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ASK *the* EXPERTS

Something different this issue:

We asked three experts the same question, and got three different answers. If you have a question send it to experts@h2openmagazine.com or post it on our Facebook page.

Swimming in a lake, even if it is the same lap after lap, keeps me entertained. I watch the fish and birds and just take in the scenery. What I struggle with are the longer pool sessions. After about a mile I am bored to tears! How do people switch off and just keep going in the pool or on massive swims like the Channel?

Shaun Bater, by email



Adam Walker says

I always find training much easier if you have a goal in place, whether that is a mile or a channel swim. Once it's booked you have the incentive to train.

Long distance pool training is still difficult but there are things you can do. For example, for part of the set I might just think about my stroke count per length. Other times I'm thinking about my head position, keeping my elbow high, my hand entry or some other focus on technique.

I will break a long swim into blocks of shorter swims. For example, I might break an 8km swim into blocks of 200m. I will

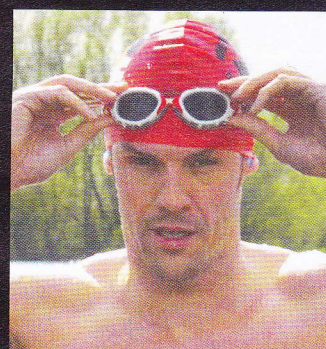
check my time after each 200m, and try to complete each at my target pace. If I complete the 200m faster than expected, I push off straight away and see how much time I can make up over the 8km. This brings out my competitive nature and pushes me against the clock with a target I've set myself. It's also an indication how fit I am before a big channel swim.

In a sea swim I will be thinking about my stroke technique and rhythm and staying relaxed, and also about the end goal and the feeling of finishing and achievement. I will also try to incentivise myself with the promise of a reward for a successful completion such as a takeaway meal or a movie.



Colin Hill says

The obvious answer for some people is an MP3 player to get you through long swims, but for me it is about looking at 'boring long pool swims' as 'challenging mental training sessions'. You have to start goal setting and sticking to whatever task you set yourself, always with your bigger goal in mind. Long distance swimming is as much (some would say more)



ADAM WALKER

Adam Walker has been teaching and coaching swimmers of all abilities for 17 years. He has completed five out of the Oceans Seven swims and was the first British person to complete a two-way Gibraltar Strait crossing. He is the founder of Ocean Walker Swim Camps (oceanwalkeruk.com)

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