



## TOP TIPS FOR THE OPEN WATER

So, you've practiced your skills and now you're ready to conquer the open water environment. Here are some tips to help you feel at ease.

### **Don't go alone!**

The more the merrier certainly applies for open water training. Joining a beginner's open water course is a great way to meet new friends and be amongst people in a similar situation to you. From a safety perspective, it is never a good idea to swim outdoors alone plus it's much more fun with other fellow swimmers!

### **Cold showers and acclimatization!**

Cold water is a definitely something to consider in UK open water swimming and something that can be tricky for anyone new to open water swimming. Acclimatization is when you allow your body time to cool, adjust to the water's temperature and avoid the

negative effects of cold water shock. Every time you swim in an open water environment set aside time to acclimatize, allowing your body and even your mind to adjust to the open water and the effects of the colder water. Start by splashing your hands and face with the water, then ease yourself into the water gently. Once in the water, pull the front of your wetsuit forward to allow the water to enter and so to allow your body to cool down and to adjust to this new environment. This can take anywhere between 5 and 15 minutes, so make sure you set aside enough time for this before a race or swim.

### **Equipment**

Having the right equipment can boost your confidence and dramatically increase your comfort and performance. Either hiring or buy a wetsuit before your first open water swim, trying it out in a pool first will

give you time to adjust to the slight restriction to the neck and chest.

### **Open water anxiety**

Is it normal for everyone to feel nervous or anxious in open water, and even top competitive swimmers can experience open water anxiety. Here are some tips to help with those open water wobbles:

**Practice** – Replicate the conditions of your open water race. If your swim is in the ocean, then do as much training in the ocean as possible.

**Meditate** – A pre-race meditation / mental walk through can work wonders on calming pre-race nerves.

**Positive mind set** – Focus on the simple enjoyment of being able to swim in nature, always go back to basics and remember why you chose to swim your 400m open water event.