined and underwater.

When you surface for your first breath and arm stroke, look for your hip and keep the left one in sight while you stroke with your right arm, the right hip with the left arm. This means your head will not be thrown back, but will stay in the same up position as your body turns on its axis. Even the kick will turn left and right. This body roll is much more pronounced than with freestyle. As in free-style, your hand passing the hip is the time to begin the rotation.

With your body on its side (but nose up!) your arm can much more easily sink, bend at the elbow, pull and push, and exit thumb first. With

this roll, you don't have to reach behind your back to get your arm and hand in the water; your body will be on its side, so you are stroking more comfortably because your side is well down in the water and your arm is naturally in the correct position.

BREASTSTROKE



Seemingly so easy, the stroke of choice for relaxation is the most technically demanding of all. Timing is everything. The arms and legs are in a streamlined position, same as freestyle, and they return to that position momentarily on every stroke.

Again, as in freestyle, the elbows stay up as the forearms sweep out and around as if inside a big salad bowl, the upper arms snapping together when the hands are coming in at the bottom of the imagined salad bowl.

As the hands, close together, extend forward to their beginning position, the knees bend to bring your feet very close to your butt and pointed out. While still extending your arms, your

legs imitate your arm stroke, circling out, around and snapping back and together. Hold it for a second in the glide position.

Breathing takes place when your arms, snapping together under your chin, push water up, raising your chin. Head goes back down as arms go forward.

More than any other stroke, the breaststroke must be watched and imitated

BUTTERFLY



Sure. Why not? It's not that big a deal. The only thing that makes it so strenuous is the awkwardness of breathing when both arms are out of the water and you have to kick very hard to get your whole upper body in a position that allows your mouth to do you the favour of taking in air instead of water. Simple solution: don't breathe. That's not as totally impractical as it seems. In a race, the flyer may take 0 to 1 breath in the first 25 meters and 1 or 2 coming back. As a learner, you can practice 4 or 5 strokes without breathing and then

just stand up if it's shallow or continue with another stroke until the end of pool. Rest and start again.

But first, we'll not only do without air, we won't bother with arms either. Arms at side, feet together, dive your head down, stand up, over and over and over. Now arms at side, dive head down and when you feel your legs surface kick them forcefully down and raise your head. Now stand up and re-peat many times. Next do it, but after your head comes up,

kick and dive again

without standing. You can take a little gasp when your head rises. Gradually make the dive shallower until

you are just

undulating without need to stand. When that becomes almost easy, try going across the pool kicking your head down and kicking your head up, breathing whenever you like. When you can do that, you've got the hard part down pat. One would think that swimming butterfly with only one arm is a special kind of aquatic torture, but it's actually easy for the same reason two arms is hard: breathing. Add only one arm to the kicking, recovering when your head is up and entering immediately after your head enters. When you

progress to two arms, it will be easier if the recovery is straight out to the sides, but the stroke itself follows the same pattern as free-style.

There's a nice sense of accomplishment in being able to swim all four strokes. Put them together in the order of Fly, Back, Breast, Free and you have the Individual Medley, raced at distances from 100 to 400 meters.

“My Journey Across the Lake” by Ron Buddo

I joined the Okanagan Masters Swim Club in July of 2009 and immediately made my presence known ... as possibly one of the worst swimmers ever to progress past the first session. I just couldn't grasp freestyle breathing, and became a familiar sight sitting on the edge of the pool after every two lengths desperately gasping for air.

I had let it be known that I was going to take part in the 2010 ATLS, but as weeks and then months went by, freestyle breathing just wasn't happening for me. To make matters worse, I had predicted to Coach Sue that I would swim 70 lengths on April 5th to celebrate my 70th birthday.

By January 15th the most freestyle I could muster was four lengths. After that, a build up of water in my throat would cause me to come to a grinding halt. By the end of

January, I had eked out 10 lengths..... and there I stayed.

Fortunately at the beginning of April, somehow I broke through my self-imposed barrier, and on my birthday, Easter Monday with Sue keeping count, I struggled through 70 lengths. It was pretty ugly, but it was a huge break-through nevertheless.

With only three months till race day, I spent lots of time at the pool, but with the lake temperature still cool due to a heavier than normal runoff, I was un-able to familiarize myself with open water



swimming. By early July when the water had warmed somewhat, I squeezed into my new 2XU wetsuit and waded into the lake at Gyro Beach.

There I found more reasons to be concerned than confident. I planned to sight on my friend Gary Mellor's kayak, but was puzzled as to why he was constantly heading off course ... or so I thought. I quickly discovered that with-out lines on the bottom of the lake, I was badly disoriented and I had to learn to ignore my instincts and trust Gary. My brief experience with open-water swimming was so unsuccessful I gave up on it in

favour of the pool, convinced that when it mattered, I would make it across the lake somehow. So there I was on July 17th, waiting with 449 other swimmers at the Old Ferry Docks having amassed a meagre total of about 400 meters of open-water experience. To my relief, I settled into a reasonable rhythm and kept abreast of Gary quite nicely. Being unfamiliar with the course, I was puzzled as to why we were still parallel to the beach for so long, and was dismayed when I caught sight of the

Bluff sign when I felt I must surely be well into the swim. Gary told me later that he had never seen me swim so well, but it all unravelled when I paused briefly and immediately had the calf muscles in both legs go into spasms.

That was the end of my day. I appear in the results page as DNF. At times like this I wish my last name wasn't so easily recognized.

After arriving on shore by boat, it was really tough being at Hot Sands Beach among so many excited swimmers and their supporters, all celebrating their success. I made my way out of the area swallowing my bitter pill, with my wife by my side, quietly trying to raise my spirits.

Linda, a friend who had to with-draw from the Across the Lake Swim due to illness, came up with a suggestion that she and I get more open water

experience and do our own two-person ATLS in September. With this in mind we met at the lake before 6am three times a week, rain or shine, and over a seven week period accumulated a total of 30 kilo-meters at Gyro Loop, The Manteo Mile and Cedar Creek Beach. I must admit though that I rarely swam farther than 500 consecutive meters before putting my feet down briefly. Hardly good preparation for what I'd have to do on the day.

September 11th arrived as we knew it would, and with our support team we crossed to the Old Ferry Docks on the Westside at 8 am in conditions that were far from ideal. Brent was swimming with us, and advised us on the best course to swim to keep out of rough water as long as possible ... and then we were off.

My first 1,000 metres were perhaps the best I had ever swum in open water and Gary in his kayak made my job easier by quietly leaving me to my thoughts. His silence allowed me to get into a groove. When I saw The Bluff sign on the hill, this time I knew we were well into the swim and I felt strong as we headed out across the lake. At that point my spirits were high, but as time and distance progressed, I began to feel my physical and mental strength slowly ebb.

Video of me during the last several hundred meters shows me dropping my arms wearily

on top of the water in a disintegration of technique. I even swam for a short time without making any forward progress, and Gary said the current at that point had a surprisingly strong effect on his kayak too. As I reached the beach and stopped swimming, I rose to my knees, and I recall hoping that I could stand up. When I was out of the water, I could tell that everyone was waiting for some kind of positive reaction, but all I could do was stand with a weary look on my face musing on what I had just gone through. I never did find the high that normally comes with reaching a goal.

My swim wasn't pretty, and it wasn't done in the style I had hoped, but when all the dust settles, I can think back to July last year when I sat exhausted on the edge of the pool. I can look at my notes and see that I could barely manage 100 meters freestyle in January, and I can now compare that to a non-stop open water swim of 2.4 kilometres..... Who said you can't teach an old dog new tricks?



OMSC EXECUTIVE

Tony Hoft (President); Brent Hobbs (Past President); Ashley Russo (Secretary); Monique Russo (Registrar); Irene Pett (Treasurer); Conny Stamhuis (MSABC Registrar); Laura Garrett (Meet Manager); Jeanette Hoft (Communications); Carmelle Guidi-Swan (At Large); Jennifer Leach-Trask (At Large); Brian Corbett (At Large); Leora Dahl (At Large); Tracey Sutton (At Large).

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Thank you also to William Burgher for many of the photographs used in this newsletter and Angelique Duffield.



We would love to have you as a member of our OMSC team whether you're 18 or 80!