April Newsletter

Welcome to the Taos Swim Club Inc. Congratulations to our state swimmers on their Awesome performance in ABQ. A lot of top finishes from Taos at the Meet. The coaching staff is very proud of the swimmers performance.
Good luck to the swimmers going to Tempe, AZ to participate at the 2017 West Coast Elite Showcase Classic Meet. Those swimmers are Dillon Brown, Gracie Goler, Nathan Hernandez, Juan Romo and Estevan Salazar. SWIM FAST!!GO TAOS!!

"Today's pain is tomorrow's power. The more you suffer today, the stronger you are tomorrow."

Self-pity is self-defeating. Tomorrow's success is based on today's discomfort. Plus, willpower is like a muscle: The more you exercise it, the stronger your will gets.

And the easier it is to call on when dedication and persistence make all the difference.

Our Commitment

The Taos Swim Club Inc. is committed to providing an enjoyable swimming experience for swimmers of all ages and abilities, while also providing a challenging and positive teaching and training environment in which swimmers can develop a sense of self-esteem and pride through individual and team achievement.

"6 Reasons Your Child Should Learn To Swim"

The benefits of swimming are endless, and your child should learn to swim as early as possible. Here's why:

1. It's essential to their safety.

According to the National Safe Kids Campaign, drowning is the second leading cause of unintentional injury-related death to children ages one through 14. It is absolutely crucial that all kids know how to swim at a young age. There is water all around us, even if it's as small as a bathtub. Making sure that your child is comfortable in and around water is essential to their safety.

I've been swimming since I was three years old, and almost all of my teammates began just as early. Even if your child isn't interested in competitive swimming, ensuring your child knows how to swim should be done as early as possible. Their interest in the actual sport is just an added benefit!

2. It's a low-impact sport.

Swimming is obviously low-impact, as it's performed in water. According to Bucknell University, the body is 90 percent buoyant when in the water up to your neck, so you're not hitting the ground with the weight you carry on land. Swimming is the ideal sport for the wellbeing of one's body in the long-run.

Yes, anything in excess can cause your body to break down, so swimming injuries are common. But if you get a shoulder injury, you may still kick during practice to stay in shape. This isn't so easy in other sports, where you often have to stop the sport all together because of the impact.

In swimming, you can often just rest the injured part of your body, and still use the healthy part of you in the pool. The most common swimming injuries are from overuse, showing that swimming is a generally very easy on one's body as opposed to a critical injury such as a sprain or break from running or jumping.

Note: The lack of serious injuries from swimming does not include dry land training, where often clumsy and uncoordinated fish out of water (also known as swimmers) are more likely to injure themselves.

3. The value of teamwork is learned along with individuality.

Like any sport, the team atmosphere is the greatest aspect. College athletes admit that post-graduation, they miss their team and the hours spent together while training and traveling. In an article I previously wrote, I stated the significance of using your teammates to help you get through the hardest times, because your friends on the team endure the same hard work that you do every day. From this shared experience, swimmers learn to support their teammates, which creates a positive atmosphere. This is a skill that can be carried through life into the workplace and beyond.

But teamwork is learned in plenty of sports, why is swimming special? The great

thing about swimming is that there is also an individual aspect to it. In competitive swimming, you learn self-motivation and goal setting/reaching. Swimmers have their own personal set of times for their events.

At each meet, competitive swimmers try to beat their personal best times, while at the same time swimming for their team as a whole. In high school and college swimming, the primary motivation is to earn points for your team so they can win the meet. I always swam on a club team in high school instead swimming for my school. So when I reached college swimming, I realized the gravity of teamwork and support, and I was able to push myself to a new level. Swimming packages teamwork and individuality into one sport.

4. Time management is inevitably learned.

Time management has been one of the most valuable skills I've attained over the past 15 years of competitive swimming. I have learned how to take the little free time I have to get what needs to be completed on time.

Especially in high school, when I was practicing nine times per week while studying an International Baccalaureate program, my free time was limited. I would wake up before school and swim, go straight to school, and then swim again after. On weekends, I practiced twice a day on both Saturday and Sunday.

I was able to train myself physically and mentally to know when it was more important to stay up and get an assignment done versus getting the sleep I needed for my brain to work properly the next day. My work ethic was often praised by my friends and teachers, and I didn't realize how well prepared I would be for college until my first year at the University of Rhode Island. I learned time management at an early age, and this skill has carried me through my four years swimming for URI.

This is a skill that swimmers will hold for the rest of their lives. Being able to divide and manage one's time, to prioritize what needs to be done first, second, and last is an invaluable talent that is gained through competitive swimming.

5. Swimming is an incredible workout.

The sport involves moving multiple muscle groups in a high-intensity, cardio workout. All four strokes involve working different muscle groups. Often times, children and adults take up swimming for weight loss. It burns calories quickly, and is easier for overweight people to pick up because it's low-impact. According to Bucknell, swimming offers 12 to 14 percent more resistance training than life on land-offering an exceptionally challenging workout.

Aside from weight loss, introducing your child to swimming early on will promote a healthy life. Once he or she learns to swim, they may hop in a pool at any point in their life to get a low-risk, high-intensity workout.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, swimming can help with chronic diseases and mental health. Water-based exercising like swimming improves the use of joints affected by arthritis.

The CDC also states that "Parents of children with developmental disabilities find that recreational activities, such as swimming, improve family connections." Swimming also releases endorphins, which aid in decreasing depression and improving moods.

6. You can swim for the rest of your life.

If your child knows how to swim at a young age, this skill is forever with them. In their later years, their longevity and quality of life will be enhanced by swimming. The CDC says that water exercising helps to decrease disability and aids in the quality of life in older adults. Since swimming is a low-impact sport, this makes it a safe option for older adults,

rather than risking a fall while biking or running. Swimming feels good on joints and boosts one's mood at the same time.

It's essential that every child learn to swim, especially to be water-safe. But there are so many levels of swimming and benefits that come along the way. Introduce your child to swimming early on so that they have the skill for their whole life. This can help improve their overall physical and mental health. Hopefully, they will fall in love with the sport and lap it up for years.

Words for Swimmers:

- Eat healthy meals, daily. Remember your basics: whole grains, protein, fruit & veggies, and dairy… Balance and variety help provide your body with the fuel it needs to put in the hard work demanded of you during practices.
- Bring water to practice… and DRINK IT! Your bodies are hard at work in the pool and your insides need to stay hydrated.
- Have Asthma? Bring your inhaler to every practice.

Words to Parents:

- Practice will not be cancelled due to rain or wind, so please be prepared with jackets and umbrellas for your comfort while waiting. However, in the event of heavy thunder showers, the swimmers will NOT be able to get in the water but we will do DRYLAND training.
- All Silver/Gold team swimmers are required to swim a minimum of three days a week.
- Make sure swimmers have their necessary items (towels, swim caps, goggles, snorkel, water, etc…) for practice.

For helpful nutrition information & snack ideas, you can visit USASWIMMING.ORG/NUTRITION. • Swimmers with Asthma: Bring your inhalers. Chlorine is a known agitator of asthma and its symptoms. Also make sure all coaches know that your child has asthma. Friendly Reminders ***Please read and know these rules of the pool***.

- Keep the deck clear. We encourage parents to sit on or near the bleachers to allow the coaches to focus their attention on the swimmers.
- Don't talk to the coaches, or your swimmer, during practice. If you have questions, please talk to coaches before or after practice.
- No Horseplay in or out of the pool, or in the locker rooms. If swimmers need to use locker rooms, go in, change clothes and/or use facilities, and come out. That's it! • No running on the deck. • Caps - all swimmers with longer hair need a swim cap.

April Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 **NM SWIM MEETING**
2	3 Practice	4 Practice	5 Practice	6 Practice	7 Practice	8 **Wet 'N' Wild Ester Eggs Hunt**
9	10 Practice	11 Practice	12 Practice	13 Practice	14 OFF	15
16 **Happy Ester!**	17 Practice	18 Practice	19 Practice	20 Practice	21 Practice	22 **NM SWIM MEETING**
23	24 Practice	25 Practice	26 Practice	27 Practice **West Coast Meet, AZ**	28 Practice **West Coast Meet, AZ**	29 **West Coast Meet, AZ**
30						

"Preventing & Treating Exercise Associated Muscle Cramps (EAMC)"

Muscle cramps can be a royal pain in the rear….and hamstring, calf, quad, … the list goes on. Even with the most disciplined training, fueling and hydration plan, a bad cramp can still find a way to hold you down on the day of a competition and completely change your performance. In fact, it is one of the most common medical problems encountered by competitors in an Ironman or any other ultra-distance event as well as affecting athletes of many other sports – especially during the conditioning phases early in pre-season training.

Affected athletes constantly ask why we cramp and how we can prevent it. In this blog, I hope to shed light on what is known and what still needs further study on exercise-associated muscle cramps (EAMC).

Definition

The medical definition of EAMC is a painful, spasmodic, involuntary contraction of skeletal muscle that occurs during or immediately after exercise. The non-medical definition is usually far more graphic. My worst muscle cramp experience was during my first 50k at mile 27. Looking back, I would describe it as a seizing, almost-crippling, loss of control of one's own limb(s). I questioned my ability to run another step, let alone finish the race. Not fun, to say the least.

Despite scientists' and physicians' abilities to answer some of the most complex medical conundrums, the cause of muscle cramping is still frustratingly elusive.

Salty Solutions

It is well documented that many athletes are "salty sweaters." Some experts theorize that this lost sodium (via salty sweating) leads to cramping. Research on tennis and football players showed crampers lost more salty sweat and had a fall in sodium blood levels compared to non-crampers. Their recommendation for preventing EAMC is to increase salt intake in the diet and through sports drinks. It should be noted that the level of evidence (i.e., the quality of the study based on well-reviewed standards) is low for these studies and a "one size fits all" approach for management of muscle cramps should be avoided.

Challenging the 'Lytes Theory

Dr. Martin P. Schwellnus and collaborating researchers have dedicated years to studying EAMC and have discovered it's not just about the salt.

- Data from several large studies on triathletes show no relationship between dehydration or electrolyte changes in the blood and the development of EAMC.
- As muscles tire, there may be an increased risk of EAMC. Early muscle fatigue can occur in hot, humid conditions, increased exercise intensity/duration, or greater depletion of energy stores.
- Racing at a higher intensity level than training puts one at greater risk of race day EAMC.[1]
- High intensity training directly before a race (with minimal to no taper) causes muscle injury and "reflex muscle spasms," leading to EAMC.[8]

Is it "the nerve"?

Dr. Rod MacKinnon, who co-founded Flex Pharma, a Boston-based biotechnology company, and Dr. Christoph Westphal out of Harvard Medical School are trying to solve the riddle by not focusing on the muscle, but instead focusing on the nerve. Here's a breakdown of what they're studying:

- The theory is that muscle cramps are actually caused by excessively firing nerves, which supply the working muscles.
- The pickle juice and mustard packets some athletes consume to prevent cramps could be triggering special ion channels in the mouth, esophagus and stomach to send calming signals to motor neurons in the spinal cord, which then relaxes the cramping muscle.
- Flex Pharma has calibrated a mixture of ingredients to stimulate these ion channels in the mouth, esophagus, and stomach with the goal of preventing and treating muscle cramps

Is there a cure for the common cramp?

With multiple theories about the cause of the cramp, it's hard to provide a single answer for a cure or prevention strategy. But, if you've experienced the debilitating effects of a muscle cramp, you want to avoid a repeat incidence, even if the evidence may be lacking. Based on the research out there, here are some helpful recommendations during training and competition.

Prevention

- **Know your training and competition conditions.** Factor in humidity, temperature, indoor versus outdoor, altitude and terrain and how this might be different than your usual training conditions.
- **If you've cramped in the past,** think about all factors that could have played a role (drastic change in intensity, volume, altitude, terrain).
- **Focus on form**. Muscles most affected by cramping are those repetitively used and confined to a small arc of motion, so focus on form in training to avoid heavy "braking" and try to stretch out the stride with adequate hip and knee flexion and extension.[6]
- **If you're a "salty sweater,"** be sure to increase salt intake in your diet and take in fluids higher in sodium content, especially in the hotter, more humid months. Salt tabs or pills are an easy method, but practice using them in training as some can cause upset stomach.[9]
- **Stay fueled:** Athletes should have adequate nutritional intake (particularly carbohydrates) to prevent premature muscle fatigue during exercise.
- **Is it "the nerve"?** The Flex Pharma research is ongoing, but the theory has a sound scientific basis and, with a little more data, could be a viable option for frequent crampers.

Treatment

- **A shot of pickle juice?** Some athletic trainers have attributed their success in treating (not preventing) EAMC by using pickle juice, mustard or other high electrolyte beverages. Based on MacKinnon's studies and a 2010 study on pickle juice[10] this may not be due to the electrolyte changes in the blood, but instead by stopping a neural reflex that gets triggered in the esophagus/stomach.
  - *The evidence: No studies have proven this is effective. If you decide to give it a try, keep the consumption volume low (80mL pickle juice or 2-3 mustard packets) to avoid unwanted stomach upset or lowering your potassium levels (if*

too low, could lead to abnormal rhythms in your heart).[11]

- **Stretch It Out**. If you're actively cramping, the most effective immediate treatment is to passively stretch the affected muscle.[7,]
- **IV fluids?** Treatment with IV fluids is debatable, but in refractory cases, could be used. It is vital to have someone skilled with placing IV's if you choose this option.[8]

Whether you're an endurance athlete or just getting in shape for next season, cramps can be a painful detriment to any training regimen or even more so on competition day. Understanding the most common ways to prevent or treat EAMC can change the way frequent crampers get through intense training and competition in challenging environments.

The Taos Swim Club Inc. would like to thank all of its sponsors for their support. If you would like to be a sponsor, or know of someone that would, please have them contact us at taostigersharks@hotmail.com or 575-224-1825. As always your donation is tax deductible!

Please visit our website for more Information: **TAOSTIGERSHARKS.COM** and Fallow us on Facebook: **facebook.com/taos.tigersharks**
Twitter: twitter.com/TaosSharks

Thank you for all your help and support. ***GO TIGER SHARKS!***