



SWIMATHON |



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Team GB Olympic Coach

Jolyon Finck's Triple 5k tips



Swimming three 5k Swimathon Challenges across the Swimathon event period would be a fantastic achievement for anyone, and it is amazing that people are looking to challenge themselves in a way that is both great for physical and mental health, and raises extra funds to support the most worthy causes.

Below are some tips and ideas to help those people who are looking to complete the Swimathon Triple 5k. I am taking to assume that most people attempting this great challenge will look to complete one 5k on Friday, Saturday and Sunday across the event period, though the ideas can still be applied to people completing two events on the same day.

Preparation

The Swimathon 5k training plans are a good resource for planning the way you might get yourself physically ready for the Triple 5k. As you prepare for the event, you might want to consider increasing your training load so as to match the physicality of swimming 15k across a weekend. Everyone's training capacity will be different, and you should make a judgement call as to what you feel capable of. However, systematically adding an extra swimming session each week (or every second week as per individual capacity) might help get you through the last few laps of the third 5k.

Hydration

Being well hydrated before beginning the Triple 5k Challenge, and topping up your hydration levels during each swim, and between swims will offer a significant performance advantage. Many people don't recognise that your body will still produce sweat while you are swimming (harder to tell as you are already surrounded by water) and this can lead to dehydration, which has a fatiguing effect. Consider using a combination of water and electrolyte drinks to maximise your hydration, and as a rough guide, try to consume 1 litre of fluid per hour of exercise. Be aware of the dehydrating effects of high volume caffeine and alcohol intake.

Fuelling and Nutrition

You may have heard about athletes "carbo-loading" before competing in endurance events such as marathon running or channel crossing swims. This is a process of gradually increasing the amount of carbohydrate rich foods (such as pasta, bread, rice etc) in an athletes diet in the days prior to performance so as to offer the athlete a greater store of glycogen (a simply stored body fuel) which can be useful for maintaining energy levels over a prolonged period of exercise. If you think this might be useful for your Triple 5k Challenge, then you should try implementing this through your training and preparation period. There are volumes of good resources available online in this area, including details for people with food allergies or preferences.

To get the best out of yourself across the Triple 5k Challenge, consider having a carbohydrate based meal and snack prior to each 5km swim, and a protein based snack and meal after each 5km swim. This will help to respectively fuel and repair bodies and muscles for the rigours of three big swims in three days.

Physical Recovery

Maintaining flexibility and muscle length will be imperative to being able to swim 5k again and again across the Triple 5k Challenge period. Dedicate 30min after each 5km swim to stretch the muscles that were worked in each swim. Again, there a number of great online references available in this area. If you have the resources, a sports massage may help you to recover faster and feel better from swim to swim.

Good Luck & Enjoy It!

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