

# OPEN WATER SKILLS 1

# SWIMMING STRAIGHT & SIGHTING

## OBJECTIVES:

- To make swimmers swim straight
- To save time and energy in a race
- To give YOU the confidence to set your own swim-path and not rely on following the person in front of you

## WHAT TO FOCUS ON:

At your next triathlon, watch a swim start before yours and see how many swimmers go off in crazy directions. This is throughout the entire swim course and is worse as people get tired. Why swim 1600m when your race is 1500m?

Having the confidence in your stroke to know you swim straight is an advantage and being comfortable at sighting during the swim means you can stay on a racing line.

## WHAT TO DO:

- 10min easy swim warm up
- Do a straight-line test: Choose a point in the distance e.g. a tree, or a buoy and swim for about 30m towards that point breathing as normal BUT WITH YOUR EYES CLOSED (avoid lots of people doing this at once – work in a small group with some looking out for others as they swim).

After 30m stop, look up and see if you are on target for your chosen destination.

If you aren't then you need to work on either balancing your stroke and/or sighting to make sure you stay on track.

- Swimming normally between buoys, lift your head and sight every 12 strokes. Try and minimise how much you lift your head. Ideally, keep your mouth below water (and even your nose), so that it is just your eyes lifting up and looking ahead to sight.

Breathe out into the water as your head looks forward and you sight, then rotate your head to breathe and continue your stroke as normal.

## TIP:

A good drill is to swim 'water polo'. Here you swim with your eyes out of the water looking forward and rotate your head to breathe. When you lift your head like this, your legs will automatically drop lower in the water (more drag), so shorten your stroke a bit and increase your stroke rate to stop your legs dropping too much.

Swim like this for 3 strokes then back to normal for 12 strokes. Repeat.