



Tips for Open Water Swimming

Before:

- Double check the **water quality** if you can. Blue green algae can bloom at this time of year & is poisonous if humans come into direct contact or consume but fairly easy to spot – bright green/blue & not clear.
- **Water temperature** – try and check before so you know what to expect. Wetsuits might be more comfortable under 18°C (water temp in Scotland is unlikely to be above this) unless it's been very warm for the days prior. [Scottish Swimming races must be above 13°C]
- **Vaseline** your neck where the collar of your wetsuit is or swimsuit straps, it will prevent chaffing.

During:

- Wear a **bright swim cap** to stay visible
- **Cold Water Shock:** When entering cold water you may involuntarily gasp and struggle to breath – Stay Calm & Steady your Breathing. It should pass.
If possible try to enter the water slowly to avoid shock, or splash yourself with the water.
Splash your face/ dip your face in the water to gradually get used to it to also prevent shock.
- **Ice Cream Headache:** If the water is very cold when you start swimming you might find you get a sore head mainly around your forehead. Again, this will pass, you just need to let your head acclimatise to the cold water. Try gradually increasing the time you keep your face in the water to help this.





After:

- **Preventing illness post swim:** drink flat Coca Cola on the way home or once you get home. It is thought amongst the Open Water community Coca Cola kills any bugs you might have picked up whilst swimming (& drinking it flat to avoid upsetting your tummy).
- Take **WARM CLOTHES:** Even if it's a warm day you might get very cold when you're swimming so take trousers, jumper & dry socks you can put on after your swim. You can always remove the extra layers once you're warmed up.
- Take a **snack:** eating a snack after your swim will provide your body with energy to help it warm up. Even something as simple as a cereal bar, or a piece of fruit.
- **Footwear:** For comfort, it might also be useful to take flip flops or sandals to wear between the car and the water's edge – particularly if the edge of the lake is stones.

Remember to follow current Scottish Swimming guidelines & RLSS UK guidance.

Happy Swimming!

