



Idiots Guide to Pool Speak

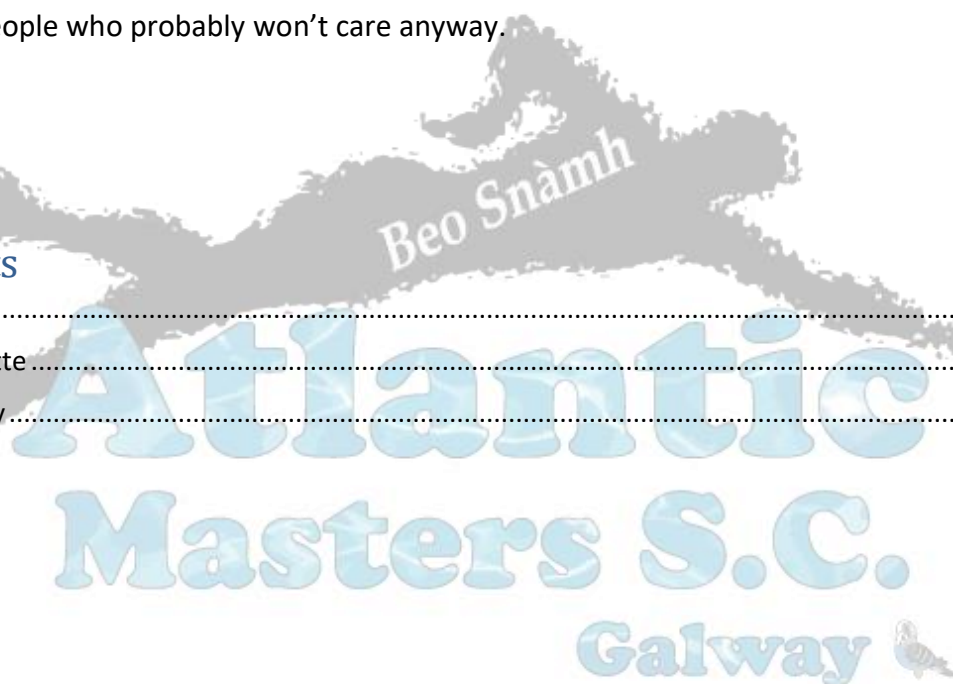
Bridget Wing

The intention of this is to help people like myself who, upon commencing ‘pool sessions’ had absolutely no idea a) what was all that gobbledegook written on the very important white board and, b) what was actually going on for the entire session. Not helped by ear plugs (*see Equipment*).

There are many (many many) more terms of reference and abbreviations in the world of swimming than have been included here. However, this guide should help to see you comfortably understanding your way through most training sessions and the White Board Jargon. It maybe also useful for trips to Gala’s (competitive event of swim races, usually indoors), plus of course showing off your marvellously extensive swim vocab whilst chatting to other people who probably won’t care anyway.

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Equipment

Personal

Ear plugs – use them. Any type that suits you, but not the foam safety ones. Ear plugs are to stop water sloshing into your ear canal and will help prevent water lodging, ear infections and ear pain. You may not be able to hear what the coach is saying and you will shout more than usual.

Nose clips – oooh this creates controversy. Some swimmers find them indispensable against chlorine (and lake) allergies, filled sinuses etc., but it has been reported that they cause problems too. Thus, for now let's say that for temporary use and to be able to actually not drown whilst being a beginner using a snorkel, a nose clip can be beneficial.

Water bottle – ideally this should be of the quick-drink sports top variety as during sessions you'll be lucky to get time to grab a quick slug

Pull buoy

Solid foam figure of eight shaped thing that you hold between your thighs. Used for arm stroke only swimming with no kicking = pull

Kick board

Flat, rectangle foam thing that you hold, arms outstretched, for kick-only drills. These are not a required piece of kit for AM pool training.

Straight from the coach himself:-

Paddles - the specific ones I want ye to have are the STROKEMAKER brand, available only from www.swimkit.ie

Paddles are beneficial because, being larger than the hand, they propel a larger water surface area, hence building up pulling and shoulder strength, resulting in a longer, stronger pull. So guys, with the smaller hand size ones, they're not as beneficial, I'm afraid.

If ye already have the grey Power Paddles, they are ok

L3 guys ye need the Red size 3 paddles, L2 the Blue size 2. (Lane 1 swimmers do not need paddles yet – when ye do get them, coach will help with the tying *but make sure he does it properly ;)*

Note that paddles can take a bit of time to get used to.



Don't string them like I've done (until ye are totally comfy with them) but secure the wrist and maybe a bit looser than mine.

Stars optional.

Fins - avoid the heavy Speedo black and red ones if ye've got any knee issues as they're very heavy.

Best fins are zoggs, finis or arena.

Make sure they fit properly

Snorkels are standard and both they and fins could be got in the good sports shops around town, I think.

Note from author – pool training snorkels sit to the front of your face clipped onto a band around your head.

Pool Etiquette

- Always swim with the directional arrows FOR THE LANE YOU ARE IN. Observe the signs at the end of the lanes as they differ from lane to lane, and pool to pool. *Note - if one lane is going in a clockwise direction, then the adjacent lane should go anti-clockwise*
- Allow a 5 second gap between you and the person ahead of you at the start of each repetition of exercises, unless coach tells you otherwise (if high numbers of swimmers in the lane, then the gap will be 3 seconds).
- Do not repeatedly (however accidentally it may be) tap the toes of the person in front unless you want them to let you pass, in which case a few polite taps will do. Being constantly tapped is stressful and unnerving when you are already going as fast as you can!
- If you are training in a lane with a faster swimmer, pause at the end of the lane to let them pass ahead when they come up behind you.
- Stand well into the corner at the end of the lane when you need a rest, or when you've completed a rep and are waiting for the interval to commence the next rep. (*see definition of Interval*).
- Do not hop into the swim lane to flimflam up and down if you want anyone to like you, or if you are trying to make swim friends.
- No peeing in the pool

Terminology

Arm extension – one arm held out straight ahead of the body (think superman), fingers pointed, shoulder by your ear. When swimming on your side, this is lower arm

Arm by side – arm held straight flat against the side of the body, hand to outside of leg

Bilateral breathing – breathing to both sides alternately. Usually every 3rd stroke

BS – back stroke

BRS – breast stroke

Catch – catching hold of and feeling the water as the first part of FC swim stroke (and after initial scull) after your hand enters the water

Catch Up – FC stroke but instead of bilateral movement, the leading arm pauses outstretched in front of you as the other arm follows over out of recovery phase and the hands briefly meet alongside each other before the leading arm continues a full stroke ...and repeat

DPS – distance per stroke = efficient long stretched stroke

Drills – different swimming exercises (i.e. catch up, finger trail, scull...) repeated many, many times

EZ – Easy slow pace

Fly – butterfly stroke. Both arms rotating forwards like a cross between 2 windmills and a breast stroke, whilst the legs do a fly kick. To an untrained swimmer, this is mind blowing

Fly kick – the kick used in butterfly stroke = dolphin kicking. For front swimming, keep feet together, toes pointing, knees bent on the up kick with power from the hips, then legs straightening on the down kick. Kicking is from the hips.

FC – front crawl

F'Trail – during recovery phase of front crawl (from the hand exiting the water by your side), the finger tips are dragged along the surface of the water past your shoulder (after the 'high elbow') until re-entering the water

FS – Free style (usually front crawl). 'FS kick' is kicking as you would in normal front crawl

High Elbow – during front crawl, the elbow of the arm coming out of the water is pointing high up to the ceiling before reaching forward

Interval sets – repeated sets of swims within a training session.

For example:- swimming 175metres in 3 ½ minutes including a short rest, then repeating that 5 times, is an interval set. The interval itself is 3mins 30 seconds and would be written on the board (and shouted out by the coach) as:-

5x175 @3.30

Long course – 50m pool (the language of competition)

Pull – the phase of the front crawl stroke when your leading arm is pulling back towards your body as you propel forward (you are literally pulling the water after catching it) **OR** the drill of swimming front crawl with the pull buoy and not kicking

Reps – the number of times you repeat each drill or interval with a set

R – rest or rest interval. Part of white board jargon. I.e. R30 is 30 seconds rest between reps or sets.

Note for beginnerson interval sets, the fitter and faster you are, the longer your rest phase.... So if you're at the end of the line....the very best of luck to you (but it will make you get fitter).

See Numbers on the White board for an example

SC – stroke count. The number of strokes per length: FC & BC, 2 arm pulls = 1 stroke cycle and BRS & fly 1 pull = 1 stroke cycle. Coach may sometimes refer to this as **DPS** (distance per stroke)

Scull/F'Scull – front scull. Lying in front swim position, arms are stretched out in front of you, shoulder width apart. Propelling forward with FS kick (fins help here) hands are held loose and 'waft' left and right and in an up and down figure of eight. Hands are slightly lower than elbows which are slightly lower than shoulders. Movement width should be about head to shoulders. This enables you to get a feel for the water through your fingertips, palms and hands and prepares for the 'Catch'

Short course -25m pool (refer to Long course)

Smooth – good technique, relaxed, not fatigued or tired. Swimming at about warm-up pace (or the pace you'd swim the first 100m of a 2k swim). This usually precedes a more testing part of a set.

Soft kick – keep the kick gentle, shallow, controlled, not forced but continuous. In freestyle swimming, the kick is not a major contributor to moving forward and even less so in open water (salt) and especially in a wetsuit.

SR – stroke rate = number of strokes per minute

Streamline Body Position – good body position. Long, narrow, flat

SD/Swim Down - EZ few lengths, as a cool down. Useful to do some BS here to loosen shoulders after repetitive sets of FC

Warm Up - slow easy lengths before training session in order to warm up muscles and lung function. Also prevents utter wipe-out when everyone pelts off on the first set

Numbers on The White Board (assuming a 25m pool) examples:-

5x175 @ 3.30 R30 = swim 7 lengths (25m pool) on an interval of 3m30seconds SOOO if you swim the 175m in 3m20seconds you get 10 seconds rest before the next rep of 175m. On completion of the 5th rep you get an additional 30seconds rest.

2x150, 2x125, 2x150 = swim 6 lengths twice, then 5 lengths twice, then 6 lengths twice. The reasoning of such a set is to enable swimmers to build up to the full 6x150 if the interval is quite tight. Also if there are swimmers in the lane that do the 6x150 it will be written on the board as:

L2 6x150 @ 2.40, Bridget do 125's on #3&4 *meaning Lane 2 swimmers swim 6 x 150m within 2min 40 and Bridget swims 125m on reps 3 & 4*

5x4x25 R10 followed by a list of 4 drills = do 1 length of each of the 4 drills then rest for 10 seconds. Repeat same procedure 5 times. There is normally no interval on drill sets, so no matter how long it takes you to swim the 25m, you still rest for 10 seconds (= much happiness).