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.

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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 - Aerobic

Goal - Challenging aerobic set good for improving endurance and speed for longer swims. Push hard in the 50's in main set

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Warm Up 200 swim 8x50 drills Main Set **4 sets of:** 150 Aerobic pace (15 secs rest) 50 Hard (15 secs rest) 100 easy 4x100 Free at 85% (20 secs rest) Cool Down 100 easy swimming	Warm Up 300 swim **2 sets of:** 150 Free 100 IM 12x50 drills Main Set **5 sets of:** 150 Aerobic pace (15 secs rest) 50 Hard (15 secs rest) 200 easy 4x100 Free at 85% (20 secs rest) Cool Down 200 easy swimming	Warm Up 300 swim **3 sets of:** 150 Free 150 of 50 Fly / 50 back / 50 Breast 16x50 drills Main Set **6 sets of:** 150 Aerobic pace (15 secs rest) 50 Hard (15 secs rest) 200 easy 8x100 Free at 85% (20 secs rest) Cool Down 200 easy swimming
Total distance: 2km **TIme: 30 mins**	**Total distance: 3.2km** **Time: 60 minutes**	**Total distance: 4.4km** **Time: 90 minutes**

Effortless Swimming Workouts

Workout #2 - Speed/race practrice

Goal - The 100's in main set are to build up lactate, then the 50's we're working hard and practicing swimming under fatigue

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Warm Up 200 swim 100 drill 4x50 of 15m fast / 35m easy Main Set 100 @ 85% effort 3x50 @ 90% effort 150 recovery 100 @ 90% effort 2x50 @ 95% effort 200 recovery 100 @ 95% effort 50 @ 100 % effort 150 recovery 4x50 Kick 4x50 Drill 4x50 Stroke Count Build 1-6 Cool Down 100 recovery swim down	Warm Up **2 sets of:** 200 swim 100 drill 2x50 of 15m fast / 35m easy Main Set 100 @ 85% effort 3x50 @ 90% effort 150 recovery 100 @ 90% effort 2x50 @ 95% effort 200 recovery 100 @ 95% effort 50 @ 100 % effort 150 recovery 4x50 Kick 4x50 Drill 4x50 Stroke Count Build 1-6 Cool Down 100 recovery swim down	Warm Up **2 sets of:** 200 swim 100 drill 4x50 of 15m fast / 35m easy Main Set 100 @ 85% effort 3x50 @ 90% effort 150 recovery 100 @ 90% effort 2x50 @ 95% effort 200 recovery 100 @ 95% effort 50 @ 100 % effort 150 recovery 4x50 Kick 4x50 Drill 12x50 Stroke Count Build 1-6 Cool Down 200 recovery swim down
Total distance: 2.1km **TIme: 30 mins**	**Total distance: 2.5km** **Time: 60 minutes**	**Total distance: 3.1km** **Time: 90 minutes**

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Workout #3 - Aerobic

Goal - Work hard at the end of the builds in main set and get your times during the set

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Warm Up 200 choice 2x100 Odd - 12 kick / 3 stroke changeover drill Even - 50 Single arm drill / 50 swim 2x100 50 scull / 50 build Main Set 3x100 Build 1-3 50 easy 3x100 Build 1-3 100 easy 50 Max effort Cool Down 300 swim with fins and paddles	Warm Up 3x200 Odd - 150 Free / 50 Back Even - 150 Free / 50 Breast 3x100 Odd - 12 kick / 3 stroke changeover drill Even - 50 Single arm drill / 50 swim 3x100 50 scull / 50 build 100 easy Main Set 3x200 Build 1-3 100 easy 4x100 Build 1-4 100 easy 50 Max effort Cool Down 200 swim with fins and paddles	Warm Up 6x200 Odd - 150 Free / 50 Back Even - 150 Free / 50 Breast 6x100 Odd - 12 kick / 3 stroke changeover drill Even - 50 Single arm drill / 50 swim 6x100 50 scull / 50 build 200 easy Main Set 3x200 Build 1-3 100 easy 6x100 Build 1-3 100 easy 50 Max effort Cool Down 400 swim with fins and paddles
Total distance: 1.6km **TIme: 30 mins**	**Total distance: 2.7km** **Time: 60 minutes**	**Total distance: 4.5km** **Time: 90 minutes**

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Workout #4 - Initial speed

Goal - Tightly focused session on start speed. First 6 strokes at 90% are designed so you don't 'spin the wheels', then next 6 strokes you accelerate and pick up your stroke rate. Good practice for 50's.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Warm Up 100 free 50 back 50 scull 8x50 of: 1. 25 kick / 25 free 2. 25 fast kick / 25 free 3. 25 form stroke / 25 free 4. 25 fast form stroke / 25 free Main Set **6 sets of:** Dive start then 6 strokes at 90% effort, then 6 strokes at 100% effort 6x100 Free with fins and paddles working on stroke length Cool Down 3x100 easy swimming with some backstroke	Warm Up **2 sets of:** 100 free 50 back 50 scull 12x50 of: 1. 25 kick / 25 free 2. 25 fast kick / 25 free 3. 25 form stroke / 25 free 4. 25 fast form stroke / 25 free Main Set **6 sets of:** Dive start then 6 strokes at 90% effort, then 6 strokes at 100% effort 9x100 Free with fins and paddles working on stroke length Cool Down 3x100 easy swimming with some backstroke	Warm Up **4 sets of:** 100 free 50 back 50 scull 16x50 of: 1. 25 kick / 25 free 2. 25 fast kick / 25 free 3. 25 form stroke / 25 free 4. 25 fast form stroke / 25 free Main Set **8 sets of:** Dive start then 6 strokes at 90% effort, then 6 strokes at 100% effort 12x100 Free with fins and paddles working on stroke length Cool Down 3x100 easy swimming with some backstroke
Total distance: 1.8km **TIme: 30 minutes**	**Total distance: 2.5km** **Time: 60 minutes**	**Total distance: 3.5km** **Time: 90 minutes**

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Workout #5 - Monster endurance session

Goal - One of our 'Hell Week' sets. Control heart rate in distance but work very hard in the efforts.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
700 Free 50 Hard 600 Free 50 hard 500 Free 50 hard 400 Free 50 hard 300 Free 50 hard 200 Free 50 hard 100 Free 50 hard ***30 secs rest after freestyles, 15 secs rest after hard efforts**	800 Free 50 hard 700 Free 50 Hard 600 Free 50 hard 500 Free 50 hard 400 Free 50 hard 300 Free 50 hard 200 Free 50 hard 100 Free 50 hard ***30 secs rest after freestyles, 15 secs rest after hard efforts**	1000 Free 50 Hard 900 Free 50 Hard 800 Free 50 hard 700 Free 50 Hard 600 Free 50 hard 500 Free 50 hard 400 Free 50 hard 300 Free 50 hard 200 Free 50 hard 100 Free 50 hard ***30 secs rest after freestyles, 15 secs rest after hard efforts**
Total distance: 3.15km **TIme: 50 minutes**	**Total distance: 4km** **Time: 70 minutes**	**Total distance: 6km** **Time: 100 minutes**

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Workout #6 - Recovery session

Goal - Working on good technique, stroke length and keeping relaxed.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Warm Up 3x200 of 150 free / 50 back with fins and paddles Main Set 4x100 of 50 kick/50 drill 4x50 your choice of drills Cool Down 200 easy swimming	Warm Up 4x200 of 150 free / 50 back with fins and paddles Main Set 4x100 of 50 kick/50 drill 3x100 IM very easy 6x50 your choice of drills Cool Down 200 easy swimming	Warm Up 8x200 of 150 free / 50 back with fins and paddles Main Set 8x100 of 50 kick/50 drill 6x100 IM very easy 12x50 your choice of drills Cool Down 400 easy swimming
Total distance: 1.4km **TIme: 30 minutes**	**Total distance: 2.0km** **Time: 60 minutes**	**Total distance: 4km** **Time: 90 minutes**

Effortless Swimming Workouts

Workout #7 - Speed endurance

Goal - Speed set from 'Hell Week'. Building up lots of lactic acid, by the end of the session you will be hurting!

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Warm Up 200 easy swimming 4x50 of scull/kick/drill/build 2x15m fast 4x50 Build 1-4 100 easy Main Set 6x50 @ 90% effort 100 easy 4x50 @ 90% effort 200 easy 2x50 Dive @ 100 % effort Cool Down 200 Fins and paddles	Warm Up 300 easy swimming 4x50 of scull/kick/drill/build 4x15m fast 4x50 Build 1-4 200 easy Main Set 8x50 @ 90% effort 100 easy 6x50 @ 90% effort 100 easy 4x50 @ 90% effort 200 easy 2x50 Dive @ 100 % effort 300 easy 1x50 Dive @ 100% effort Cool Down 400 Fins and paddles	Warm Up 600 easy swimming 3x4x50 of scull/kick/drill/build 6x15m fast 4x50 Build 1-4 200 easy Main Set 10x50 @ 90% effort 100 easy 8x50 @ 90% effort 100 easy 6x50 @ 90% effort 200 easy 4x50 Dive @ 100 % effort 300 easy 2x50 Dive @ 100% effort Cool Down 400 Fins and paddles
Total distance: 1.8km **TIme: 30 minutes**	**Total distance: 3.0km** **Time: 60 minutes**	**Total distance: 4.2km** **Time: 100 minutes**

Effortless Swimming Workouts

Workout #8 - Technique

Goal - Hold long strokes and good technique in main set. Keep it balanced and controlled.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Warm Up 200 swim 8x50 of scull/kick/drill/build Main Set **2 sets of:** 300 of 200 free / 100 back - With fins and paddles - Build the freestyle 1-5 Cool Down 6x50 Stroke Count with Paddles	Warm Up 200 swim 8x50 of scull/kick/drill/build 50/100/150/200 holding the same stroke count for each lap Main Set **3 sets of:** 300 of 200 free / 100 back - With fins and paddles - Build the freestyle 1-3 Cool Down 10x50 Stroke Count with Paddles	Warm Up 400 swim 16x50 of scull/kick/drill/build 2x 50/100/150/200 holding the same stroke count for each lap Main Set **5 sets of:** 300 of 200 free / 100 back - With fins and paddles - Build the freestyle 1-5 Cool Down 10x50 Stroke Count with Paddles
Total distance: 1.5km **TIme: 60 minutes**	**Total distance: 2.5km** **Time: 60 minutes**	**Total distance: 4.2km** **Time: 90 minutes**

Effortless Swimming Workouts

Workout #9 - Aerobic with quality

Goal - Working both aerobic and anaerobic systems. Build speed in 400's and work hard in the fast 50's. Good set.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Warm Up 200 swim 50 kick 50 drill 4x50 Build 1-4 Main Set 400 free @ 80% 100 easy 3x50 @ 90% effort 150 recovery Cool Down 100 swim	Warm Up 200 swim 100 kick 200 drill 4x50 Build 1-4 Main Set **2 sets of:** 400 free @ 80% / 90% (faster each set) 100 easy 3x50 @ 90% effort 150 recovery Cool Down 200 swim	Warm Up **3 sets of:** 200 swim 100 kick 200 drill 4x50 Build 1-4 Main Set **3 sets of:** 400 free @ 80% / 90% / 100% (faster each set) 100 easy 3x50 @ 90% effort 150 recovery Cool Down 200 swim
Total distance: 1.4km **TIme: 30 minutes**	**Total distance: 2.5km** **Time: 60minutes**	**Total distance: 4.6km** **Time: 90 minutes**

Effortless Swimming Workouts

Workout #10 - Aerobic

Goal - Hold aerobic pace in the freestyle then build to fast in the IM's. Push out the last IM hard.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Warm Up 200 easy swim 4x50 alternating 50 scull 50 kick Main Set 6x100 Free (15 secs rest) 100 easy 4x50 Form stroke 100 recovery Cool Down 100 easy	Warm Up 400 easy swim 8x50 alternating 50 scull 50 kick Main Set 8x100 Free (15 secs rest) 100 easy 4x100 IM Build 1-4 200 recovery Cool Down 100 easy	Warm Up 400 easy swim 8x50 alternating 50 scull 50 kick Main Set **2 sets of:** 8x100 Free (15 secs rest) 100 easy 6x100 IM Build 1-3 200 recovery Cool Down 200 easy
Total distance: 1.5km **TIme: 30 minutes**	**Total distance: 2.4km** **Time: 60 minutes**	**Total distance: 4.4km** **Time: 90 minutes**

Effortless Swimming Workouts

Workout #11 - Back end speed

Goal - Very challenging main set, aiming to hold your times in 50's.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Warm Up 100 swim 100 kick 100 drill Main Set **4 sets of:** 50 of 25 fast / 25 easy 3x50 @ 90% effort 100 recovery Cool Down 100 easy swim	Warm Up **3 sets of:** 100 swim 100 kick 100 drill Main Set **6 sets of:** 50 of 25 fast / 25 easy 3x50 @ 90% effort 100 recovery Cool Down 100 easy swim	Warm Up **4 sets of:** 100 swim 100 kick 100 drill Main Set **8 sets of:** 50 of 25 fast / 25 easy 3x50 @ 90% effort 100 recovery Cool Down 200 easy swim
Total distance: 1.6km **TIme: 30 minutes**	**Total distance: 2.8km** **Time: 60 minutes**	**Total distance: 3.8km** **Time: 90 minutes**

Effortless Swimming Workouts

Workout #12 - Speed with fins

Goal - In the last 50 and 100 in each set, aim to beat your PB time of reach distance. With fins on you should come very close.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Warm Up 100 Easy swim 4x50 Kick/Drill/Swim/Build 4x50 Build 1-4 to 90% 100 easy Main Set **WEAR FINS FOR THIS SET** 4x50 Build 1-4 to max 100 easy 4x100 Build 1-4 to max 200 easy Cool Down 200 easy	Warm Up 3x100 Easy swim 4x50 Kick/Drill/Swim/Build 4x50 Build 1-4 to 90% 100 easy Main Set **WEAR FINS FOR THIS SET** **2 sets of:** 4x50 Build 1-4 to max 100 easy 4x100 Build 1-4 to max 200 easy Cool Down 100 easy	Warm Up 6x100 Easy swim 12x50 Kick/Drill/Swim/Build 4x100 Build 1-4 to 90% 200 easy Main Set **WEAR FINS FOR THIS SET** **3 sets of:** 4x50 Build 1-4 to max 100 easy 4x100 Build 1-4 to max 200 easy Cool Down 300 easy
Total distance: 1.7km **TIme: 30 minutes**	**Total distance: 2.6km** **Time: 60 minutes**	**Total distance: 4.8km** **Time: 90 minutes**