

OPEN WATER SKILLS 2

BETTER BREATHING

OBJECTIVES:

- To make swimmers find comfortable breathing patterns in open water
- To focus on deeper exhalation IN the water
- To encourage a rhythmic bi-lateral breathing pattern (breathing to each side)

WHAT TO FOCUS ON:

Cold or choppy open water can make your breathing shallow and inefficient. If you are new to open water swimming, or find yourself in a chaotic race situation it can be an unpleasant panic-inducing experience.

With this session aim to stay calm as you reduce the amount of oxygen you take in as you swim, and crucially, try and forget about the breathing action and focus on the symmetry of your stroke.

To have a balanced stroke, breathing to both sides is usually better (bi-lateral breathing). In a race, breathing every 3 strokes is a good balance of oxygen in-take versus stroke disruption as you breathe. So all the exercises below work on odd numbers to encourage bi-lateral breathing.

WHAT TO DO:

- 10min easy swim warm up
- Swim from one buoy to the next (approx 100m) breathing 3 strokes, then 5 strokes, then 7 strokes
- Once you feel comfortable doing this swim the same distance but breathe every 5, 7 then 9 strokes
- As a progression, you could swim the entire distance between two buoys breathing every 5 strokes (or 7 or 9 if you feel comfortable)
- 10min easy swim cool down

TIP:

How far you turn your head to breathe makes a big difference. If you turn your head a lot you slow down and often your extended arm drops lower in the water (not good). So work on reducing the amount you turn your head. Ideally, you can open your mouth to breathe right against the surface line of the water. A good indicator of this is your eye line; one goggle should be out of the water the other submerged. Your wake and forward-motion will prevent water from filling your mouth. This takes some getting used to but give it a go! Ardingly is about as clean a body of water as you will find, so you have the best place to try!