



Coaching protocol

All sessions should be developed with the ability of participants foremost in mind. Special consideration should be given to the amount of time swimmers have been out of the pool, and thus their fitness levels.

Where possible and practical activities should start and stop mid-pool, in order to prevent crowding at the ends of the pool. Coaches should be aware of the communication problems this may present and adjust accordingly.

Bearing in mind the speed and abilities of swimmers, endeavour to maintain five second gaps between swimmers.

Coaches should consider the constraints and effects of particular strokes when planning sessions, for example that butterfly and breaststroke require more space laterally, and that vision is particularly impacted in backstroke.

Emphasis should be placed on technique development, where there is little need for recovery time and swimmers are not overly exerted. That is to say that swimmers maintain lower heart and breathing rates. Suitable activities include drills and skills, underwater work (streamlining and transition phases) as well as stamina over the longer term.

Swimmers should be allowed to pass each other, but encouraged to do so as quickly as possible. Swimmers should be discouraged from "chatting" while swimming.

When swimming front crawl and passing another swimmer, breathing should take place on the opposite side to the swimmer being passed. Swimmers should be aware of other swimmers around them, and take care as to their position when inhaling and exhaling.

Avoid activities that lead to particular exertion, for example race pace practise, explosive breathing, excessive heart rate intensity.

Avoid activities that move swimmers repeatedly from pool to poolside, so as to minimise contact with steps, handrails, etc. For example, avoid practising starts, due to the need to climb out of the pool, and the contact with equipment that this would involve.