

The Cool-Down

The cool-down in swimming sessions is as important as the warm-up. Games and activities may replace the more traditional cool-down routines, so long as they achieve the required effect. Abruptly stopping an activity may cause pooling of the blood and slow the removal of waste products in the athlete's body. It may also cause cramps, soreness and other problems for athletes. The cool-down gradually reduces the body temperature and heart rate and speeds the recovery process before the next training session or competitive experience. The cool-down is also a good time for the coach and athlete to talk about the session or competition.

Activity	Purpose	Time (minimum)
Slow aerobic swim or activity	Lowers body temperature Gradually reduces heart rate	5 mins
Light stretching	Removes waste from muscles	5 mins

Source - http://www.specialolympics.org/Special+Olympics+Public+Website/English/Coach/Coaching_Guides/Aquatics/Teaching+Aquatics+Skills/The+Cool-Down.htm

'Tapering' for swim competitions

'Tapering' is all about reducing your training workload and resting in the lead up to your main competitions to ensure that you're in the best possible shape to go for gold!

Tapering = less exercise. Less exercise = more free time on your hands. Sometimes pre-race anxiety hits you in your new found free time. Use your time to mentally prepare for the race. Think about the positives (how much fun you will have, how great it will be to finish) but also take time to plan for unexpected problems. Have plans in place so that you don't have to think about any problems, you just react. For example, Plan to take two sets of goggles, trunks, hats etc to competitions, practice dives, turns, touches etc
Get lots of sleep. Stay relaxed and happy!!

The review below is particularly applicable for swimmers training up to twelve swim sessions a week covering between 60-90 kilometres. The principles, however, are useful for Northern Wavers.

This is a review of the physiological factors associated with tapering in swimming.

- An incremental, stepwise reduction in training volume (>60%) over a period from 10 to 21 days results in an improvement in performance. This contrasts to a minor reduction (<30%) in training volume that appears to maintain performance.
- Weekly training frequency should be reduced by no more than 50 percent, although it is more conservatively suggested as being 20 percent (a substantial reduction results in loss of "feel" for the water and specific movements). It appears that rapid reductions in training frequency reduce performance rather than improve it.
- Summary: a successful taper involves a substantial (60-90%) graded reduction in training volume and daily high-intensity interval work over a 7 to 21 day period. Training frequency should not be reduced by more than 50 percent although a more conservative reduction would be 20 percent.