

Commonly Used Swimming Terms

Alternate Breathing - In freestyle swimming, breathing to the right side then swimming an odd number of strokes and breathing to the left side, then swimming an odd number of strokes and breathing to the right side, etc.

Blocks - The starting platforms located behind each lane. Some pools have blocks at the deeper end of the pool and some pools have blocks at both ends. Blocks have a variety of designs and can be permanent or removable.

Build - Increasing in effort/speed within a specific distance.

Circle Swimming - Performed by staying to the right of the black line when swimming in a lane to enable maximum use of pool space.

Course - Designated distance (length of pool) for swimming competition.
Long Course = 50 meters Short Course = 25 yards or 25 meters.

Deck - The hard surface around the pool.

Descending - Swim each distance faster within a given set as the set progresses. Typically, you begin at an easy pace and progress to a faster one throughout the set.

Disqualified - A swimmer's performance is not counted because of a rules infraction. Also called a DQ.

Drills - A drill is used to break down parts of a stroke in order to emphasize certain aspects of the body's movements. Drills may be used to learn a new stroke or strengthen certain areas of a stroke.

Fins - Large rubber flipper-type devices that fit on a swimmer's feet. Used in swim practice, not competition. Also called flippers by some.

Flags - Triangular pennants alternating colors suspended on a line stretched over the width of the pool. In a short course pool, they are 15 feet from the wall and in a meter pool they are five meters from the wall. Used primarily to notify backstrokers that the wall is coming.

Interval - A specific elapsed time for swimming or rest used during swim practice.

Kickboard - A flat rectangular board (usually a stiff or hard Styrofoam) used to isolate leg muscles in kick sets.

Lane - Specific area in which the swimmer is assigned to swim.

Lane Lines - The floating markers which separate adjacent lanes.

On The Bottom - this refers to the 30 on the pace clock. It is called this because of its' bottom-most location on the clock.

On The Top - this refers to the 60 on the pace clock. It is called this because of its' top-most location on the clock.

Negative Split - For any given distance, the second half is faster than the first half.

Pace - The often pre-determined speed with which a swimmer completes each segment of a race or practice

Pace Clock - The electronic clocks or large clocks with highly visible numbers and second hands, positioned at the ends or sides of a swimming pool so the swimmers can read their times during warm-ups or swim practice.

Pull Buoy - Usually two cylinders of Styrofoam tied together with rope and placed between the legs. It enables you to focus on your pull without kicking.

Set - A number of repeated swims at specified distances with a stated interval.

Streamline - The position used to gain maximum distance during a start and/or push-off from the wall in which the swimmer's body is as tight as it can be.

USA Swimming - USA Swimming, Inc. The national governing body for amateur competitive swimming in the United States.

Wall - The vertical portion of the pool.

Warm-down - The recovery swimming a swimmer does after practice or a race when pool space is available.

Warm-up - The practice and "loosening-up" session a swimmer does at the beginning of practice or before the meet/their event.

Yardage - The distance a swimmer races or swims in practice. Total yardage can be calculated for each practice session.

Distance	Number of Lengths	Distance	Number of Lengths	Distance	Number of Lengths
25	1	225	9	425	17
50	2	250	10	450	18
75	3	275	11	475	19
100	4	300	12	500	20
125	5	325	13	1000	40
150	6	350	14	1650 (mile)	66
175	7	375	15		
200	8	400	16		