

## How to do well in open water swimming

So you're ready to get out there and do some open water swimming to prepare for your next triathlon? Before you go dipping into your local body of water, keep these tips in mind:

1. Never swim alone. For safety purposes, always swim with a group or bring along a friend. Given the unknown elements, a dangerous situation may arise such as fog, currents, boats, etc. where you will be in much better shape with others around.
2. Adjust to cold water. If the water you are training in is cold, below 66 degrees fahrenheit, be prepared. Wetsuits are necessary. Wearing a swim cap and earplugs can help keep your head warm. Get in the water slowly and only get in for 5-20 minutes the first time out, gradually increasing your time in the water with each swim.
3. Upon exit of your cold water swim, drink warm fluids, take off your wetsuit, and dress warmly.
4. On sunny days, apply sunscreen 30 minutes before getting in (especially for those with light skin!).
5. Be careful of the fog. It is easy to get lost in foggy weather and lose sight of the shore.
6. Watch the seaweed. If you are ocean swimming and come across seaweed, stay high in the water and do not kick. The seaweed can wrap around you if your legs are kicking.
7. Never swim in a lightning storm.
8. Open water swimming can cause chaffing. Use petroleum jelly if this is a problem.
9. Goggle color. Use dark lenses on sunny days, blue lenses on cloudy days.

Open water swimming can be challenging, but for many it is FUN and a nice change from "following the black line" at the bottom of the pool. Enjoy, and remember, "when in doubt, get out."

## About the Author

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