

- **FR:** Freestyle
- **FLY or FL:** Butterfly
- **BK:** Backstroke
- **BR:** Breaststroke
- **IM:** Individual Medley
- **FRIM:** Freestyle IM (replace the butterfly with freestyle)
- **K:** Kick
- **P:** Pull
- **ST:** Stroke (usually any stroke other than freestyle)
- **CH:** Choice (any stroke you want!)
- **Aerobic Training:** Swimming a moderate pace over a long period of time.
- **Age groups:** Swimmers are organized by age in competition. 8 and under swimmers compete against each other. Same goes for 9-10 year olds, 11-12 years olds, 13-14 year olds, and 15-18 year olds. "Senior" is often 17/18 and over. (Age groups vary by swimming organization, but these are the most common.)
- **Alternates:** When a swimmer places 9th or 10th, placing just outside of the top 8 competitors who advance to the final, they are designated as alternates in the event that one of the finalists decide to scratch their race.
- **Anaerobic Training:** High intensity swimming that produces lactic acid. All-out sprints!
- **Anchor:** The fourth and final swimmer on a relay team. A position of prestige, often reserved for the [fastest swimmer on the relay](#), as they are competing for a better finishing position and a fair chunk of glory.
- **Ascend:** Swimming slower by time over the duration of a set.
- **Base Training:** Usually done in the beginning or middle of a swim season. Swimmers will do more aerobic training to build their fitness base. As the season progresses, they'll build up from the base!
- **Bell lap:** When a swimmer has two lengths of the pool remaining, an official will ring a bell at the end of their lane. Used for longer races, 500-yard freestyle and up.
- **Best Average:** Swimming as fast as possible and maintaining the same pace on every repetition within a set.
- **Build:** Swimming faster by the end of the repetition. Think of build as "speeding up" throughout the rep.
- **Championship Final:** The fastest top eight swimmers from the morning or preliminary session. These swimmers are competing for medals and points.
- **Championship meet:** Swimmers usually have a couple big championship meets per season. Championship meets are the big year-end competitions that swimmers train for all season.
- **Circle Swimming:** Swimming on one side of the lane to accommodate multiple swimmers in the lane. In some countries, you'll always swim on the right side of the lane. In others, you'll stick to the left.
- **Consolation Final:** Usually, these are the 9th to 16th fastest swimmers from the morning or preliminary sessions. Even if a swimmers from this heat posts a time faster than the winner of the championship final, the best they can do is place ninth overall.

- **Cool Down:** The final set in your workout. Usually one long, easy swim or a set of shorter, easy swims to help you get your heart rate down and flush lactic acid from your muscles. Don't skip the cool down!
- **Deck Entry:** At most meets you have to sign up to swim your events days or even weeks in advance. Many meets will offer deck entries which allow you to sign up for an event the day of the meet. The downside of deck entering is usually you'll be seeded as a no time, they are more expensive than a regular entry, and usually the meet will only fill empty lanes, and won't create new heats to accommodate deck entries, so you may not get into the events you want.
- **Descend:** Swimming faster by time over the duration of a set.
- **DQ:** This is short for disqualification. There are many things a swimmer can do to be disqualified including improper stroke technique, false starts, swimming the wrong stroke, or not following some other rule. If you're disqualified from a race the swim will not count.
- **Dual meet:** A competition that is set-up between two swim clubs. Both teams compete for points. Most prevalent in high school and collegiate swimming.
- **False start:** When a swimmer leaves the blocks early. A false start can include a swimmer trying to jump the start or rolling forward before the starter's pistol has sounded.
- **Final results:** After a race has been completed, and there have been no disqualifications, results are said to be "final."
- **Finals:** Held at night, they are the championship heats of the events that were held in the morning. Some meets will have a final and consolation heat.
- **Fins:** Wear them on your feet for extra resistance and a burst of speed. Fins help improve your kick speed and power.
- **Heat sheet/Psych sheet:** A list of the day's events, usually paper-bound, that lists the participants in each lane, their seed time, lane, and the heat they are in. Races are arranged by event number. Swimmers can be "circle seeded" or seeded slowest to fastest.
- **Heat:** One flight of swimmers doing an event. For example, in an 8-lane pool, it would be eight swimmers doing the same race. An event of race can have a few or many heats. Slower swimmers race in the first heats, with the swimmers with the fastest seed or entry times swimming in the final heats.
- **Kickboard:** Use a kickboard on kicking sets to keep your upper body afloat. If you don't have a kickboard, try kicking in streamline position on your back.
- **Long Course Meters (LCM):** 50-meter pool (Olympic-sized pool)
- **Main Set:** The main focus of your swim workout.
- **Marshalling area:** The area on the pool deck where swimmers are "marshaled" prior to the race. Sometimes, rows of chairs will be set-up, with swimmers being assigned to a particular row along with the other swimmers in their heat. This is more typical of swim meets with younger swimmers.
- **Meet Fees:** The cost to swim per event
- **Negative Split:** Swimming faster on the second half of an individual repetition. For example, say you swam a 200 freestyle in 3:00. You finished the first 100 in 1:40 and the second in 1:20. That is a negative split.

- **On the Bottom/Down:** Leaving on the :30. Think of an old-school analog clock. The 60-second (or :00) mark is when the clock hands are pointing to the top, and the 30-second mark is when the hands point to the bottom.
- **On the Top/Up:** Leaving on the :00
- **Paddles:** Wear them on your hands to focus on your catch and pull technique, and build strength in your arms.
- **Post-Set:** Done after the main set, usually as a “finisher” or final push before the cool down.
- **Pre-Set:** A set designed to prepare you for the main set. May include drills, speed work, or pulling.
- **Prelims:** The morning or preliminary session of a swim meet. This is where the finalists and consolation finalists are decided for the evening or “finals” session.
- **Prelims/Finals–** Some meets are done in prelim-finals format. In prelims your swimmer is swimming with a goal of making finals. They will take the top swimmers from the preliminary heats (the number depends on the meet rules) and they will swim for points and awards later in finals. Sometimes finals are swum later that day, or for larger more prestigious meets they are sometimes swum the next day.
- **Proof of time:** Some meets require proof that an entry time has been legally completed.
- **Psych Sheet:** These have swimmers listed in events organized fastest to slowest. Unlike heat sheets they do not list the swimmers heat and lane assignments. Psych sheets allow you to quickly see how a swimmer stacks up against the competition.
- **Pull Buoy:** A pull buoy goes between your legs and stops you from kicking so you can isolate your arms. Often used with paddles during pull sets.
- **Qualifying Times (Cuts):** Time standards for competitions. For example, a AAA cut of :58.44 for the 100m freestyle would be the minimum requirement to attend a AAA meet. Most junior meets and all senior meets have qualifying times (cuts).
- **Registration Deadline:** a date or time that you can enter or remove a swimmer without cost to you
- **SCRATCH:** You can remove yourself from the meet, but still abrogated for meet fees
- **Seed time (or entry time):** The time that a swimmer is entered into an event with. This time, usually the swimmer’s personal best time in the event, is used to seed the swimmers into heats. For example, if a swimmer has a best time of :30 in the 50-yard butterfly, they will be entered with this time, and meet organizers will seed the swimmer alongside other swimmers in the same age group with a similar time.
- **Set Group:** A collection of sets. See below for examples of different Set Groups. Some Set Groups have multiple rounds. In that case, you would complete all sets, in order, for the prescribed number of rounds.
- **Set:** One piece of a workout. In our example above, 5×100 freestyle on 2:00 is a set. Sets may also include specific drill names or notes about the target effort level.
- **Short Course Meters (SCM):** 25-meter pool (Most common)
- **Short Course Yards (SCY):** 25-yard pool (Only in the United States)
- **Snorkel:** Swimming snorkels are front-mounted, sitting on your forehead rather than on the side of your face. Use a snorkel to work on technique — since you don’t have to lift or turn your head to breathe, it’s a great tool to refine your stroke.

- **Starting block:** The mounted platform a swimmer uses to dive into the water. When a coach says to “get behind the blocks,” this means the swimmer should get behind their respective starting block in anticipation of their heat.
- **Structured Workout:** A swim workout that is broken into defined sets. You’ll see these types of workouts in team environments.
- **Swim-off:** Occasionally when there is a tie there will be a swim off where the tied swimmers race again to break the tie. This is often done in prelims finals meets where a tie needs to be broken to determine who gets to move on to finals.
- **Registration Deadline:**
- **Taper:** The process of reducing swimming volume and resting in preparation for a big race.
- **Time Standards:** Some meets require you to have a certain seed time in order to qualify for the meet. These are also sometimes called “cut times”. In most cases you need to have a faster seed time than the standard (cut) in order to qualify to swim in. In some cases you need to be slower than the standard because the meet is intended for slower swimmers.
- **Timed Finals:** If the competition is timed finals your swimmer will only swim each event once. The swimmers with the fastest times score points and earn awards based on that swim.
- **Timer:** A volunteer, usually a swim parent, who times the swimmer in their assigned lane with a stopwatch. Usually there are 2-3 timers per lane.
- **Touchpad.** The yellow electronic pad that is affixed underneath the starting block. The clock stops when a swimmer touches it at the end of their race. Although there are 2-3 timers behind the block, this is usually the official time.
- **Warmup:** The first set in a workout. Usually made up of a long, easy swim, followed by kicking and a few drills.