

Open Water Strategies...

Eating:

1. Fluid-stick with reg. am bev (coffee, tea, Gatorade, apple juice okay, OJ is not).
2. Food-light, if at all (1/2 cliff bar or 1/2 banana or one piece toast with pb) 1-2 hours prior.

Stretching & Warming Up:

3. Definitely stretch and feel loose & warm.
4. Actual swim warm up depends on air/water temp, and if it's a deep water start*.
 - a. If cool, choose b/w a jogging warm up or an easy swim in different suit so you may put on a dry suit when done to conserve body temp.
 - b. If very soon to start, wetsuit is fine. Do some kicking specific warm up to get over that early out-of-breath feel.

Goggles & Cap:

5. Goggles-Always have two pair, race ready
 - a. Sunny? Then go with darker model. Overcast?...go with lighter color.
 - b. Tight and dry
 - c. Over or under cap?
6. Cap-in cool weather put on dry, in warm weather put on last and put on wet.

Chaffing: where do you get raw? Less than 1 mile-don't worry about it☺

7. 1-mile +...Perhaps a little Vaseline around collar & armpits... Do not get any Vaseline in or on goggles-ever! Vaseline breaks down neoprene.

Swim Course:

8. Know & Visualize the loop you'll be doing.
 - a. Will buoys be on right or left shoulder?
 - b. What's the straightest line to the first buoy?
 - c. Swim the apex, trust your sight breathing-not the swimmer next to you.
 - d. What will the sun be doing during the race?

Start:

9. Outside angle-less crowded and often the straightest line.
10. Be calm. Repeat often. Breathe deeply and slowly. Repeat for duration of race☺
11. Beach start? Do NOT sprint into water...no gain for energy used.
12. Shallow water start? Master dolphin dive in all shallow water-it's faster!
13. *Deep water start? Use breast or egg-beater kick gently to get legs warmed up-use this time to get yourself warmed up. Stay aerobic and calm. Float on back with ears under!
14. Is there someone racing you know is a good swimming match? Should you draft? Could be fine, but don't swim their race.
15. Kicking...minimal! #1 mistake is overuse of legs in a swim. A 2-beat balance kick will work best and keep you aerobic. It's natural to want to kick 'cause you're fresh, but you must resist! Relax the legs, let 'em balance you with toes pointed, legs long!

During Race:

16. Stay long...get used to pointing toes, gliding on hand/arm extension, face DOWN.
17. Bi-lateral breathing is easy and helps to keep you balanced
 - a. 3-5 straight breaths to one side, then same on the other.
18. Double breaths are okay, too...I'll show you.

During Race continued:

19. **Sight Breaths**-Resist more than 3 in a row, & try to go 20-40 strokes before the next one!
 - a. *Either side will do, but you'll have a preference.*
 - b. **For right side**, as right hand enters and extends begin lifting head only high enough to expose mouth, breathe and sight simultaneously.
 - c. After breath, allow head to recover in the natural breath position to the right side, following stroking hand with face. Tuck chin to insure head position is face down-this brings the hips & legs back up.

20. **To DRAFT or not to...** depends on how comfortable the speed is. If it feels too slow, don't. If it feels too fast, don't. If it's really aerobically comfortable-why not?
 - a. Don't touch toes of person in front, rather, stay about 12-18 inches behind them and you'll enjoy a 30% energy savings.
 - b. If someone is drafting off of you and they're good, you'll never know, so don't worry about them. If they're touching your toes, and you think you can speed up or zig-zag to pull away then weigh the energy cost before you do it. They may be back soon!
 - c. If you've been drafting and suddenly are riding up on that same person, it's time to go around. Make your way around whatever side best fits the race course and to your advantage.
 - d. Don't let the person you're drafting off of dictate the course...keep checking your course and be responsible for your own line.

21. It's okay to ride over someone's legs if it's really crowded, but try to remain cordial. Send out good Karma and go around, if possible.

Buoys:

22. Stay tight to the buoy by swimming straight for it.
 - a. A simple water-polo move with a breaststroke kick gives your hip-flexor a bit of relief
 - b. OR, a backstroke move for sharper angles works well.
 - c. A good opportunity to lose a drafter by speeding up into turn.

Aerobic checks:

23. Repeating the "I am calm" & "I feel awesome and smooth" mantra, exhaling/inhaling fully and keeping your face down will go a long way in keeping you aerobic.
24. If you feel anaerobic, swim easy backstroke for 12-20 strokes with ears under & face/chin up and repeat calming mantra and slow your breathing down.
25. When calmer, flip back over to resume controlled, aerobic pace.

Finish:

26. Is the energy expended to pass that person 10-yards ahead worth the :04 sec difference? Perhaps not if you've got two more legs of the race ahead, unless cash is on the line☺
27. Shallow water finish? If so, swim to extended arm depth, then begin dolphin diving and switch to easy running, lifting feet out of water. Stay aerobic as you run.

Final thoughts:

28. Remember, it should be fun to control your race as best as possible. Stay long, calm, smooth and relaxed.
29. Good luck!