



How to Improve Your Swim Technique: How to Correct the Top 5 Triathlete Swim Mistakes

1. Swimming off course – practice your sighting in the pool. It could be every 10-12 strokes that you sight, or 8-10 or even 6-8. The point is, start somewhere. Once you know you are going straight, you can start sighting less frequently. Additionally, you can close your eyes and swim down your lane while practicing swimming in a straight line or black out a pair of goggles to prevent your “peeking” while practicing.
2. Improper breathing – you should never hold your breath in swimming. You are always either inhaling or exhaling. Particularly in a race, you want to make sure you are getting enough oxygen, so it might not be advantageous to breath every 7 strokes. Practice some sets of breathing every 3 or 5 strokes for 200 or more yards. For example: 3 x 200 breathing every 3/5 strokes by 50s. This means your 200 would be: 50 breath every 3 strokes, 50 breath every 5 strokes, 50 breathing every 3, 50 breathing every 5.
3. Improper pacing – For the swim, the name of the game is pacing and you’ll want to find your rhythm right away. Find your “T-Pace”: 3 x 100 Meters T-Pace Test

Keep the pace each set within 5 seconds of each other:

1. Warm up
2. Rest for 2 minutes
3. Swim 100 meters at a consistent pace
4. Rest for 15 seconds
5. Swim a second 100 meters at the same pace
6. Rest for 15 seconds
7. Swim a third and final 100 meters at the same pace
8. Rest and cool down

Calculate your T-Pace by adding together the time from all 3 of the 100 meter efforts (excluding the rest periods), and divide by 3. For example, if your times were 2:24, 2:27, and 2:31, you would divide 7:22 by 3, resulting in a T-Pace of 2:27.



4. Not drafting – this one can only be done with another swimmer (or more). Practice leaving the wall immediately when the swimmer in front of you leaves. You can swim directly behind this person with the arms entering the water normally, or, if you get a little close, you can widen your entry so you don't hit the person's feet in front of you. You can also try and swim off the hip of the swimmer in front, but this can be tricky in one lane when it comes to the turn. Another option is to take all the lane lines out of the pool and have everyone swim in a large circle. This gives swimmers the chance to draft, sight and experience the bumping of other swimmers as experienced in a mass swim start.
5. Head position – many swimmers tend to pick the head up and give a slight look forward when in the water. This will only slow you down. Practice keeping that chin tucked and use your sighting when looking forward. One simple trick is to tuck a plastic fork under your goggle strap with the tines pointed toward your neck. When you lift your head, you will feel the tines digging into your neck signaling for you to bring the head back down.