

4-week Training Plan for Strel Swimming Adventures

We have put together a simple training plan that prepares you for our swimming adventures. You are welcome to join our tour even if you are unable to complete the training plan in full, but the plan certainly helps if you plan on completing the swimming distances on the itinerary.

The four week training plan is designed for intermediate swimmers and it consists of 12 sessions. It includes all four strokes but the emphasis is on freestyle technique and drills. We have also included the use of kickboards, pull buoys and hand paddles. The total distance of each session starts at 2000 m and slightly increases through the weeks. We have excluded the time limits as the main goal is to achieve the distances throughout the 4 weeks. If you swim outdoors, try to achieve the distances from the plan and please take into consideration the key differences between pool and open water swimming. Main factors are: temperature/weather conditions, buoyancy, support and navigation. Most outdoor swimmers achieve the longer distances more easily.

Week 1, Session 1	
Warm up	400 m slow and easy Freestyle, working on your water feel
Drills	Freestyle drill; 200 m one arm front, 200 m catch-up drill
Main set	2 × 500 m with 2 min rest in between, medium pace, rotation of 150 m Freestyle the last 25 faster, 50 m Breaststroke the last 25 faster, 50 m Backstroke the last 25 faster, and repeat
Swim down	200 m slow relaxing swim down any stroke
Total	2.0 km

Week 1, Session 2	
Warm up	400 m slow and easy, working on your water feel. Alternating Freestyle, Breaststroke and Backstroke
Drills	400 m, co-ordination drill; 3 single arms on the right arm - non-pulling arm extended, 3 swimming strokes, then repeat on the left arm and so on
Main set	10 × 50 m Freestyle, starting slow and gradually increasing the speed up to the maximum, resting 30 sec in between 100 m swim down 400 m Freestyle, medium pace, counting your strokes per length and trying to keep the same stroke cycle/rate
Swim down	200 m swim down any stroke
Total	2.0 km

Week 1, Session 3	
Warm up	400 m slow and easy, working on your water feel. Alternating Freestyle and Breaststroke, 50 m each
Drills	200 m catch up drill, 200 m body rotation drill
Main set	8 × 100 m Freestyle at 80% of maximum effort, resting 30 sec in between. You can use a pull bouy every second cycle to focus all strength on your arms
Swim down	200 m swim down on your back doing "frog" kicking and rotating arms simultaneously
Total	2.0 km

Week 2, Session 1	
Warm up	400 m drills and easy swim. Focus on high elbow recovery and full length strokes
Sub set	8 × 50 m Freestyle warming up using hand paddles and pull buoy, 15 sec rest
Main set	16 × 50 m Medley with 20 sec break in between, medium pace, try to swim all 4 strokes including Butterfly, if you cannot do entire 50 m Butterfly, swim Freestyle instead 100 swim down
Swim down	200 m with kickboard, deep Freestyle leg kick. If you cannot do Freestyle kick all the way, do Breaststroke kick instead
Total	2.2km

Week 2, Session 2	
Warm up	400 m; 1Length single arm Freestyle, 1L choice swim other than Freestyle
Drills	400 m, 3 single arms on the right arm - non-pulling arm extended, 3 swimming strokes, then repeat on the left arm and so on
Main set	800 m Pyramid: 50,100,150,200,150,100,50 50 Freestyle, 100 Medley, 150 Freestyle, 200 Medley (50 m each stroke), 150 Freestyle, 100 Medley, 50 Freestyle, 5-10 slow deep breath rest in between, if you cannot do full 200 m Medley, swim Freestyle instead
Swim down	400 m steady stretched out swimming
Total	2.2 km

Week 2, Session 3	
Warm up	400 m slow and easy, working on your water feel. Alternating Freestyle and Breaststroke, 50 m each
Sub set	200 m catch up drill, 200 m body rotation drill, position held in streamline, arms fully extended
Main set	1000 m swim in one set: 400 m Freestyle at 60% of maximum effort, 100 m relaxing breaststroke and repeat. Make sure you keep the same pace
Swim down	400 m kickboard, 200 deep Freestyle leg kick, 200 long deep Breaststroke kick
Total	2.2 km

Week 3, Session 1	
Warm up	400 m; 100m Freestyle, 50 m Backstroke, 100 m Freestyle, 50 m Backstroke
Drills	500 m; 25 catch-up, 25 single arm right, 25 single arm left, 25 full stroke (focus on front end of stroke, entry & catch), repeat 5 times, 30 sec rest time
Main set	5 x 100 m Freestyle (steady pace), rest time 20 sec (you can use a pull buoy) 5 x 100 m Freestyle, the last 25 faster, rest time 30 sec 100 m Backstroke or Breaststroke swim down
Swim down	300 m kickboard, 150 deep Freestyle leg kick, 150 long deep Breaststroke kick
Total	2.3 km

Week 3, Session 2	
Warm up	400 m slow and easy, working on your water feel. Alternating Freestyle and Backstroke, 50 m each
Drills	400 m, co-ordination drill; 3 single arms on the right arm - non-pulling arm extended, 3 swimming strokes, then repeat on the left arm and so on
Main set	800 m Pyramid: 50,100,150,200,150,100,50 All Freestyle, medium steady pace, 5-8 slow deep breath rest in between 200 m Backstroke swim down
Swim down	400 m kickboard, 200 deep Freestyle leg kick, 200 long deep Breaststroke kick
Total	2.2 km

Week 3, Session 3	
Warm up	400 m Freestyle slow and easy
Sub set	200 m catch up drill, 200 m practise sighting (important for navigation in open water) every 5th stroke, raise your head, check your aiming spot (end of the pool) and don't inhale while sighting. The key is to only lift your eyes high enough to see the aiming landmark, this is vital to stay on course in open water swimming.
Main set	8 x 50 m Freestyle full speed, with underwater kick and breathing every 3 arm strokes, resting 60 sec in between 4 x 100 m Freestyle at 80% of maximum effort, resting 45 sec in between 100 m Backstroke swim down
Swim down	200 m swimming with fins and kickboard, long Freestyle leg kick 200 m with fins (no kickboard) Backstroke leg kick, holding extended arms straight back together
Total	2.2 km

Week 4, Session 1	
Warm up	4 × 100 m slow and easy Medley (if you skip Butterfly, swim Freestyle instead)
Drills	400 m Freestyle drill, alternating 25 m catch up, 25 m one arm front
Main set	12 × 100 m Freestyle with hand paddles and pull buoy, medium steady pace, 30 sec second in between 200 m Backstroke relaxed swim down
Swim down	400 m swimming with fins and kickboard, long Freestyle leg kick
Total	2.6 km

Week 4, Session 2	
Warm up	400 m slow and easy, working on your water feel. Alternating Freestyle and Backstroke, 50 m each
Drills	4 × 50 Freestyle only leg kick without kickboard breathing frontally, 30 sec rest in between 4 × 50 breaststroke only leg kick without kickboard breathing frontally, 30 sec rest in between.
Main set	1250 m Pyramid: 50,100,150,200,250, 200, 150,100,50 All Freestyle, medium steady pace, 5-8 slow deep breath rest in between, you can take a longer (3 min) break and have a drink after reaching 250 top level 200 m Backstroke swim down
Swim down	350 m kickboard, 200 deep Freestyle leg kick, 150 long deep breaststroke kick
Total	2.6 km

Week 4, Session 3	
Warm up	400 m alternating Freestyle and Backstroke, slow and easy
Sub set	12 × 50 m Freestyle warming up using hand paddles and pull buoy, 15 sec rest
Main set	16 × 50 m Medley with 20 sec break in between, medium pace, try to swim all 4 strokes including Butterfly, if you cannot do full 50 m Butterfly, swim Freestyle instead 200 swim down
Swim down	200 m swimming with fins and kickboard, long Freestyle leg kick 200 m with fins (no kickboard) Backstroke leg kick, holding extended arms together straight back
Total	2.4 km

ADDITIONAL NOTES

The key factor in swimming is your technique. When it comes to improving your technique we believe in performing drills. Drills are swimming exercises that improve overall technique.

Below you find some of the most common used drills in the swimming world. You can perform these drills during warm up, main set or during cool down swim. Swimming all strokes, practicing exercising and drills will make you stronger and enhance your motor coordination and feeling for the water. If you can't go to the pool 3 times a week, just go as much as you can and keep the plan as it is session after session. Follow it through and see your swimming getting better!

Freestyle Breathing

Breathing is a key factor in swimming freestyle. To improve the breathing technique and make it as efficient and natural as possible, you can train in varying the rhythm of your breathing pattern during freestyle. During your regular training and your special drills session try to do breathing, every 3, 5 and 7 arm strokes.

For example, you do 500 m freestyle; do the first 50 breathing every 3 strokes, the second 50 every 5, and the third one every 7, and then go back to 5 and 3. Repeat until you finish. This kind of drill will teach your body to swim with less oxygen improving your aerobic conditioning, but also to keep your breathing technique clean even when you really need to breathe, like in a competition.

Catch Up drill

This drill is by far the most effective drill you can do to improve your freestyle swimming. While performing one arm stroke keep the other arm outstretched in front of your head and do not move it until the other arm has finished the stroke. The benefit of this swimming technique is that you are forced to keep the arm stretched in front of you while the other arm is performing the stroke.

One arm front drill

As for the arm catch up drill, the one arm front drill is meant to improve the efficiency of the “gliding” phase of freestyle. The one arm front drill consists of repeating the arm stroke of only one arm with the other arm stretched in front of you. Do one lap stroking with the left arm and the next stroking with the right arm, breathe normally in the direction of the arm stroke.

Happy swimming!

Written by Strel Swimming Team, March 2011 | www.strelswimming.com