

Swim Serpentine

One-mile pool training plan

If you're planning to train for the Swim Serpentine one-mile event in a 25m pool, you'll need to complete 64 lengths (1,600m) to cover the distance.

There are a variety of training sessions and skills sets for you to try below. If you're new to swimming or looking to improve, it's also a good idea to find out if your local pool holds any adult swimming sessions. These sessions are often welcoming and a great way to progress your technique and fitness quickly, especially if there are swimming coaches on the poolside providing set sessions for you.

A swimming session should consist of a warm up, main set, contrast set and warm down.

WARM UP

Gradually warm up your arms and lungs as you increase your pace over some short distances.

MAIN SET

Typically, a target distance broken down into shorter distances with short recovery times to help you work on your pace. For example, the target may be 1,000m, so a simple session would be to swim 10 x 100m with one-minute rest between each four lengths (in a 25m pool). This way you can swim faster for the duration of the 100m than you would be able to over a straight 1,000m swim.

CONTRAST SET

After a main session, the contrast set throws in some drills with perhaps some kick or stroke work.

WARM DOWN

A reverse of the warm up, reduce your speed and think about technique.

At other times you may go into the pool to complete a long-distance swim – for example, to swim one mile non-stop and time yourself.

You can also try the following sample sets and drill suggestions when training for Swim Serpentine.

Sample Main Sets

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| Big Step Pyramid (1,150m) | Swim 25m, 5 sec rest, swim 50m, 10 sec rest, swim 100m, 15 sec rest, swim 200m, 20 sec rest, swim 400m, 30 sec rest, swim 200m, 20 sec rest, swim 100m, 15 sec rest, swim 50m, 10 sec rest, swim 25m. |
| Build Set (1,475m) | Swim 25m, 5 sec rest, swim 50m, 10 sec rest, swim 100m, 15 sec rest, swim 150m, 20 sec rest, swim 200m, 25 sec rest, swim 250m, 30 sec rest, swim 300m, 35 sec rest, swim 350m, 40 sec rest, swim 400m, 45 sec rest. |
| 5 x 400m (2,000m) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 16 x 25m (5 sec rest at the end of each length), plus 30 sec rest at the end of each set.• 8 x 50m (10 sec rest after each 50m), plus 30 sec rest at the end of each set.• 4 x 100m (15 sec rest after each 100m), plus 30 sec rest at the end of each set.• 2 x 200m (30 sec rest after each 100m), plus 30 sec rest at the end of each set.• 1 x 400m. |
| Sample contrast set | 8 x 50m kick using a kick board, then 8 x 50m as a 25m drill, practicing one part of the swim stroke, then a 25m swim. |

Sample Basic Drills

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| Single Arm Swim | Hold one arm out in front of you and swim using only the other arm. Think about getting a good pull through the water with each stroke. Alternate the arms you use for this drill. |
| Six Arm Switch | Complete six single arm strokes on one side, then six on the other. The aim is the same as above – to get a good pull through the water with each stroke – but use your hips when switching from one arm to the other to create a body roll. |
| Catch up | Make sure one hand is always in the water out in front of you. The 'glide hand' in the water stays there until the 'moving hand' touches the water – then they switch. This is good for lengthening your stroke for long distance swimming. It should be nice and smooth as you always have one hand stretched out in front of you. |
| Chicken Wing | As you swim, touch your right thumb under your right arm pit and left thumb under your left armpit. This helps create a high elbow when swimming. |
| Three-point touch (good for warm up and warm down) | Touch three points on each stroke: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Catch up as above.2. Touch your thigh with your thumb – this should be at the end of your stroke, as low as you can on your leg without twisting your body.3. Under your arm pit. With practice, this should be nice and smooth and a good way to get your stroke feeling better after a hard session. |
| Clenched fist | Keep your fist clenched during the whole stroke. The aim of this drill is to use your forearm while swimming to appreciate the power your hand creates when pulling through the water. Try and keep this slow and think about keeping a high elbow throughout the stroke. |
| Kick on side | Placing your left arm in front of you, swim on your left side, kicking for one length, then change sides. The aim of this drill is to create good balance in the water and get used to rotating onto your side when swimming. |