

# Session Theme & Focus

## Starting Strong & Settling Into Race Pace

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### Race Week Swim Prep

A funny place to start our **Swim Squad Online**, but that's where we find ourselves in the season. Many of our athletes are racing their first triathlons this month. Our recent sessions have focused on helping them feel sharp - without creating too much fatigue.

I suspect you are in a similar position in the season - so that's where we'll start.

### Session 1 - Starting Strong & Settling Into Race Pace

If you've been a regular reader of our posts, you will know my thoughts on race days.

Whether deliberate or not, we all start our races or our swim events too quickly. Adrenaline, excitement, following others. Easily done. We want to be able to recognise the signs of going off too quickly and then be able to do something about it, rather than panicking or having to stop because we are exhausted.

This session is specifically around this topic and will help us prepare for that race day scenario.

#### Warm Up (500m)

2 x 100m easy (20s rest)

2 x 75m slightly quicker (15s rest)

2 x 50m swimming strong (10s rest)

2 x 25m fast (10s rest)

Our warm up is about finding our rhythm and picking up speed through the set, so we are ready for what's next.

#### Main Set (1800m)

4 x 150m (30s rest)

Swim the first 50m at a strong pace (8/10 effort) - a pace you cannot sustain for long - raising the heart rate significantly. After the first 50m slow the pace down to a more sustainable and comfortable pace (perhaps a 6/10 effort) and swim the next 100m at this pace. Effectively, you are recovering whilst still swimming with purpose.

Slowing the pace down might involve reducing the kick and / or slowing the arm turnover. Personally, I like to think about going longer with each stroke, really extending at the front, whilst regaining control of my breathing.

1 x 200m pull. If you are doing this in race week, use a pullbuoy. If a week or more away from your event, use paddles and / or an ankle band too.

4 x 100m (20s rest)

Similar to the 150m efforts above, you should swim this as 50m strong (8/10), 50m smooth (6/10).

Again, a 200m pull follows.

4 x 50m (15s rest)

Swim quickly but in control of your technique. You do not want to feel like you are fighting the water. Keep the stroke technique sound.

Finish the set with a 200m pull again.

## **Finish**

I like to finish a swim feeling good, knowing that my technique is in a good place. One way of doing this is some distance per stroke 25s.

8 x 25m (15s rest)

Swimming with a slower-than-normal stroke rate, but focusing on good power underneath the water. You are aiming to swim the length in as few strokes as you can, with the emphasis on good propulsion from the pull (rather than lots of long glides!).

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## **Scaling**

This session can be scaled up to make it longer. One way of doing this is starting with 200s (instead of 150s), with the first 50m strong and then 150m at a more sustainable pace, before moving on to the 150s, 100s and 50s.

You can also scale down, shortening the session. I would start with 100s, with the first 25m strong followed by 75m smooth. Then move on to 75s (first 25m strong, 50m smooth). And so on.

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## **Feedback**

I hope you give this session a try. If you do, let me know how you got on – and anything you learned during the session.

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