Effortless Swimming Workouts

Welcome to the Effortless Swimming Workouts manual! In this first month of the program you've got 12 rock-solid, no fluff programs which will help you improve your swimming well beyond where you are currently at. I've personally used these workouts to take a Master's swim squad to two back-to-back national titles and swimmers to dozens of open water medals.

If you're only new or you feel you don't have much experience with a training program, don't fret! We've made the workouts useable for nearly all levels of triathletes starting at level one and moving up to level three. If you are learning to swim, please see a qualified instructor to teach you the basics and be sure to swim in a supervised pool with lifeguards. Always consult your doctor before beginning any exercise program. The last thing we want is for anyone to hurt themselves!

Where to start:

The best place to get started is picking one workout and going through it. Most of the programs are aerobic focused for triathlon training, but we also have a number of speed and back end pace workouts in here too. You will benefit from both, even if your swims are 'distance' swims. Pick any workout in the manual and be adventurous, why not start at #3 or #7 rather than #1?

If you would like to improve your freestyle technique before you begin the program the Mastering Freestyle Program makes you a swim smoother, longer and faster freestyle.

What to do if you can't do one of the strokes?

If you're unable to do one of the strokes and the set includes it (like 8x25 Fly), feel free to do freestyle or another stroke instead. It's good cross training changing strokes. If you would like to improve your form strokes (butterfly, backstroke and breaststroke) go to www.EffortlessForm.com and join the program.

Drills:

In some of the workouts we have included time to do drills. We don't specify which drill to do because it is a very individual thing. If you're stuck for ideas on some drills we've listed some below for you to choose from. If you were lucky enough to get the bonus drills video, please watch that video for ideas.

Freestyle

Catch up drill – This drill is simple and easy to do. Begin by swimming normal freestyle but don't start your pull until your recovery arm has entered the water. This drill helps swimmers 'lengthen' their stroke and remain streamlined throughout the whole stroke.

'Reach for the wall' freestyle – This drill is done for the same reason as catch up drill. It improves the streamline of the swimmer during the freestyle stroke. As your hand enters the water and glides forward after the recovery, drive your hand forward as if you were reaching for the wall and hold it streamlined for 1-2 seconds. Continue with normal freestyle but each time your hand enters, drive it forward and hold for a moment before beginning each pull.

Fingertip drill - This drill is good for freestyle because it emphasizes body roll and a high elbow recovery. During the recovery, keep the fingertips in contact with the surface of the water. You should feel your fingertips "dragging" in the water as they recover.

Breaststroke

One pull, two kicks – This is one of the easiest breaststroke drills but one of the most effective. It improves your glide after each stroke which means you're using less effort by taking less strokes. Simply do a normal breaststroke pull and kick and then rather than coming back up for your next pull, do an extra kick while still gliding forward underwater. This drill can be change to one pull three kicks, one pull four kicks and so on.

Breaststroke pull with butterfly kick – To develop a strong pull, breaststroke can be swam by doing buttery/dolphin kicks instead of breaststroke kicks. It's best to do two buttery kicks to every breaststroke pull.

Pull progression – A common problem among beginner breaststrokers is they don't pull far enough back with their arms. They often only do a 'half' pull which is doesn't provide the maximum power. Pull progression is done by swimming one lap with a quarter pull, one lap with half a pull, one with three quarters pull and one lap with a complete pull. All of these are done with normal kicking and timing, the only difference is you are changing how far back you pull. This drill helps swimmers get a feel for the correct catch and pull.

Backstroke

Single arm drill – Just as in butterfly , single arm drill is fantastic for improving the pull and entry of the stroke. Done correctly, single arm drill can help with body rotation too. Keep one arm by your side and swim backstroke with the opposite arm, concentrating hard on rotating so the shoulder on your stationary arm is rotating to 45-90 degrees while completing your pull. To improve your pull, imagine you are throwing a tennis ball towards your feet. This is a great way to visualize where you should be pulling.

Six kicks, three strokes – As we've mentioned, it's important to keep our body 'long' in the water like a yacht and not wide like a barge. This drill helps us do that. Kick on back with your body rotated to one side and your head looking directly up. Keep one arm by your side and have the other arm pointing to where you're going. You're going to do six kicks on your side and then take three arm strokes with normal kicking. You will then have rotated to your opposite side where I want you to repeat from the start. Take six kicks on your side and then three arms strokes with normal kicking working on having a 'long' body position.

Balancing cup drill – This drill is performed by the 200 backstroke world record holder Ryosuke Irie. If you watch him swim, his head remains completely still and centered. You won't see him throwing his head from side to side which is common among beginners. Balancing cup drill requires a plastic cup that can sit and balance on your forehead. Fill the cup up to 1/3 or 1⁄2 full with water, and then place the cup on your forehead and proceed to swim backstroke. The aim is to not let the cup fall off your head. By keeping your head stationary, it keeps the body centered and stops the swimmer from 'snaking'. If you are only starting out with backstroke, this drill is best done with fins.

Butterfly

One arm drill– Being one of the most popular butterfly drills, single arm drill can help you develop a clean hand entry, improve the catch and pull and help you get a feel for the correct timing of the kick. One arm drill is done by keeping one arm out in front of the head and doing the arm stroke with the opposite arm. In the recovery of the arm stroke, instead of keeping the arm straight, bend it as you would in freestyle and work on getting a 'clean' entry as the hand enters the water. It's best to do three left arm strokes, three right arm strokes and then 3 normal butterfly strokes.

Six kicks, two strokes – A strong kick is important in buttery, , and this drill encourages you to work on the kicking aspect. To do this drill, you take two normal butterfly strokes with normal kicking, and then after the two strokes you go underwater in a streamlined/torpedo position and do six dolphin/butterfly kicks. After the six kicks are completed you come back to the surface and perform another two strokes and repeat the process. If you are only starting out, six kicks may be too difficult to do, so begin with 2,3 or 4 kicks instead.

Keyhole drill – This is my personal favorite and for good reason. It helps you work on the pull and the timing of the kick and is a great drill even a beginner can do. To begin, your hands should scull out in front of you where the catch would normally begin. Kick with a light freestyle kick. After 3-4 seconds, pull through the water with both arms as if you were doing a buttery pull through. Your arms should follow the shape of an old-school key hole. At the beginning of the pull,butterfly kick to help you drive through the water and take breath. Bring your hands out in front again by bringing them up the centre of your body. Repeat this until you get to the end of the pool.

Effortless Swimming Workouts

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

There are some terms in the workouts which you might not be familiar with. Here we've listed all the terms and their meaning and provided an example of each one.

Term	Meaning	Example
Build	Build up your speed. Start of easy and get faster towards to the end.	4x100 Build In each 100 you would start off easy and get faster towards the end of the 100.
Build 1-4	Build each one as you go. So the first one is the slowest and the 4th one is the fastest.	4x100 Build 1-4 Your first 100 would be the slowest and your last 100 would be the fastest.
Max / Max Effort / Sprint	As fast as you can go!	2x25 Max Two 25's as fast as you can go
Moderate	Swimming at a comfortable pace	300 moderate Swimming at a comfortable pace for 300 meters
Breathing 3/5 in 50's	This means you breath every 3rd stroke for the first 50 and every 5th stroke for the second 50	300 free breathing 3/5 in 50's Swim 300 meters breathing every 3rd stroke for the odd 50's and every 5th stroke for the even 50's
Drill	Your choice of any drill	8x50 Drill 50's of drill, you can change the drills as you go, they don't need to be the same

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Term	Meaning	Example
(30 sec rest)	Rest for 30 seconds in between	4x100 Free (30 sec rest) Swimming 100's of freestyle and resting for 30 seconds in between each 100 Pick a timeframe for each set and use that rather than counting 30 seconds rest. Example above: If you would come in on 1 minute 20 secs for you 100's, make your time frame 1 minute 50 secs.
@ 95%	Swimming at 95% effort	50 @ 95% Swimming 50 meters at 95% effort
Form	Form means any stroke but freestyle	200 form
Choice	Your choice of any stroke	300 choice Swim 300 meters of any stroke
Min/max free	Normal freestyle but kick as hard as you can and slow down your arms	25min/max free
--Repeat--	Repeat the set listed above	200 free 100 back --Repeat---

Effortless Swimming Workouts

Workout #1 - Technique & Speed

Goal - Whole session is focused on technique and swimming with a controlled stroke.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Warm Up **250 with fins on of:** 150 fr/50 bk/50 kick 6x50 of: Odd - Minimum strokes Even - Minimum breaths 200 easy Main Set **2 sets of:** 50 Build 50 of 25 fast/25 easy 50 Fast 50 recovery 200 easy Cool Down 2x150 with fins of 50 side kick/50 single arm free/50 swim	Warm Up **500 with fins on of:** 2x(150 fr/50 bk/50 kick) 12x50 of: Odd - Minimum strokes Even - Minimum breaths 200 easy Main Set **4 sets of:** 50 Build 50 of 25 fast/25 easy 50 Fast 50 recovery 200 easy Cool Down 4x150 with fins of 50 side kick/50 single arm free/50 swim	Warm Up **1000 with fins on of:** 4x(150 fr/50 bk/50 kick) 12x50 of: Odd - Minimum strokes Even - Minimum breaths 200 easy Main Set **4 sets of:** 50 Build 50 of 25 fast/25 easy 50 Fast 50 recovery 200 easy Cool Down 4x150 with fins of 50 side kick/50 single arm free/50 swim
Total distance: 1.8km **TIme: 30 mins**	**Total distance: 3.1km** **Time: 60 minutes**	**Total distance: 3.6km** **Time: 90 minutes**

Effortless Swimming Workouts

Workout #2 - Aerobic

Goal - Building aerobic base fitness with first two main sets and then bringing in speed in the final main set. It's tempting to go harder than 70% but hold back.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Warm Up 100 swim 100 of 50 drill / 50 swim 100 of 25 kick / 25 swim 100 of 25 scull / 25 swim Main Set 8x100 Free @ 70% effort (15 secs rest inbetween) 100 easy 3x100 of: - 1x Medley @ 80% effort (20 secs rest) - 2x Free @ 70% effort (15 secs rest) 100 easy 4x50 of 1 hard / 1 easy Cool Down 100 recovery	Warm Up 400 swim 300 of 50 drill / 50 swim 100 of 25 kick / 25 swim 100 of 25 scull / 25 swim Main Set 8x100 Free @ 70% effort (15 secs rest inbetween) 100 easy 6x100 of: - 1x Medley @ 80% effort (20 secs rest) - 2x Free @ 70% effort (15 secs rest) 100 easy 8x50 of 1 hard / 1 easy Cool Down 200 recovery	Warm Up 400 swim 300 of 50 drill / 50 swim 200 of 25 kick / 25 swim 100 of 25 scull / 25 swim Main Set 16x100 Free @ 70% effort (15 secs rest inbetween) 200 easy 12x100 of: - 1x Medley @ 80% effort (20 secs rest) - 2x Free @ 70% effort (15 secs rest) 200 easy 10x50 of 1 hard / 1 easy Cool Down 300 recovery
Total distance: 2km **TIme: 30 mins**	**Total distance: 3.1km** **Time: 60 minutes**	**Total distance: 5km** **Time: 90 minutes**

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Workout #3 - Pull

Goal - Building pull strength in first main set, and mixing in some fly and speed at the end

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Warm Up 200 choice 100 of 25 scull/kick/drill/swim Main Set 4x200 Building 1-4 (with Pull buoy) 100 recovery of 50 back / 50 free 3x100 of 25 fly / 75 free 100 recovery 4x50 of 25 fast / 25 easy (with fins) Cool Down 100 swim down	Warm Up 400 choice 200 of 25 scull/kick/drill/swim Main Set 8x200 Building 1-4 (with Pull buoy) 100 recovery of 50 back / 50 free 4x100 of 25 fly / 75 free 100 recovery 8x50 of 25 fast / 25 easy (with fins) Cool Down 100 swim down	Warm Up 600 choice 400 of 25 scull/kick/drill/swim Main Set 12x200 Building 1-4 (with Pull buoy) 300 recovery of 50 back / 50 free 8x100 of 25 fly / 75 free 300 recovery 8x50 of 25 fast / 25 easy (with fins) Cool Down 200 swim down
Total distance: 1.9km **TIme: 30 mins**	**Total distance: 3.3km** **Time: 60 minutes**	**Total distance: 5.4km** **Time: 90 minutes**

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Workout #4 - Test Set

Goal - Main set we are aiming to hold the same time for all 'Best Average' swims. Best Average means the fastest you can maintain. Same as 'Threshold' or 'CSS'.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Warm Up 200 of 150 fr / 50 back (Fins) 4x25 scull 4x25 Kick (build 1-4) 4x25 Build 1-4 100 easy Main Set 20x100 of: 5 @ Best Average 1 Recovery 4 @ Best Average 1 Recovery 3 @ Best Average 1 Recovery 2 @ Best Average 1 Recovery 1 @ Best Average 1 Recovery Cool Down 100 easy swimming with some backstroke	Warm Up 2x200 of 150 fr / 50 back (Fins) 4x25 scull 4x25 Kick (build 1-4) 4x50 Build 1-4 100 easy Main Set 20x100 of: 5 @ Best Average 1 Recovery 4 @ Best Average 1 Recovery 3 @ Best Average 1 Recovery 2 @ Best Average 1 Recovery 1 @ Best Average 1 Recovery Cool Down 100 easy swimming with some backstroke	Warm Up 3x200 of 150 fr / 50 back (Fins) 8x25 scull 4x50 Kick (build 1-4) 4x100 Build 1-4 200 easy Main Set 20x100 with 30 secs rest between 100's of: 5 @ Best Average 1 Recovery 4 @ Best Average 1 Recovery 3 @ Best Average 1 Recovery 2 @ Best Average 1 Recovery 1 @ Best Average 1 Recovery Cool Down 400 easy swimming with some backstroke
Total distance: 2.7km **TIme: 40 minutes**	**Total distance: 3.0km** **Time: 80 minutes**	**Total distance: 4.0km** **Time: 90 minutes**

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Workout #5 - Aerobic and Anaerobic

Goal - Get faster in the 3rd, 6th and 9th 200. Last one should be close to maximum effort. Good chance to practice pacing

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Warm Up 100 choice **3x50 of:** 1x Kick 1x Drill 1x Swim Main Set **9x100 of:** Build 1-3 to 80% Build 4-6 to 85% Build 7-9 to 90% 4x50 Relaxed swimming 3x50 of 25 fly / 25 free 2x50 Drill 1x50 Build Cool Down 150 easy swimming with some backstroke	Warm Up 200 choice **6x50 of:** 2x Kick 2x Drill 2x Swim Main Set **9x200 of:** Build 1-3 to 80% Build 4-6 to 85% Build 7-9 to 90% 4x50 Relaxed swimming 3x50 of 25 fly / 25 free 2x50 Drill 1x50 Build Cool Down 200 easy swimming with some backstroke	Warm Up 500 choice **12x50 of:** 4x Kick 4x Drill 4x Swim Main Set **9x200 of:** Build 1-3 to 80% Build 4-6 to 85% Build 7-9 to 90% **3 sets of:** 4x50 Relaxed swimming 3x50 of 25 fly / 25 free 2x50 Drill 1x50 Build Cool Down 300 easy swimming with some backstroke
Total distance: 1.8km **TIme: 40 minutes**	**Total distance: 3km** **Time: 60 minutes**	**Total distance: 4.7km** **Time: 90 minutes**

Effortless Swimming Workouts

Workout #6 - Recovery

Goal - Rolling through some easy swimming. Focus is on good technique and staying relaxed

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Warm Up 100 choice Main Set **3 sets of:** 2x50 Kick on side 2x50 Pull 2x50 25 fly / 25 free 2x50 Breast or Back 2x50 Build Cool Down 100 easy swimming	Warm Up 200 choice Main Set **4 sets of:** 2x50 Kick on side 2x50 Pull 2x50 25 fly / 25 free 2x50 Breast or Back 2x50 Build Cool Down 200 easy swimming	Warm Up 400 choice Main Set **6 sets of:** 2x50 Kick on side 2x50 Pull 2x50 25 fly / 25 free 2x50 Breast or Back 2x50 Build Cool Down 200 easy swimming
Total distance: 1.7km **TIme: 30 minutes**	**Total distance: 2.4km** **Time: 60 minutes**	**Total distance: 3.6km** **Time: 90 minutes**

Effortless Swimming Workouts

Workout #7 - Aerobic with speed

Goal - Control stroke in 300's and really pick up the pace for the 100. Surprise time trial at the end for Level 3 swimmers!

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Warm Up 200 choice 2x100 IM 4x50 Drill 3x50 Build 1-3 Main Set **2 sets of:** 300 medium pace (70% effort) 10 seconds rest 100 fast (90% effort) Cool Down 150 recovery	Warm Up 400 choice 3x100 IM 4x50 Drill 3x100 Build 1-3 Main Set **4 sets of:** 300 medium pace (70% effort) 10 seconds rest 100 fast (90% effort) Cool Down 100 recovery	Warm Up **2 sets of:** 400 choice 3x100 IM 4x50 Drill 3x100 Build 1-3 Main Set **4 sets of:** 300 medium pace (70% effort) 10 seconds rest 100 fast (90% effort) Cool Down 100 recovery 200 Time Trial Fast 400 swim down
Total distance: 1.7km **TIme: 30 minutes**	**Total distance: 2.9km** **Time: 60 minutes**	**Total distance: 5km** **Time: 90 minutes**

Effortless Swimming Workouts

Workout #8 - Speed

Goal - Short sprints only. Make them all at a very fast pace. Lot's of rest, let's get your speed going.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Warm Up 400 choice Main Set 4x25 Maximum Effort on 45 secs 200 easy 4x25 Fly Max Effort on 45 secs 200 recovery 50 Max Effort Free 200 recovery Cool Down 200 swim down	Warm Up 400 choice Main Set **2 sets of:** 4x25 Maximum Effort on 45 secs 200 easy 4x25 Fly Max Effort on 45 secs 200 recovery 50 Max Effort Free 200 recovery Cool Down 200 swim down	Warm Up 800 choice Main Set **4 sets of:** 4x25 Maximum Effort on 45 secs 200 easy 4x25 Fly Max Effort on 45 secs 200 recovery 50 Max Effort Free 200 recovery Cool Down 200 swim down
Total distance: 1.35km **TIme: 30 minutes**	**Total distance: 2.4km** **Time: 60 minutes**	**Total distance: 4.4km** **Time: 90 minutes**

Effortless Swimming Workouts

Workout #9 - Quality

Goal - Practicing 200 race pace and lactic tolerance. Take your time during the main set with the recovery. It's better to get your times than to have lestsrest

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Warm Up 200 free 4x25 Kick 2x25 Scull 200 drill 50 build Main Set **2 sets of:** 25 fast / 25 easy 3x50 @ 90% effort 100 recovery 50 Max 150 recovery Cool Down 200 swim	Warm Up **2 sets of:** 200 free 4x25 Kick 2x25 Scull 200 drill 50 build Main Set **3 sets of:** 25 fast / 25 easy 3x50 @ 90% effort 100 recovery 50 Max 150 recovery Cool Down 200 swim	Warm Up **3 sets of:** 200 free 4x25 Kick 2x25 Scull 200 drill 50 build Main Set **4 sets of:** 25 fast / 25 easy 3x50 @ 90% effort 100 recovery 50 Max 150 recovery Cool Down 200 swim
Total distance: 1.6km **TIme: 30 minutes**	**Total distance: 2.6km** **Time: 60minutes**	**Total distance: 3.6km** **Time: 90 minutes**

Effortless Swimming Workouts

Workout #10 - IM

Goal - Cross training for open water with medleys. Work the medleys a bit harder than the free.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Warm Up 6x100 of: 2x choice 2x kick/swim 2x drill/swim 1x IM Main Set 100 IM 100 Free 2x100 IM 200 Free 3x100 IM 300 Free Cool Down 100 easy	Warm Up 10x100 of: 3x choice 2x kick/swim 3x drill/swim 2x IM Main Set 100 IM 100 Free 2x100 IM 200 Free 3x100 IM 300 Free Cool Down 200 easy	Warm Up 20x100 of: 6x choice 4x kick/swim 6x drill/swim 4x IM Main Set **2 sets of:** 100 IM 100 Free 2x100 IM 200 Free 3x100 IM 300 Free Cool Down 200 easy
Total distance: 1.9km **TIme: 30 minutes**	**Total distance: 2.4km** **Time: 60 minutes**	**Total distance: 4.4km** **Time: 90 minutes**

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Workout #11 - Lactic tolerance

Goal - Best average means as fast as you can hold for the set without blowing up. So you're holding as quick as you can for each 200 and then you have a final hard 200 at the end.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Warm Up 200 choice 200 of 50 scull/kick/drill/swim 3x100 Build 1-3 200 easy Main Set 6x200 Best average (20 secs rest between 200's) 200 recovery 200 max effort Cool Down 10x50 Fins Alternating back/free	Warm Up 300 choice 200 of 50 scull/kick/drill/swim 3x100 Build 1-3 200 easy Main Set 6x200 Best average (20 secs rest between 200's) 400 recovery 200 max effort Cool Down 18x50 Fins Alternating back/free	Warm Up 500 choice 600 of 50 scull/kick/drill/swim 3x100 Build 1-3 200 easy Main Set 6x200 Best average (20 secs rest between 200's) 400 recovery 200 max effort Cool Down 18x50 Fins Alternating back/free
Total distance: 2.1km **TIme: 30 minutes**	**Total distance: 2.8km** **Time: 60 minutes**	**Total distance: 3.4km** **Time: 90 minutes**

Effortless Swimming Workouts

Workout #12 - Speed and technique

Goal - Short sprints are good practicing race speed. A lot of 25's this session, getting you swimming strong.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Warm Up 200 Easy swim 8x50 Kick/Drill/Swim/Build Main Set 8x25 Fast 4x50 Drill 8x25 Fast Fly 4x50 Stroke count 8x25 Fast 4x50 Backstroke 8x25 Fast Cool Down 200 easy	Warm Up 600 Easy swim 12x50 Kick/Drill/Swim/Build Main Set 8x25 Fast 8x50 Drill 8x25 Fast Fly 8x50 Stroke count 8x25 Fast 8x50 Backstroke 8x25 Fast Cool Down 200 easy	Warm Up 600 Easy swim 12x50 Kick/Drill/Swim/Build Main Set 8x25 Fast 8x50 Drill 8x25 Fast Fly 8x50 Stroke count 8x25 Fast 8x50 Backstroke 8x25 Fast Cool Down 200 easy
Total distance: 2.2km **TIme: 40 minutes**	**Total distance: 3.4km** **Time: 60 minutes**	**Total distance: 3.4km** **Time: 90 minutes**