

OPEN WATER
SWIMATHON



500m 5-Week Training Plan



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Swimmer^{OUTDOOR}

About Outdoor Swimmer

Outdoor Swimmer is the monthly magazine for people who love swimming outdoors. It is produced by swimmers for swimmers. Enjoy inspiring stories from the world of outdoor swimming; discover wild swimming locations and destinations; become a better swimmer with our training, technique and safety advice; and make sure you've got the right kit with trusted gear and kit reviews.

Find out more: www.outdoorswimmer.com



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Simon is the founder and publisher of Outdoor Swimmer magazine. A lifelong swimmer, he enjoys and participates in all forms of outdoor swimming from open water racing to wild and winter swimming. Meet the Outdoor Swimmer team: <https://outdoorswimmer.com/about>

Welcome to your Open Water Swimathon 2021 training plan!

Congratulations on signing up to the 500m challenge at Open Water Swimathon! As you've signed up for the shortest distance, we're assuming you are new to outdoor swimming, and have not done a lot of pool swimming recently either. This training plan is therefore designed to take you from zero to 500m in 5 weeks.

The key purpose of this training plan is to ensure you are confident you can cover 500m in open water. Remember, unlike a pool, there is no wall to grab hold of to rest. You need to be able to swim continuously, although always remember that if you do get tired in open water and you're wearing a wetsuit, you can roll onto your back, float and rest. The wetsuit will keep you afloat.

Do these practice sessions using whatever stroke you're going to use in the event. If you're planning to use a mixture of front crawl and breaststroke, then practise both. Front crawl is faster but harder to see where you're going. If you're not proficient, it can be more tiring too. Breaststroke is slower but it's easier to swim straight and stay relaxed. Most swimming wetsuits are designed for front crawl. You can swim breaststroke in one, but it will lift your legs, which can be uncomfortable and take some getting used to. This one of several reasons why it's important to get some outdoor swimming experience before your 500m challenge.

Before you start, make sure you've got all the kit you need. Initially, for the pool, that will just be a costume and, optionally but recommended, a pair of goggles and a swimming cap. Open Water Swimathon is a wetsuit compulsory event, so you will need to buy, hire or borrow one of those for your swim. You should get this in time to do at least two or three practice swims, to check sizing and fitting.

Try to practice at least twice per week and before starting this programme, do the following quick swim test in a pool to gauge your current level.

Test session (in a pool)

Purpose: assess your current swimming level.

Task: Try to swim as far as you can in 10 minutes. Use whatever stroke you like and take as much rest as you need between lengths.

For the rest of this first session in the pool, swim as you like. Experiment with front crawl and breaststroke to see if you have a preference for one over the other. Practice lying on your back in the water and sculling gently, to reassure yourself you can stay afloat and rest if you get tired. Try treading water – a useful skill for open water.

After the swim, assess your level of swimming as follows:

Beginner: you got out of breath after one or two lengths and had to take frequent rests.

Basic: you didn't get too out of breath, but felt the need to stop a couple of times to rest, or you made the full 10-minutes but it was a major effort.

Competent: you swam continuously for 10 minutes (even if you changed strokes) and were not tired at the end. If this is you, swimming 500m in open water shouldn't present any difficulties, provided you get used to swimming in that environment. Consider following a plan for one of the longer swims (even if you're just doing 500m) and make sure you do a couple of open water swims before event day.

In order to swim 500m in open water, you need to be able to swim continuously without getting out of breath. If you get out of breath quickly while swimming, it's usually because you're either trying to swim too fast or you have poor swimming technique and habits rather than a lack of fitness. If this is happening to you, you may need the assistance of a coach or swimming teacher as some simple changes to the way you swim could make a huge difference. Some of the tips in the training plan below should also help.

5-week training plan

Repeat each session twice per week. We highly recommend you do the sessions from week 5 at a safe, supervised open water venue. If you can't, do the sessions in a pool, but do try to swim at least once in open water, in your wetsuit, before your event. You should do these sessions using the stroke you're planning to use for your swim. It's OK to do a mixture of strokes, so if that's your plan, practice for that.

Week 1

Beginner

Aim	Swim 500m
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Divide 500m by the length of your pool. If your pool is 25m, 500m will be 20 lengths.• Swim the right number of lengths one at a time, with as much rest between each length as you need.• Try not to get out of breath by slowing down, relaxing and breathing out when your face is in the water.

Basic

Aim	Swim 500m +
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Divide 500m by the length of your pool. If your pool is 25m, 500m will be 20 lengths.• Swim 5 sets of 100m (4 lengths in a 25m pool) at a steady pace. Take 30 seconds rest after each 100m. Try not to get out of breath by slowing down, relaxing and breathing out when your face is in the water.• If you are up to it, add an extra 2 or 3 x 100m at the end.

Let's Get Started!



Week 2

Beginner

Aim	Reduce rest
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Repeat last week's session, but do two lengths each time before resting.Feel free to add an extra 100 or 200m to the end if you're not too tired.

Basic

Aim	Reduce rest
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Swim 3 sets of 200m. Take 30s rest after each 200m (total distance 600m).Feel free to add an extra 100 or 200m to the end if you're not too tired.

Week 3

Beginner

Aim	Swim 300m non-stop
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Swim 300m without stopping. Don't take any rest on the turns. After 300m, rest as long as you like, and then repeat.As usual, if you're feeling strong, add a few more lengths at the end.

Basic

Aim	Swim 500m non-stop
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Firstly, swim 100m at a slow speed to warm up. Rest 30s and then swim 500m non-stop. Rest 30s, then swim another 100 or 200m slowly.

Challenge Yourself

Don't Forget to Fundraise

Week 4

Beginner

Aim	Swim 500m non-stop
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Firstly, swim 100m at a slow speed to warm up. Rest as long as you need and then swim 500m non-stop. Switch strokes if necessary but do not stop.

Basic

Aim	Swim 750m non-stop
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Try to swim 750m without stopping. Go slowly and change strokes as needed. If you can do more than your open water distance, this will be a big confidence booster.

Week 5

Beginner

Aim	Get some open water experience
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Go to a lifeguarded venue and do whatever you can. You may need to do an induction. Try out your wetsuit, practice floating on your back, see what it feels like to swim in a wetsuit. If you're planning on swimming front crawl, have a go at sighting.Don't worry about how far you swim on your first visit but if you go again, try to swim at least 250m.

Basic

Aim	Get some open water experience
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Go to a lifeguarded venue and do whatever you can. You may need to do an induction. Try out your wetsuit, practice floating on your back, see what it feels like to swim in a wetsuit. If you're planning on swimming front crawl, have a go at sighting.Don't worry about how far you swim on your first visit but if you go again, try to swim the full 500m. Go slow.

Let's Increase the Speed

Don't Forget to Fundraise



**Good Luck
& Enjoy It!**