

# Chlorine Chronicles

29 May 2008 Issue • [www.metroswim.org](http://www.metroswim.org)

Online newsletter of the Metropolitan Local Masters Swimming Committee

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## Notes From The Editor

Greetings! I hope all of you enjoyed a fun-filled action-packed Memorial Day holiday weekend to kick off the unofficial start of summer.

With this seasonal shift in mind, we conclude the 2007-2008 indoor short course season with results and pictures from the Sunday 18 May New York City Parks Department Commissioner's Trophy Relay & Masters Meet at the brand new Flushing Meadows Corona Park pool. Next up we shift our focus to long course training and LCM swim meets ~ along with the beginning of open water season ~ with a sample long course meter workout challenge and a few open water swim tips.

Longer days filled with sunshine and warmer weather motivates many people to turn their thoughts to outdoor activities, cross-training endeavors, and a renewed interest in all that United States Masters Swimming has to offer its members from health and fitness to a variety of competitive events. Invite a friend, co-worker, neighbor or relative to join you one day at pool swim practice or an open water swim. Forward a copy of this newsletter to someone and urge them to consider enrolling in an instructional clinic or training program, or to set a goal to prepare for an upcoming summer event. Spread the word and promote USMS!

Questions? Ideas? Pictures or information to share? Feel free to contact me at [aquafitinc@aol.com](mailto:aquafitinc@aol.com).

Lisa K. Baumann

## Upcoming Events

- Sunday 8 June Chesapeake Bay 4.4 Mile Swim\*
- Saturday 14 June Long Island Senior Games\*
- Friday-Sunday 20-22 June NEM LCM Champs
- Saturday 21 June USMS National One Mile Open Water Swim Championship in Madison, CT
- Saturday 5 July Manhattan Marathon Swim\*
- Saturday 12 July Greenwich Point One Mile OWS
- Saturday 12 July USMS National Two-Mile Cable Swim Championship in Virginia
- Sunday 13 July Hungtinton Bay 5K OWS
- Friday-Sunday 27-29 Empire State Games\*

\*Non-USMS sanctioned event

Above event info and entry forms are posted on the Metropolitan LMSC website at [www.metroswim.org](http://www.metroswim.org).

In addition, visit [www.cibbows.org](http://www.cibbows.org) for open water group swim practices and upcoming events, along with checking out [www.nycswim.org](http://www.nycswim.org) for Manhattan Island Foundation upcoming events!

## USMS "Go The Distance" April Results

James Anderson	M45-49	129.16 miles
Maria Anderson	W45-49	61.18 miles
Janet Harris	W40-44	143.97 miles
Kitty Kessler	W65-69	50.00 miles
Steve Newman	M45-49	262.85 miles
Kathleen Romano	W60-64	142.34 miles
Suzanne Schwartz	W45-49	6.34 miles
Jenny Seagraves	W40-44	62.37 miles
Dahlia Thompson	W25-29	75.13 miles
Bob Unger	M50-54	96.25 miles
Marie Vellucci	W55-59	32.75 miles
Morton Wolf	M60-64	87.48 miles

Complete "Go The Distance" participation entry form, statistical summaries and highlights are posted online at [www.usms.org/fitness/content/gothedistance08/](http://www.usms.org/fitness/content/gothedistance08/).

Pictures from Sunday 18 May Swim Meet

Complete meet results at [www.metroswim.org](http://www.metroswim.org)



More Sun 18 May Swim Meet Pix!



More Sun 18 May Swim Meet Pix!



**LC METER WORKOUT CHALLENGE**

Warm-Up: 10 min EZ (drill-swim-kick-swim laps)

Main Set: 40 x 100 Freestyle (Swim, Buoy or Pull)  
*Do four (4) continuous rounds of 100's on decreasing rest with minimal break between rounds. **Objective is to maintain consistent pace as rest decreases and reps increase.** Final reps within each round should be swum on the fastest possible interval you and your lane-mates can make! Quite a challenge!*

Example:

1 x 100 on 1:35 or 1:40 or ?  
1 x 100 on 1:30 or 1:35 or ?  
1 x 100 on 1:25 or 1:30 or ?  
1 x 100 on 1:20 or 1:25 or ?

2 x 100 on 1:35 or 1:40 or ?  
2 x 100 on 1:30 or 1:35 or ?  
2 x 100 on 1:25 or 1:30 or ?  
2 x 100 on 1:20 or 1:25 or ?

3 x 100 on 1:35 or 1:40 or ?  
3 x 100 on 1:30 or 1:35 or ?  
3 x 100 on 1:25 or 1:30 or ?  
3 x 100 on 1:20 or 1:25 or ?

4 x 100 on 1:35 or 1:40 or ?  
4 x 100 on 1:30 or 1:35 or ?  
4 x 100 on 1:25 or 1:30 or ?  
4 x 100 on 1:20 or 1:25 or ?

Cater intervals to your personal ability level.  
Cool down at least 5-10 minutes afterwards.



## Open Water Swim Tips by Hazen Kent

The fears and concerns related to open water swimming are very real. The most obvious reason being, most of us do our swim training in the safety of a swimming pool complete with lifeguards, walls on which to rest, lane ropes that calm the water (and to grab if need be) and a shallow bottom on which to walk leaving even the most timid swimmer feeling safe and secure. In the open water these conveniences are not always available, especially in the ocean. Yes, there may be lifeguards on duty, but that doesn't help much when you are 50 yards offshore swimming in fifteen feet of water and the lifeguard appears as a small red dot on the horizon. Add to that the chance of rough seas and swells breaking close to shore as well as the possibility of an undertow and its no wonder fears exist. Lakes are not as bad as the ocean and tend to be a bit calmer, but you still have to keep an eye out for boaters (and critters) and be sure to swim in designated areas.

Please understand, I am not trying to add to anyone's existing fears of swimming in open water. But for me to say, "*you have nothing to worry about, swimming in the open water is a piece of cake*" would be a lie. It can be a wonderful experience but you must be aware of your surroundings and practice safe swimming. Following are some suggestions for training and racing in open water that may help you focus less on your trepidations and more on your performance.

**Get Out There in the Open Water and Practice, Practice, Practice** – As obvious and cliché as this may sound, it really is *the* best way to get used to swimming in open water. And you will learn very quickly that swimming in open water is much different than in a pool. For one, there is no thick black line running along the bottom of the ocean or lake to help guide you as you swim. Unless the water is crystal clear, you will have to lift your head to "sight" or see where you are going. And you will probably take a swig or two of water during your swim. So the more you hit the open waters to swim, the better the results.

**Sprain your Brain...Safety First** – *Yeah, yeah, yeah...safety first...no kidding!* It seems we are always preaching safety. Don't swim alone in an open body of water unless there is a lifeguard on duty or you have a friend to accompany you. If you are swimming under the watchful eye of a lifeguard, let him/her know your plans and where you will be swimming. If you are planning on swimming in the ocean and the seas are rough...don't bother. It won't make you a tougher swimmer, chances are the race conditions will not be that extreme, and the bottom line... it may save your life! If you are swimming in a lake, swim in a designated area and swim along the shoreline if possible. Swimming straight out towards the middle of the lake will put you right in the middle of "motorboat" territory.

**Test the Waters** – Whether it is just before the start of a race or you are out for a practice swim, always test the waters and water temperature. In a race situation, I recommend getting in the water and warming up prior to the start. Get a feel for the

water and do some warm-up strokes. If you are going out for a training swim, make sure the water is safe to swim in. Obviously if you are swimming in a public area, there should be no problems. But in areas where you are swimming at your own risk (with a friend of course!), familiarize yourself with the waters and stay close to shore. If you are training and you are wearing a wetsuit, make sure the waters are not too warm. It is easy to overheat when wearing a wetsuit. If the water temperature is above 80 degrees, I recommend swimming without one. By contrast, if the water feels too cold, take some caution. Obviously, a wetsuit helps to create warmth in cooler waters. But for folks swimming in the Northeast, the water temperature can be dangerously cold, even in the summer months. So again, be careful.

**Practice Sighting** – As previously mentioned, you will not have a thick black line running along the bottom of the ocean or lake to help guide you in a straight line. You must learn to lift your head and sight certain points in order to stay on track. If you are out for a training swim, you will want to look for various land markers. It may be a tall tree, a water tower, or the top of a building, something that you can see each time you lift your head to look forward. In an open water swim event or triathlon, there will likely be large bright orange buoy markers in the water outlining the swim course.

**Have Faith in Your Training and Your Stroke** - It is not uncommon for all of us to get a little panicky during an open water swim. We get so used to swimming in a nice clear pool that we tend to "freak" a little when we realize we can only see a few feet in front of us! As a result, we tend to lift our head and check our position much too often. Unfortunately, the more we look, the more disruptive we are to our own stroke rhythm, technique and pace. This will not only physically wear you out, but it can mentally tire you out as well. My word to you is – RELAX and have faith in your training and your stroke. You should be able to swim 8-12 strokes before lifting your head to sight without seriously straying off course.

**Follow the Bubbles** – Learn to spot the "kicking" bubbles from swimmers who may be in front of you – this is just one more way to keep you swimming straight without lifting your head to sight. A word of caution, do not rely solely on these folks. Always keep track of the buoy markers as well. It is possible to be led off course by the swimmers in front of you.

**Learn Bilateral Breathing** – If the swim course is an open rectangle whereby you swim out for a short distance then head left or right along the shoreline then back in again, you can use the shoreline as a means of marking your position. However, this may require that you breath to a particular side that may be uncomfortable. So practice breathing on both sides during your freestyle swim training. Also, breathing on both sides will keep your stroke in balance and allow you to swim straighter for more strokes. During your pool or open water swim training, play around with a variety of bilateral breathing patterns to find what feels most comfortable, to add diversity to your training, and to reinforce both bilateral breathing ability and stroke symmetry. Do not expect to feel comfortable doing this initially; it takes time and practice to become proficient at bilateral breathing skills!

## Open Water Swim Tips continued

**Take Advantage of the Draft:** Drafting by placing yourself within a pack of swimmers of similar experience and speed can prove beneficial to your swim performance and overall time. There are actually two ways one can draft off another swimmer. One is swimming directly behind a swimmer and the other is swimming off to the side in the wake of a swimmer. And both can be very effective in an open water swim. If you were to swim directly behind a swimmer and close to his/her feet the result would be a "pulling" effect (similar to that created by an outboard motor on a speedboat). If you were to swim in the wake of another swimmer, ideally you would position yourself just off the shoulder of that swimmer. The benefit being, an added push provided by the swells or wake created by that lead swimmer. Note of caution. If you are swimming in a pack, things can get a little rough. There will be swinging arms and kicking feet and you might find yourself getting "wacked" by accident. Try to stay relaxed and let the momentum of the moving water push you along.

**The Start and Positioning** - With the exception of a few specific races, there are two ways you will start a traditional open water swim event...either wading in deeper water or beachside which requires a running start. If you start beach side or even in ankle deep water, you will quickly discover you can only run so far in the water before it becomes counterproductive. Unfortunately, you may still be too shallow to start swimming! So what do you do? Many people will "dolphin" for several yards until they are deep enough to begin swimming. "Dolphining" refers to a swimmer taking a shallow dive or leap forward, gliding for a few yards under water, then standing and leaping out again until the swimmer is in deep enough water to begin swimming. This can be very effective. And you will probably find the more competitive and/or experienced swimmers performing this technique. However, it is not necessary. There is nothing wrong with walking all the way in to deeper water before swimming. Plus, if you are among a large group at the start, most likely, you will not have the room to dolphin. This too will be a result of how competitive you want to be and your swimming background. One note of caution...if you do dolphin...DO NOT DIVE DEEP! If you dive too deep you can seriously injure yourself. Know the depth of the water where you are swimming and keep the dive portion of the entry shallow. Finally, regarding Positioning at the start - if you have problems with the masses, then stay out of them! Place yourself to one side of the group or the other side prior to the start.

**Start Out Relaxed!** You might want to consider the tactic of starting your open water swim with a hard or "all out" effort in order to put yourself into a particular position or within a pack of swimmers and then settle into your pace. This is all well and good, especially if you are both a strong swimmer and have significant open water swim experience. But if this is not the case, then I strongly recommend that you hold back, settle into a pace that is well within your comfort zone, and build from there as the swim progresses. Starting out too hard on the swim will cause your heart rate to "spike" or shoot up

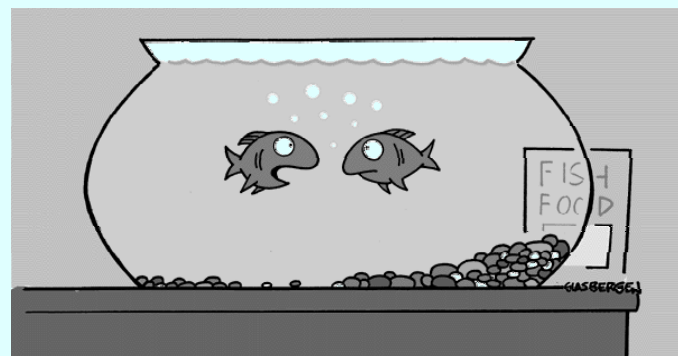
to anaerobic levels, leaving you in oxygen debt at the onset of the race and forcing you to try and "catch your breath" later on during the swim. But for most who start out too hard and fast, "settling in" never really happens, regardless of your swimming experience. I suggest that you start swimming long and relaxed, find your pace, and then turn it up later on.

**Drills for Open Water Swimming** – As mentioned in the beginning of this article, the best way to acclimate to open water swimming is to go out in the open water and practice! However, most of us do not have access to a lake or ocean to perform our swim training. So, we must do our training in a pool. Unfortunately, a pool will not really give you that "open water" feel. This is due to the fact that the pool will have lane ropes stretched from one wall to the other designed to calm the waters. However, there are a couple of things one can do in a pool to prepare for an open water swim. One is to practice a drill I call the "Water Polo Drill." And the other, do a swim workout or two in your pool without the lane ropes.

**Water Polo Drill (or open-face swimming)** – Have you ever had the opportunity to watch a water polo match? If you have, then you probably noticed the team members spending most of the match swimming up and down the pool with their face out of the water. Well, the Water Polo Drill is based on this open-faced swimming. Basically, this drill requires that you swim freestyle with your face out of the water. This will help develop the necessary strength to lift your head when sighting without disrupting your freestyle rhythm. However, it is not as easy as it may appear and can put some stress on your neck and lower back. Feel free to start out using fins until you feel comfortable enough to swim without.

**Swim Without Lane Ropes** – Basically this means you are training in the pool without lane ropes. This can create a heck of a chop and will be the closest thing to an open water swim you will experience in a pool environment. Unfortunately, this may not be convenient or even possible. However, if part of the pool is set up without lane ropes, and there is no "free" swim going on, do your workout in the open pool section.

And there you have it folks! I hope these steps help ease some of your fears or frustrations regarding open water swimming. Good luck!



**"I pay you five pebbles a session to be my personal trainer, but all we ever do is swim!"**

