

# OPEN WATER SWIMMER'S CHECKLIST

## Preparation for your open water swim

### Training

- Maintain your endurance and muscular strength
- Take part in an open water swimming course or train with an experienced open water swimmer.

Learn the following skills:

- How to swim in a straight line and navigate in open water
  - How to cope with changing weather conditions and chilly water
  - Low effort kicking in freestyle
  - Relaxed and efficient freestyle stroke
  - High breathing position in freestyle
  - Relaxed neck position and long glide in breaststroke
  - How to swim in wetsuit
- Warm up before your swim

### Safety

- Inform yourself of the water conditions, tides, (rip) currents and boat routes beforehand
- Check weather forecast and blue-green algae alert of the area
- Never swim alone, always swim with a friend or a group.
- Ask somebody to escort your swim with a canoe, kayak or SUP board
- Get used to contact with weeds and jellyfish in the sea (remedy for stings is cold water and antihistamine)
- Learn how you to calm yourself when faced with something unexpected in the water
- Take a (warm) drink and snacks for during your swim and for recovery afterwards
- Download a smart phone emergency application, which allows for direct and geographically pinged emergency calls



## Before your open water swim

### Eating and drinking

- Drink just before your swim to prevent muscle cramps
- Eat suitably before your swim so you have enough energy to swim and maintain your body temperature

### Using swim kit

- Wear a brightly coloured swim hat
- Wear goggles – a tinted pair is useful even on a cloudy day
- Use a tow-float or a dry-bag

- For longer swims, pack your dry-bag with:
  - A drinking bottle and an energy bar
  - Flippers, towel or clothes
  - A mobile phone or navigation device
  - Medicine you might need, i.e. an inhaler for asthma
- Use waterproof sun block cream
- Use neoprene accessories and a wetsuit if you are not used to chilly water
- Don't leave your clothes or any other things on the beach



### **Informing**

- Tell a family member or friend how long and where you are going to swim
- Tell people on the beach how long and where you are going to swim

### **During your open water swim**

#### **Start gradually**

- Enter the water slowly
- Splash your face and neck to get used to the water temperature
- Swim a few strokes with your head out of the water and control your breathing
- Introduce your head into the water gradually

#### **Sighting**

- Swim along a shoreline or along a marked swim route
- Keep your direction by sighting buoys and landmarks
- Avoid swimming in boat routes

#### **Resting and feeding**

- Rest by supporting yourself with your tow-float
- Drink at least every half an hour
- Eat snacks or gels to maintain energy levels
- Keep feed stops short in order to avoid getting cold

#### **Be ready to**

- Wait and help other swimmers
- Go on shore and call for help
- Finish your swim, when you still have energy left to continue swimming

#### **After your open water swim**

- Exit the water carefully, your muscles can be stiff after swimming in chilly water
- Wrap a towel around you, drink a warm drink and warm up slowly
- Take off your wetsuit and swimsuit and put on warm clothes
- Inform your family member/friend and people on the beach that you have finished your swim
- You can feel dizzy after your swim, especially after a long distance swim or a swim in cold water. Using earplugs could prevent these symptoms
- Your open water swim is over only when you have recovered well after your swim