**Preparing for open water swimming in the pool**

**Top Tips**

Preparing for open water swimming in a warm pool is a good stepping stone to the real thing.

**STROKE**

* It is vital to be comfortable with your stroke in open water. Most open water swimmers choose front crawl, so start by making sure your stroke is in good shape in the pool.
* Try to get competent in another stroke, such as breaststroke. You may need to recover in open water and breaststroke uses less energy than front crawl.
* Open water swimming is no splash and dash. Open water events are at least 500m. Use pool time to ensure you can confidently swim further that the event you want to enter without having to put your feet down.
* Gradually build up your distance.

**TECHNIQUES**

Prepare for a few more surprises that open water can spring on you.

**Sighting:** In the open water there are no lane lines.

* Practice looking ahead during your swim to find a marker in the distance to follow.
* Looking up is a simple thing to practice in the pool. Try perfecting it so you do not disrupt your rhythm.
* Practise swimming in a straight line. Close your eyes while swimming and see whether you veer left or right (most people do). Try tweaking your stroke to straighten your natural line.

**Treading water:** There is no wall to hold on to or kick off from in open water.

* Use pool time to get used to treading water in the deep end. You could spend a lot of time treading water in open water.

**Turning:** Most events will involve turning around a marker buoy, often four or five times a race.

* If you have space in the pool and a willing practice-mate, swim up to and round your friend without touching the walls or bottom of the pool.

**Breathing both ways:** Breathing on alternative sides in open water events is a necessity.

* Focus on your technique in the pool. It may not feel natural at first, but it will become more comfortable.
* Let your head and spine join the rotation of your shoulders, inhale sharply then turn your face smoothly back in time with your shoulder rotation.

**Group swimming:** Lots of people swimming together can come as a bit of a shock the first time.

* Practise group swimming with four or five of your friends in one lane of the pool to help get used to the feeling.