

WE TRAIN HEROES



Swim Training Plan:
5 km Beginner –
12 Week Plan

In partnership with

running
withus 

COACHING &
CONSULTANCY
runningwithus.com

MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT
RIGHT THERE WITH YOU

Introduction

This training plan, put together by our coaching partners Running With Us, is designed to get you to the start line of the swim feeling prepared and confident that you can achieve your goal.

1 Is this the right plan for me?

This 12 week beginners swim plan is designed for those who are new to swimming. This plan will see you training 4-5 times a week and we would encourage you to complement the swimming with core conditioning and cross training as outlined in our Swimming Guide.

5 What do all the terms mean?

All the training schedules involve a broad variety of training sessions and intensities. We have a full glossary of different terms you will see in this guide, such as 'threshold' and 'progression'.

2 What if I'm not there yet

Really focus on holding back your effort on your easy training sessions – many beginners try to train a little too hard. You can always mix the sessions in the plan with cross training.

6 What if I miss a session, pick up a niggle or get sick?

No training plan is designed to be a tablet of stone; it's a guide and only one approach to get you in great shape. Training for a swim is a journey, though, and doesn't always go smoothly. Feel free to chop and change the plan and shift swims to different days that may work better for you. Take care not to train back-to-back 'hard' days – so try to avoid doing a threshold session followed the next day by another hard session, for example.

3 Why train in this way?

If you keep doing the same things over and over again you can't expect different results. This plan is designed to add variety, structure and progression to your training. It will challenge you across a range of different heart rate zones and gradually build up your ability to swim at your desired 5 km pace.

If you miss days through work, holiday, sickness or injury, don't try to play catch-up. Step back into the plan where you left off, and be patient. If you feel you need to catch up, check out our cross-training tips in the Swimming Guide ... don't just add more sessions unless you are ready.

4 Is this everything I need to know?

No – this plan is supported by our Swimming Guide, which gives more detail on the structure of the swim sessions and top tips on nutrition and recovery to leave you fitter, stronger and more energised as you progress through your training journey.



Notes

It is assumed most of your training will be undertaken in a swimming pool but if open water swimming is available this will be a useful additional training stimulus to add in to the plan. There are various swimming training aids you can use to make indoor swimming more challenging such as floats and pullbuoys, fins and paddles.



GLOSSARY

Here you will find a glossary of the terms used in our training plans.

Rest (R)

To help your body cope with the workload, rest is going to be as important a part of your training schedule as the swimming itself. Listen to your body and take heed of any warning signs. If you feel fatigued even before you've stepped in the pool, find yourself thinking up excuses not to train or start suffering a series of minor injuries; you probably need more time off. Taking enough rest allows physical and mental recovery and gives your body the time to adapt to your workload.

Recovery Sessions (RS)

To see improvement without breaking down, you'll need some recovery sessions. These should be nice and easy and you should feel relaxed. You should be breathing easily and be capable of holding a conversation throughout the swim. This will mean that you are training in the 60–70% range of your Maximum Heart Rate (MHR). It also helps with the removal of the waste products which accumulate in your muscles after harder efforts.

Freestyle Sessions (FS)

Freestyle swim sessions use the front crawl stroke. This is considered the fastest, most competitive of swimming strokes and these sessions are designed to focus on developing and improving technique for competition.

Threshold Sessions (THR)

Threshold sessions are probably your most valuable workouts. They are completed at a controlled brisk effort, about 80–85% of your MHR, you'll only be capable of uttering a couple of words to your training partners. Tempo/threshold swim sessions. improve your lactate threshold (the speed above which your body struggles to cope with the lactic acid created by burning energy without oxygen), your economy and aerobic capacity.

Interval Training (IT)

Intervals help to boost specific race pace speed and involve swimming timed efforts with a controlled recovery. The effort level is around 85–100% of MHR, depending on the duration of the event you are training for and the length and volume of intervals used.

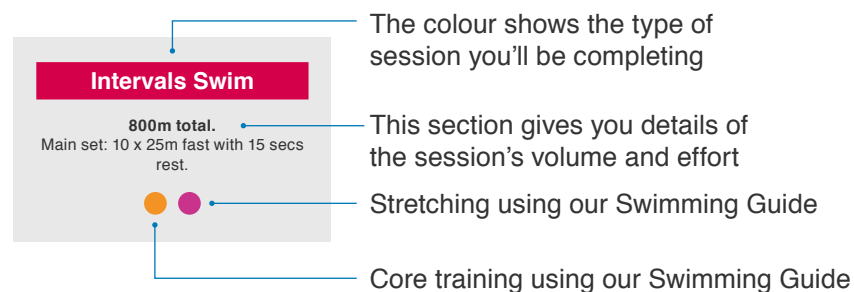
Warming Up / Warm Down (WU/WD)

When you are going to do any faster training such it is important to warm up gradually. A 10-15 minute easy swim, lets your muscles warm up and improve their range of movement.

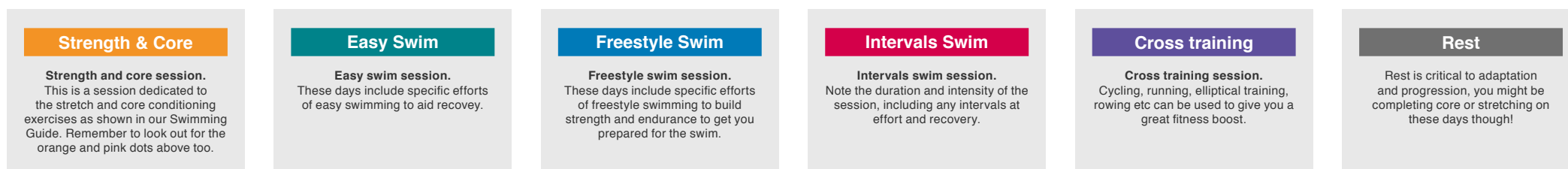
USING THE PLANS

Our training plans are structured as follows:













Anatomy of a session:



What the colours mean:



5 km Swim Beginner Training Plan / 1

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Weekly positives:
1	Strength & Core	Freestyle Swim 20 mins freestyle Easy effort as 4 x 5 mins with 2 mins recovery.	Rest Rest is vital to progression and adaptation. Note the yellow and pink dots to remind you to do the stretches and core conditioning in our guide. 	Intervals Swim Intervals swim session 6 x 100m steady effort with 30–60 secs recovery.	Rest 	Cross training 45 mins easy	Easy Swim 1 km easy swim	
2	Strength & Core Stretching well the day after your hard Sunday sessions will help you feel better as you move through the week ahead!	Freestyle Swim 25 mins freestyle Easy effort as 5 x 5 mins with 2 mins recovery.	Rest 	Intervals Swim Intervals swim session 10 x 100m steady effort with 60 secs recovery.	Rest 	Cross training 50 mins easy	Easy Swim 1.2 km easy swim	
3	Strength & Core Remember to note down the positives at the end of each training week.	Freestyle Swim 30 mins freestyle Easy effort as 3 x 10 mins with 2–3 mins recovery.	Rest 	Intervals Swim Intervals swim session 8 x 200m with 90 secs recovery.	Rest 	Cross training 60 mins easy	Easy Swim 1.6 km easy swim	
4	Strength & Core Easy week This is an easier week to help your body adapt to the training.	Freestyle Swim 20 mins freestyle Easy effort as 4 x 5 mins with 2 mins recovery.	Rest 	Intervals Swim Intervals swim session 6 x 100m steady effort with 30 secs recovery.	Rest 	Cross training 45 mins easy	Easy Swim 1 km easy swim	
5	Strength & Core Get into a good habit of regular stretching check out our training guide!	Freestyle Swim 40 mins freestyle Easy effort as 4 x 10 mins with 90 secs recovery.	Rest 	Intervals Swim 30 mins Go as far as you can whilst maintaining control.	Rest 	Cross training 60 mins easy	Easy Swim 1.6 km easy swim	
6	Strength & Core	Intervals Swim Intervals swim session 15 mins easy with 3 mins recovery then 5 x 100m controlled effort with 90 sec recovery.	Rest 	Intervals Swim Intervals swim session 10 x 150m steady effort with 20 secs recovery + 90 secs recovery + 100m fast recording time.	Rest 	Cross training 90 mins easy	Easy Swim 2 km easy swim	

5 km Swim Beginner Training Plan / 2

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Weekly positives:
7	Strength & Core	Freestyle Swim 45 mins freestyle Easy with 9 x 5 mins with 1 min recovery.	Rest 	Intervals Swim Intervals swim session 20 mins continuous with 3 mins then 5 x 150m race pace with 30 secs recovery.	Rest 	Cross training 1 hr 45 mins easy	Easy Swim 2.4 km easy swim	
8	Strength & Core Easy week This is an easier week to help your body adapt to the training.	Easy Swim 20–30 mins easy.	Rest 	Intervals Swim Intervals swim session 5 x 200m steady effort with 30 secs recovery.	Rest 	Cross training 90 mins easy	Easy Swim 1 km easy swim	
9	Strength & Core	Easy Swim 60 mins easy as 3 x 20 mins with 3 mins recovery.	Rest 	Intervals Swim Intervals swim session 30–40 mins go as far as you can whilst maintaining control.	Rest 	Cross training 2 hrs easy	Easy Swim 3 km easy swim	
10	Strength & Core	Intervals Swim Intervals swim session 20 mins easy with 3 mins recovery then 5 x 100m controlled effort with 90 secs recovery.	Rest 	Intervals Swim Intervals swim session 10 x 150m at race pace with 20 secs recovery + 90 secs recovery + 100m fast recording time.	Rest 	Cross training 1 hr 45 mins easy	Easy Swim 3.5 km easy swim	
11	Strength & Core	Easy Swim 60 mins easy	Rest 	Intervals Swim Intervals swim session 16 x 100m at race pace with 30–60 secs recovery between sets.	Rest 	Cross training 45 mins easy	Easy Swim 1 km easy swim	
12	Rest 	Intervals Swim Intervals swim session 3 x 100m controlled effort with 90 sec recovery.	Rest 	Freestyle Swim 15 mins freestyle Continuous easy effort.	Rest 	Cross training 15 mins easy 	Race Day Good luck!	

Contact

We're here for you

For support, information or if you just want to chat, call us free on 0300 100 0200 (Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm), email swimming@macmillan.org.uk or visit macmillan.org.uk



Macmillan.org.uk

