



Otter Aquatics Newsletter

No 37. June 2018

Dear swimmers

Welcome to the June 2018 edition of the Otter Aquatics newsletter. Look inside to find:

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- 🦫 Learn-to-swim instruction, stroke correction and swimfit coaching – all levels
- 🦫 Open water swimming instruction and training
- 🦫 Swimming as therapy
- 🦫 Swimming-based tourism – domestic and international

Winter Open Water Swimming

Some of us are tough, such as Siberians and New Zealanders (or so our Kiwi friends like to tell us). Others swim in a heated pool in winter. But why would you want to do that if the ocean is within a reasonable distance? Don't wait for summer to get wet in the ocean; get into open water swimming in winter simply because it's just so good. The seas are generally much calmer than in summer and the water is astonishingly clear – it's amazing what you can see down there. Seriously, with just a few precautions to keep in mind, cold water swimming is not only invigorating and fun, it is very good for your health (see below).

About the only extra piece of kit you may need when swimming outdoors in winter is a wetsuit, so here are a couple of 'wettie' tips. When should we don wetsuits? This is a very personal decision. My own parameters are a water temperature below 20 degrees and a swim lasting an hour or more because the onset of hypothermia is a function of both how cold the water is and the amount of time being immersed in it. Being in sunny Queensland, many of us will choose to wear what southerners call 'Queenslanders', which are wetsuits with short sleeves and short legs. Others will choose the long version with various neoprene thicknesses. Prices vary considerably with \$500 and upwards for a long wetsuit being not uncommon. But shop around. Wetsuit Warehouse in Woolloongabba probably has the best range in Queensland, but I have a long wetsuit which I bought in Aldi for \$19 and it's now in its third season.



Winter is upon us. Enjoy the cold in an open water swim – you will feel good when you stop. This is a shot of last year's world ice swimming championships in Siberia. Note that not many heads are actually in the water plus the presence of tea cosies for caps

Is cold water swimming good for your health?

The answer is 'of course it is. Why do you need to ask?' But read on if you still need convincing.

If you had to assign one attribute to the kind of people who jump into ice-encrusted lakes or the ocean for fun, it would probably be 'weird'. But, if pushed for a second, I bet it would be 'healthy'. Overweight, lethargic, bad skin, thin hair – these are not adjectives often associated with those crazy freezing water enthusiasts. Try athletic, youthful and toned with good complexions and lots of energy. So, what's their secret? What are the real beneficial health outcomes of regular exposure to cold water and are they available to normal people, those without masochistic tendencies? Here are a few:

It boosts your immune system

For your body, a sudden and drastic change in temperature constitutes an attack as anyone who has ever fallen overboard in icy waters will agree. While 'attacking' your own body may not sound like a good thing, there is no harm in keeping your body on its toes. In fact, quite the opposite. A few years ago, scientists in the Czech Republic immersed willing subjects in cold water for one hour, three times a week and monitored their physiology. They found significant increases in white blood cell counts (white blood cells are essential for good health and protection against illness and disease) and several other factors relating to boosting the immune system. This was attributed to the cold water being a mild stressor which activates the immune system and gives it some practice.

It gives an all-round natural high

Winter swimmers talk a lot about the high they get from cold water; it is a feeling of wellbeing that is so encompassing that it becomes quite addictive. Who doesn't want to feel truly good, at least once a day? The cause? Endorphins. Endorphins are the body's natural pain killers and, in the case of a cold dip, it uses them to take the sting away from your skin. So, to get high on your own supply, all you need to do is jump in cold water. And if you think that sounds dangerously close to the pain/pleasure barrier then you're probably right. The two primary causes for endorphin release are pain and orgasm.

The cold will also stimulate your parasympathetic system which is responsible for rest and repair, and this can trigger the release of dopamine and serotonin. These neurotransmitters are a vital part of keeping us happy and low levels of them are linked with depression. You may have read that exercise overall is widely accepted as being good for treating depression. New research has found that it is also excellent for maintaining a healthy mood and fending off depression. Couple this effect with the endorphin rush as you take the plunge and it should make for a warm glow and a wide smile when you re-emerge.

It gets your blood pumping

Being hot brings blood to the surface. Being cold sends it inside your body to the organs. Both extremes work your heart like a pump. That's why the Scandinavians sit in the sauna, then roll in the snow, then sit in the sauna again – and it makes them glow. But why is increased blood flow good for you? Well, it helps flush your circulation for starters, pushing blood through all your capillaries, veins and arteries. It will exfoliate your skin and flush impurities from it, thus helping your complexion (firm-bodied female swimmers of all ages say it stops cellulite).

Evidence has also shown that your body adapts to the cold with repeated exposure and this may improve your circulation, particularly to your extremities. Swimmers preparing to cross the English Channel undergo ice baths a number of times a week to adapt their bodies to Channel water that is no more than 16°C even in summer.

You could get these benefits by switching between the hot and cold taps in your shower (or the sauna, snow, sauna thing) but that doesn't sound nearly as much fun as quick dip in your local lake or ocean followed by wrapping up warmly afterwards.

It improves your sex life

The suggestion of a cold shower might bring forth images of hot-headed young men trying to quell wanton urges and obvious but embarrassing bodily manifestations, but research paints a different picture.

In a study with a similar format to the one described above, participants took daily cold baths and were monitored for changes. In addition to some similar results to their Czech counterparts, these researchers also found increased production of testosterone and oestrogen in men and women respectively. In addition to enhancing libido in both sexes, these hormones also play an important role in fertility. In fact, one technique recommended for men aspiring to fatherhood is to bathe their testicles in cold water every day. Whatever your procreative desires, a dip of a different sort certainly could add an edge to your sex life.

And on that erogenous topic, consider the paradoxical fact that standing waist deep in cold water may help guard against erectile dysfunction. Hmmm. Apparently you get a similar effect from doing pelvic floor – or 'kegel' – exercises.

It burns calories

We all know that swimming is great exercise but there are some extra benefits from doing it in the Southern Ocean or the North Sea that you just won't get from a warm wade in the Med or off our own coasts.

Swimming in cold water will make your body work twice as hard to keep you warm and burn more calories in the process. For this sort of exercise, fat is your body's primary source of energy and the increased work rate will increase your metabolism in the long run.

This item has been adapted from an article in the newsletter of the Bold and Beautiful Swim Squad from Sydney's Manly who, in turn, stole it from the Outdoor Swimming Society.

*'Swimming in cold water gives you a heightened sense of existence; a heightened sense of life'
(elderly Irish gent who is an open water swimmer).*

Watch for the drop off







(sometimes called 'the after-drop' – and no, John, it's not what you think)

If you have spent any time hanging around open water swimmers in winter you may have heard the term 'drop off'. And, if you've done any swimming in cold water, you may have experienced it yourself. It has nothing at all to do with leaving various bit of your anatomy behind in the water, drop off or after-drop refers to the decline in your core body temperature after you have got out

of the water. When you swim in cold water the body cleverly tries to protect vital internal organs by reducing blood flow to the skin and limbs (this is why the extremities might become numb). Thus the core stays warm while the skin, arms and legs cool down. The process is known as peripheral vasoconstriction.

Shortly after you exit the water, peripheral vasoconstriction ends. Cold blood from your limbs and skin returns to your core where it mixes with warmer blood thereby causing your deep body temperature to drop, even if you're warmly dressed and move into a warm environment. This is why you often only start shivering 10 to 15 minutes after leaving the water.

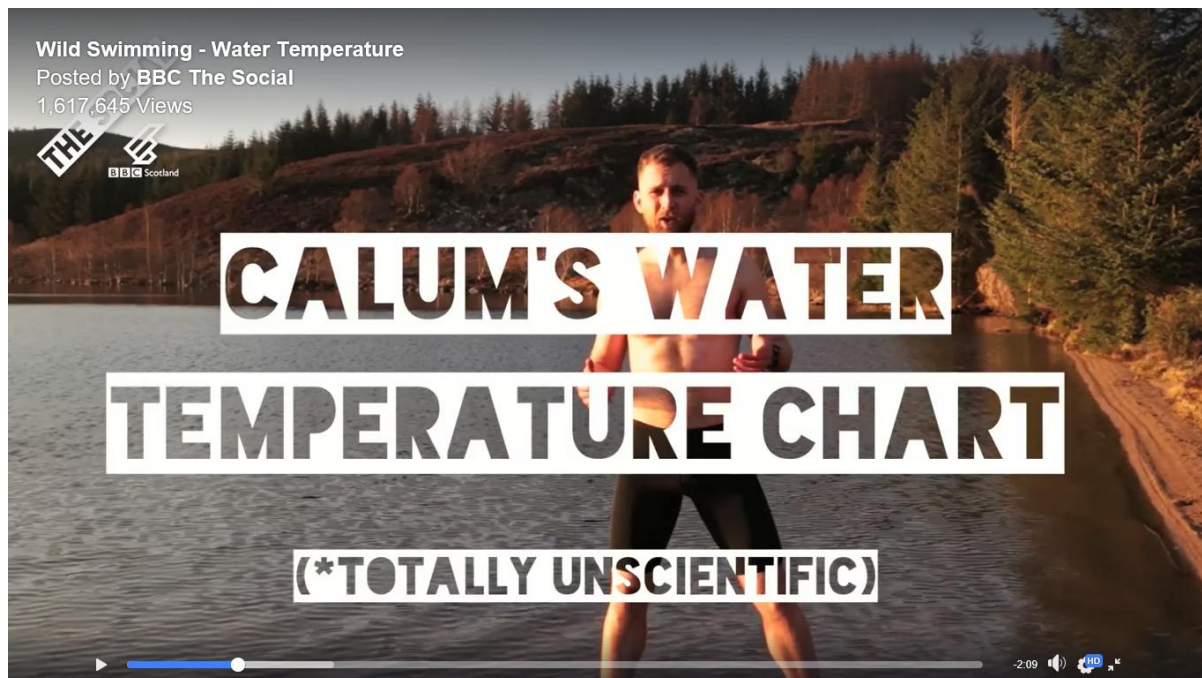
What to do about it:

-  Get dry and dressed quickly and warmly. Immediately after swimming you may feel great as the cooled blood has not yet returned to your core. Best to wrap up warmly before it does. It's much harder to do up buttons when you're shivering
 -  Don't take a hot shower straight away as this will increase the rate at which cooled blood returns to the core and makes the drop off faster and deeper. Swimmers have been known to faint in hot showers after a cold water swim. Shower in cold water straight away after getting out of the water or wait until you've warmed up again before showering
 -  Don't attempt to drive or ride a bike until your core temperature has recovered. Driving and shivering are not a good combination. If your core temperature drops too much and you become hypothermic, your cognitive abilities become affected. Again, not good for driving. Remember that symptoms of hypothermia begin to occur at a core body temperature of about 35°C, which is only two degrees below normal body temperature of 37°C
 -  Drink something warm (but not hot) and eat something. Shivering is a highly energy consumptive bodily function. You need to fuel it. Shivering will also raise your body temperature
 -  Keep an eye on your fellow swimmers. Someone who appears completely fine getting out of the water may be in trouble 10 minutes later and may need your help
 -  Get out of the water before you get too cold as you will continue to get colder after swimming. Give your body a margin of safety.
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How should you measure the temperature of the water in winter?

Forget about thermometers and give this Scottish option a try:

<https://www.facebook.com/bbcthesocial/videos/850211648422593/>



Swimmer of the month: Ross Hughes

In this, the second in our series on highlighting the swimming journey of one of our swimmers, Ross Hughes tells his story:



Hi everyone, my name is Ross Hughes and I have been training with Mark at Otter Aquatics since October 2017. My parents, Helen and Don, were searching for a coach who could perhaps help me with my swimming technique and improve the muscle tone in my legs. I wanted to improve these aspects of my swimming as I have been selected to swim as part of the Australian Down Syndrome Swimming Team competing at the 9th World Down Syndrome Swimming Championships in Truro, Nova Scotia, Canada in July 2018. Mark took me under his wing and I have been enjoying being part of his friendly and inclusive 10am Sunday group.

Mark has been helping me improve my stroke, breathing, kicking, diving starts and finishes. I also participate in squad training at Rackleys Swimming, Chermside, with my other coach Brett Clister, five times a week and regularly swim with Special Olympics and Nudgee Brothers Masters. To strengthen my fitness level I also attend the gym at PCYC, Sandgate.

I also keep myself (and my parents!) busy with all the other things I do each week – hip hop dancing, working at KFC, going to HELP Enterprises at Mitchelton, work experience at Kmart, going dancing at Redcliffe Dolphins Leagues Club, and doing a weekly grocery shop!

Swimming keeps me fit and healthy so I can keep up my busy lifestyle. It has taken me to many places including Mexico in 2014 and Italy in 2016 as part of the Australian team competing in the World Down Syndrome Swimming Championships. I also like taking time to chill out and enjoy the simple pleasures of swimming in billabongs, pools and the ocean when I go camping with my family.

Ross Hughes

Ed's comments

Ross departs for Canada in early July. We wish him all the best. I will provide a report on his results in the August issue of this newsletter.

Check out the following invitation to Ross's uniform presentation at Chandler Theatre in the Sleeman Sports Complex on Sunday 10th June. We are all invited. If you would like to go, don't forget to RSVP for catering purposes.

Also, I'm looking for more stories for our Swimmer of the Month column. Don't wait for me to write it as it may not be as flattering as a story written by you.



Down Syndrome Swimming Australia
Australian Team 2018
9th World Swimming Championships
Nova Scotia, Canada 20th – 26th July 2018

You are cordially invited to attend the
 2018 Australian Down Syndrome Swimming Team Uniform Presentation.

Sunday 10th June

10.00 am – 12.30 pm

Chandler Theatre, Sleeman Sports Complex

Cnr Old Cleveland and Tilley Rd

Chandler Q4155

Please RSVP 3/06/2018

David Cahill Secretary DSSA,

dssa.org@gmail.com

*Please join us after for light refreshments

Team Australia

Team Manager - Annette Telfer

Head Coach – John Beckworth

Team Support

Kareena Preston – Assistant Head Coach

Sandra Booysen

Brett Glistler

Sadat Hussain

Debbie Jukes

Tegan Riding

Craig Tobin

Swimmers

Taylor Anderton

Elizabeth Claydon

Lily Crawford

Stephanie Dunning

Madeline Fox

Caitlin Kerby

Phoebe Mitchell

Ashley-Kate Schlenner

Tiffany Smith

Aleisha Sneesby

Russell Booysen

Harry Cahill

Michael Cox

Jack Dixon

Bradley Doolan

Ross Hughes

Colin Marks

Aran Miller

Matthew Walker

Zac Telfer



"Start by doing what is necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible." Francis of Assisi

Bronze Medallion



As many of you know, I have been conducting pool-based Bronze Medallion, First Aid and Pool Lifeguard training for the past seven or so years. But the time to move on has come and, after 30th June, I will not be renewing my training licence with Royal Lifesaving. Some of you have expressed interest in doing your Bronze so, if you think you will be ready before 30th June, please let me know pretty soon. I am also aware that there are others who want to train to be ready to do the course at a later date. I can still do your preparation of course after 30th June, however I will direct you to another trainer to undertake the course.

The Bronze Medallion is the foremost aquatic lifesaving qualification and has been delivered in Australia by the Royal Lifesaving Society for over 100 years. It is an entry-point qualification for anyone considering employment in the aquatics industry. Also, many swimmers aspire to gain their Bronze simply to note their achievement as a competent swimmer. To give you an idea what's involved, the course is divided into assessment and instruction. The assessment part tests your swimming ability (100m continuously in each of a) freestyle, b) a stroke on your back, c) a stroke on your front and d) sidestroke in under 13 minutes and swimming 50m to a 'patient' and towing the 'patient' another 50m in under 3m15s.). There is also dry land and in-water instruction on general aquatic survival and rescue techniques as well as CPR. The qualification is nationally recognised under the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system. The course cost is \$200 and will take a full 8 hour day (or two half days). The location will be a local pool.

Stroke trip of the month – how far should you turn your head to inhale in freestyle?

The short answer is as little as possible but also enough to allow your mouth to be out of the water ... pretty obviously. The more you turn your head, the more drag or resistance you create and the more of that, the slower you swim. If you watch some elite swimmers, they will probably allow only about half of their mouth to rise above the surface and they inhale over the top of any water that comes into their mouth. As elite swimmers tend to swim rather fast, they also generate a pressure wave (a 'bow wave') as they swim and they breathe inside this bow wave so an onlooker may not even see their mouth above the surface at all.

Actually, you should not turn your head at all to inhale, or as little as possible, because body rotation rather than head turning is a better way to get your mouth out of the water. You just allow your head to come to the side with your body as it rotates.

Learning to inhale without swallowing water or trying to inhale it takes time to learn. All beginners will experience taking in water when they try to breathe simply because their mouth is not above the water's surface. The idea is to get your mouth sufficiently out of the water to

breathe while not turning your head too much which creates undesired drag. While it might sound silly, it's a good idea to ask yourself, at least subconsciously, 'is my mouth above the water' before you attempt to inhale. Obviously, if it is not you will try to breathe in water resulting in coughing and sputtering, which is the body's way to keep water out of the lungs. With practice, it is easy enough to learn this in a pool or in calm open water but, when open water conditions are rough, we really do have to ask ourselves that question. If the answer is 'no' because a wave might be in the way, we need to hold our breath or continue exhaling until the next opportunity arises which might well be turning the head/rotating the body to the opposite side – i.e. away from the wind and waves. So there's another reason to be able to breathe bilaterally.

Here are a couple of tips. The first, in order to keep the head movement to a minimum, is to keep one goggle under the water and one on top with your head completely flat and on the side. Another is to look at the side of the pool when you inhale – not up in the sky, or look at a swimmer in the next lane under the water with just one eye/goggle. But if you do manage to get water in your mouth, don't worry about it; if you have rotated enough, your head will be on its side and the water will sit in your lower cheek and not go down into your stomach or try to get into your lungs. You just let it come out or blow it out when you exhale next time your mouth is in the water. But if you do inadvertently swallow some water, don't worry about it; it's not the end of the world; it's only water after all.

There is a trick that many freestylers often use when inhaling and exhaling. You should already know that you always exhale when your face is in the water (in fact, every time and the whole time your face is in the water). The trick is to maintain your exhalation for just a moment *after* your mouth comes above the surface and begin your exhalation just *before* your mouth goes under the surface again. Not only will this prevent any water coming in – it can't come in when air is coming out – it is a tried-and-proven method of relaxing, especially in rough or cold conditions. And don't forget your nose. Most freestylers breathe through their nose *and* their mouth (you can teach yourself to do this), so do the above exhalation trick with your nose too. Exhalating through your nose is especially useful in relaxing – and the mega-tip for swimming is to relax.



Breathing inside the bow wave – the mouth is only partly above the water and one goggle is under the water. Also note the low and flat head position, high elbow and hanging fingers

Quiz of the month

This month's question is 'Why do our swimfit sessions usually include interval training?' Get in quickly with your answer in order to stop Marieta earning yet another Mars bar.

Last month's quiz question was: 'which of our swimmers has been mentioned more than once in this newsletter?' And for a bonus question: 'how many times has this person been mentioned?'. The answer to the first part was Therese Puffett; however the answer to the second part was – and still is – in dispute. Our judge (me) reckons one thing and our sole entrant (Marieta Hanaghan) reckons something quite different. So the issue was referred to the High Court of Australia. The court had to defer consideration of much less important matters, such as the citizenship of some of our polties, but they did manage to fit our appeal in during a lunch break. They came down on the side of the judge – of course they did, otherwise this story would not have been written. Nevertheless, in the spirit of congeniality, to keep some peace in our Sunday 10am session and in an attempt to persuade Marieta not to wreck the joint, I have subjected myself to mediation and given Marieta the prize. Oh yes, the answer to the second part is '3'.

The High Court also made me put an ad for Marieta's water colour exhibition in this newsletter. But this is no chore at all. After all, Marieta is Otter Aquatics' artist-in-residence and I have on loan from the artist three wonderful water colour paintings of Italy's stunning Lake Orta. Marieta was one of the participants in Otter Aquatics inaugural flagship swimming holiday in Lake Orta in 2015.



Quote of the month

'... most men pursue pleasure with such breathless haste that they hurry past it'.
(Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard)

But perhaps our OWSers are not most men (or women) We pursue our pleasure slowly, gently, savouring the present while being in harmony with our natural environment.

Pic of the month

Glaucus Atlanticus (common names include the sea swallow, blue angel, blue glaucus, blue dragon, blue sea slug and blue ocean slug).

When one of our swimmers drew my attention to a newspaper article about this creature being found in Moreton Bay, I didn't believe him. I thought I knew a reasonable amount about sea critters, particularly those in our neighbourhood, from my recent experience as a surf lifesaver. But I was wrong; this amazing creature really exists, although sightings are rare. There is even a local society dedicated to studying them.

Glaucus atlanticus is a species of very small (25mm long), blue sea slug. It is very rare and, while its sting is not fatal, it can pack a wallop. It feeds off Portuguese Man of War (what we in Australia call 'blue bottles'). Australian Marine Stinger Advisory Service director Dr Lisa Gershwin has warned that sea slugs carry a painful sting because of their blue bottle diet. 'You would get a blue bottle type of sting from these guys only it's more powerful, because they take a lot of the stinging cells and concentrate them into their little finger cells' she said.



Glaucus Atlanticus or Blue Sea Slug