

Swimmers:

Looks like summer is arriving, swim teams are braving the cold, and triathlons are in full swing. Life is good!

Every month I try to bring you a mix of current information, news, technique related advice and generally things to make you swim better. The focus this month will be a more advanced look at 'the catch'. The catch is your ability to connect with as much water with your arms/hands as you can in front of you.

Coaches are referring to anything directly related to 'the catch' as FRONT QUADRANT SWIMMING.

Richard Quick (6 time Olympic coach) tells us that you go faster when you CATCH an armful of water than when you grab a handful of water.... Think about this. There are many ways to develop a strong catch.

Your catch is also DIRECTLY related to the distance you are swimming. Sprinters ride high and tend to exit the water at or above the hip in order to get back on the front where they can grab another ARMFUL of water. Distance swimmers (all triathletes) develop a solid catch, but also do not release the grip until they have crossed the hip and into the thigh area in the rear of the stroke - this would be the final HANDFUL of water in the stroke. The distance swimmer will ride lower in the water for this and many other reasons.

I have worked with each of you in different ways, depending on your needs and ability. The following will be points of focus for this month - all leading to improving your 'catch' and making you a faster/stronger swimmer:

*** finger paddles - these little devices increase your tactile sense of the water as they are small, but will feel best when you put your hand in a downward pitch facilitating a meaningful catch

*** SWIMMITS or fistgloves - these are little fingerless gloves that I am redeveloping and refining with the help of a local company (Designs by PSG) to force you to engage your forearm as a paddle by taking your hands away (hiding them in your SWIMMITS). This is very effective and I am getting better every day along with you!!!

***soft elbow - do not stiff arm the water. After you have a long extended hand in a downward pitch, allow your elbow to break/bend slightly so that it can be more powerful and get under your outside body line. This is one of the things I see over and over that swimmers do not do well. Elite swimmers do it very well. Go back and look for it in some of our videos.... Pretty cool. Make it a focal point this month !!

*** catch up drill - ;nuff said. Works every time to initiate patient hands and a strong follow through from the core

*** one stroke freestyle - this is fun. See how few strokes you can do to swim one length. Take one stroke and position the catch arm perfectly - only then take one more stroke..and so on.. Fun drill. I do it everyday!

I would like to wish all my youngsters well this Sunday at the Doylestown Kid's TRI. They show how many each school has entered....means nothing to me! I know how many O2 SWIMMERS will be there kicking butt - now that means something to me. See you all there. The weekend looks to be beautiful!

The first ever STEELMAN OPEN WATER SWIM on 12 July 2009 has many entries from O2 SWIMMING as well and I am proud of each of you for entering a great event. We hope this local swim race will continue for years to come. I am only surprised that we did not get an O2 SWIMMING relay team together yet.....hint...hint...hiint.... !!!! See you all at Lake Nockamixon.

In our never ending series of video clips, please enjoy the following instructive video which demonstrates both extending your arm in catch up position as you breath and NOT doing it. You will readily notice that the less advanced swimmer uses much more effort as he is constantly recovering from his poor form upon breathing. The better swimmers look like they can go all day..... They can. I like this clip also because it has world record holder from Australia, Grant Hackett in it. Enjoy....

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3LqqNO3WYZ0&NR=1>

SwimStrong. SwimSilent.

Ps. Please call to schedule soon, as summer fills up quickly and I have a little vacation planned as well as some time off for my own lifesaving/CPR/First Aid, etc... I am still getting a good number of you in for general training on your own on the weekends - the pool is always available if I am home for only a \$20 fee for as long as you can swim! Now that is a challenge, eh?

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