

# How can I swim faster?

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[Charlie852](#) 3 posts since

Oct 6, 2007

I've done about 5 sprint tri's and I'm really slow on the swim. I can do the distance. I don't know if I should focus on kicking more or there is something about my form, or I'm just not strong enough. I can try to swim hard for 800 yds in the pool and I'm not sore the next day.

I wonder what direction I should take to get the best improvement. I'm 55 so I don't expect to get better naturally.



[LAURENFERRAND](#) 1 posts since

Jun 24, 2008 1. **Re: How can I swim faster?** Jun 24, 2008 1:03 PM

I've been told that running intervals helps your running speed (sprint fast then walk) .. so, using that knowledge towards the swim may help! I suggest you increase your speed by increasing your overall strength. Start working in 50m-100m sprints into your swim routine... also some weight training might help.



[Joe\\_h1](#) 1,583 posts since

Jul 9, 2007 2. **Re: How can I swim faster?** Jun 24, 2008 2:09 PM

 in response to: [LAURENFERRAND](#)

agree with previous poster to swim fast in a race you need to swim fast in practice. also have a knowledgeable swimmer/coach/lifeguard take a look at your form you may be able to improve your form and save some time and energy.

How can I swim faster?

but you don't want to use your kick to improve your swim time at the expense of your bike and run. my .02 check out the total immersion books/dvds and see if they can help with your form



[triguy140.6](#) 2 posts since

Oct 10, 2007 3. **Re: How can I swim faster?** Jun 24, 2008 2:15 PM

The # 1 thing you can do to get faster in the pool is to get in the pool more. A lot of speed is gained in off season for swimming (swimming at least 3 or 4 times). Swimming is a very high portion of technique. 1 thing I would consider is to get a few private lessons from a swimming coach or go to a masters program at your local gym. It might look scary with all of the fast people but they love to help everyone.


One last thing to note with swimming that most good coaches will tell you kick more will not propel you fast. The kick only makes up about 10% of the propulsion of a stroke. For longer distance swimming it sucks up much more oxygen because of the quadricep muscles.

Good luck



[Rob Toren](#) 1 posts since

Mar 24, 2008 4. **Re: How can I swim faster?** Jun 24, 2008 6:38 PM

 in response to: [triguy140.6](#)

How can I swim faster?

While it is true that kicking gains little in forward motion, one easily remedied and common problem among non-swimmers is lack of ankle flexibility. If ankles have limited flexibility, then the foot is essentially close to 90 degrees relative to the plane of the water surface, increasing resistance to forward motion. There are ingenious little stretching devices that one can easily purchase and do while lying on one's back reading, watching TV (at a funny angle obviously). Studies have been done on top swimmer's ankle flexibility and it's obviously key. Though triathletes don't need this level of flexibility, the more the better leading to increased efficiency in the water.



[Anthony All3](#) 238 posts since

Aug 8, 2007 5. **Re: How can I swim faster?** Jun 25, 2008 3:30 AM

I agree that intervals will help your speed. But you must build a huge aerobic base before diving in to that. Many people get confused about their own aerobic base, by that I mean thinking it is big enough for intervals. Just because you can swim say 1000m, doesn't mean your ready, you need to be able to swim a long distance at a relatively lower HR and not be exhausted afterwards. Before you get started on intervals, you must first correct all form issues, not 100%, but you must have an efficient stroke first. So let me ask you a few questions.

1.) Can you swim 100m with a tennis ball(or similar object), under your chin and hold it there while you rotate(from the hips) to breath?

2.) do you rotate from the hips when you breath?

How can I swim faster?

3.) Are you bending your elbow at the beginning of your pull phase?

4.) Where is your hand in relation to your body when you finish the push phase and begin the recovery phase?

So lets assume you have good form, before you start doing intervals can you comfortably swim 2000-3000m? If not then skip intervals till you build a bigger aerobic base. Good luck, let me know if you have further questions or would like some sets or training plans for your races, I have put together a decent plan for a sprints that I used this year with much success.


-Anthony

How can I swim faster?



[trideborah](#) 12 posts since

Nov 16, 2007 6. **Re: How can I swim faster?** Jul 16, 2008 7:01 PM

 in response to: [Anthony\\_All3](#)

Anthony: I have not heard about the tennis ball thing under the chin. Can you go into further detail? The person who has been coaching me stressed the importance of hip rotation, but I still struggle breathing on the left side. (right side is smooth and fluid).