

Swim A Mile for Women with Cancer

Training Guide

Designed by Neil Virtue, Head Swimming Coach at Mills College
and Julie Martin, Director of Aquatics and Safety at the Downtown Oakland YMCA

Definitions

Swim workouts or sets are designed using the following variables:

- Distance (how far you swim before taking a break)
- Repeats (how many times you do the distance)
- Rest Interval (or “RI” - how long you rest between repeats)
- Effort (how hard you work)

Example: 10 x 25 @ :10 RI

Swim 25 yards 10 times with a 10 second break in between repeats

Descend

Doing a series of distances, using progressively more effort with each repeat. If the workout says to do 4 x 50's descending 1-4 that means the 1st 50 is the easiest, and the 4th the hardest. It is more important here to think in terms of effort than speed.

Example: 5 x 50 descending @ :05 RI

Swim 50 yards 5 times with a 5 second break between repeats, with more effort on each repeat

Build Up

Increasing your speed as you swim a distance - within each distance, get progressively faster, then start over with the next distance (as opposed to Descend, where you exert the same effort or swim the same pace within each distance, but each distance gets faster than the one you just did).

Example: 10 x 50 build up @ :15 RI

Swim 50 yards 10 times with a 15 second break between laps, building the effort within each distance

Catch Up Drill

A great basic drill to help lengthen out the stroke. Start on the wall and push off in a streamline (torpedo like position with arms over head, palm of one hand over the back of the other hand, chin tucked to your chest) position and kick. Starting with the bottom hand take a big freestyle stroke and 'catch up' this hand to end up on the top of the other hand that is still extended out in front of you. Kick for a little bit in the streamline position and then take another stroke with your other hand. Keep alternating with one hand and then the other.

Tips For Breathing

If you feel like you are very out of breath after the first few laps:

- You could be going too fast for the intended exercise. Take it down a notch and see if it helps.
- You may not have a good exchange of O₂ and CO₂. Experiment with changing the amount you are inhaling and exhaling in order find the right balance.
- You may not have the hang of rhythmic breathing. You want to keep a consistent breathing rhythm right from the start of your swim. Try the “Bobbing” exercise below.

Bobbing

Either standing in water or holding onto a wall, bob up and down, inhaling (ONLY through your mouth) above water and exhaling (through your nose, or nose and mouth) under water. If you get water in your mouth, just push it out with your tongue. The goal is to be able do it for 5 minutes nonstop, getting a good exchange of O₂ and CO₂. You can always start your workout with some bobbing and rhythmic breathing and don't be afraid to add it in until it becomes automatic.

Sample Workouts

Aim to do two or three of these workouts a week and have the fourth workout be a “Check Yourself” set (see below). If you are starting way ahead of the game you could do the Check Yourself set once every two weeks instead. You can create your own workouts by varying the components (distance, repeats, RI, effort) and adding elements (descend, build up). The intention is to find that threshold of a workout that is doable but challenging. Feel free to mix up the strokes as you see fit.

It is up to you to check in and see where you are at and make adjustments. If you find that you need to take more rest than is suggested for a workout, experiment with reducing your effort during the repeats, shortening the repeats, or increasing the rest interval. Then try the set a week later and see if you can do it as suggested. In the end it really doesn't matter as long as you are setting a goal of swimming 3-4 times a week, enjoying your process and challenging yourself within reason.

Short Workout A - 1000 yards

150 swim
150 catch up drill
6 x 25 kick @ :10RI
10 x 50 @ :15 RI
(Laps # 4, 7, 9 and 10 are pushing it with the rest being stretched out and easy.)
50 warm down

Short Workout B - 1000 yards

150 swim
3 x 50 catch up drill @ :10RI
3 x 50 kick @ :10RI
300 swim @ :30 RI
200 swim @ :15RI
100 swim
50 warm down

Medium Workout A - 2000 yards

200 swim
200 catch up drill
3 x 50 kick @ :10RI
3 x 50 swim @ :10 RI
Do the following combination 4 times:
4 x { 150 swim @ :15RI
 { 3 x 50 swim @ :10RI descending
100 warm down

Medium Workout B - 2000 yards

300 swim
200 kick
100 drill
300 swim @ :15RI
2 x 50 @ :05RI
200 swim @ :15 RI
4 x 50 @ :10RI
100 swim @ :15RI
6 x 50 @ :15RI make these the most effort of the 50's
200 warm down

Long Workout A - 3000 yards

300 swim
300 (25kick+25 drill + 25 swim, 4 times through)
6 x 50 kick build up @ :10RI
6 x 50 swim alternate 1 fast with 1 long and stretched out :10RI
Do the combination below 4 times
4x { 200 swim @ :15 RI
 { 4 x 50 pace descending @ :10RI
200 warm down

Long Workout B - 3000 yards

200 swim
200 kick
8 x 50 descend 1-4 and hold #4 speed for 5, 6,7,8 @ :10RI
400 swim @ :15RI
2X50 descend @ :05RI
300 swim @ :15RI
4 x 50 descend @ :10RI
200 swim @ :15RI
6 x 50 descend @ :15RI
100 swim @ :15RI
8 x 50 descend @ :10RI these will be fastest 50's
200 warm down

The “Check Yourself” Sets

These are designed to give you an idea over a four-week period what your time might be for a mile. You should do the above workouts for your first 2-3 swims in a week, then have the last workout be a Check Yourself set.

Each time get in and do a short warm up before the Check Yourself set.

Easy

If the rest interval feels too short, take longer rests or ease up on the effort to make it sustainable.

Week 1: 18 x 25 @ :20 RI

Week 2: 36 x 25 @ :15 RI

Week 3: 54 x 25 @ :10 RI

Week 4: 72 x 25 @ :10RI This one is to find out your approximate mile time. Take note of your start and finish times. Subtract the total rest time you took (should be 11:50) from that time, to get an idea of your mile time.

For the next 4 weeks do this series again or move on to the Medium Sets

Medium

If the rest interval feels too short, take longer rests, ease up on the effort to make it sustainable, or go back to the Easy Sets.

Week 1: 9 x 50 @ :10 RI

Week 2: 18 x 50 @ :10 RI

Week 3: 27 x 50 @ :10RI

Week 4: 36 x 50's @ :10RI. This one is to find out your approximate mile time.

Take note of your start and finish times. Subtract the total rest time you took (should be 5:50) from that time, to get an idea of your mile time.

For the next 4 weeks do this series again or move on to the Advanced Sets

Advanced:

If the rest interval feels too short, take longer, ease up on the effort to make it sustainable, or go back to the Medium Sets.

Week 1: 6 x 100 @ :10 RI

Week 2: 12 x 100 @ :10 RI

Week 3: 18 x 100 @ :10RI. This one is to find out your approximate mile time.

Take note of your start and finish times. Subtract the total rest time you took (should be 2:50) from that time, to get an idea of your mile time.

Either do this again for the next 3 weeks or add another step with more distance:

Week 4: 6 x 300 @ :15RI

Again take note of your start and finish times and subtract 45 seconds to give yourself a fairly accurate idea of how long it will take to do the mile.

Guide:

| <u>Length Time (25 yds)</u> | = | <u>Mile Time</u> |
|-----------------------------|---|-------------------|
| 30 seconds | = | 36 minutes |
| 40 seconds | = | 48 minutes |
| 50 seconds | = | 60 minutes |
| 60 seconds | = | 72 minutes |