

## Common Swimming Terms/Definitions

**Age Group Swimming:** This is the program through which Swimming-Natation Canada (SNC) provides fair and open competition for under 18 years of age members. It is designed to encourage maximum participation, provide an educational experience, enhance physical and mental conditioning.

**Block:** The starting platform

**Bulkhead:** A wall constructed to divide a pool into different courses, such as a 50m pool into two 25m pools.

**Circle Swimming:** Performed by staying to the right of the black line when swimming in a lane to enable more swimmers to swim in each lane.

**Coach:** A person who trains and teaches athletes in the sport of swimming.

**Cut:** Slang for qualifying time. A time standard necessary to attend a particular meet or event.

**Distance Event:** Term used to refer to events over 400 metres.

**DQ (Disqualified):** This occurs when a swimmer has committed an infraction of some kind (e.g. one-handed touch in breaststroke). A disqualified swimmer is not eligible to receive an award, nor will there be an official time in that event.

**Drill:** An exercise involving a specific part of a stroke, used to improve technique.

**Dry-land Training:** Training done out of the water that aids and enhances swimming performance; usually includes stretching, callisthenics, and/or weight training.

**Entry Deadline:** A date coaches must submit entries for swimmers by to allow them to race in a specific competition. Once deadline is past there are no refunds.

**False Start:** Occurs when a swimmer is moving at the start prior to the signal.

**Final:** The championship heat of an event in which the top 6, 8 or 10 swimmers from the preliminaries compete for awards, depending on the number of lanes in the pool.

**Finish:** The final phase of the race, the touch at the end of the race.

**Flags:** Backstroke flags placed 5 metres from the end of the pool. They enable backstrokers to execute a backstroke turn more efficiently through being able to count the number of strokes into each wall.

**Goal:** A specific time, event or skill achievement a swimmer sets and strives for; can be short or long term.

**I.M.:** Slang for individual medley, an event in which the swimmer uses all four strokes in the following order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle.

**Long Course or LC:** a 50m long pool.

**Long Distance/Open Water:** Any freestyle event over 1500 metres, normally conducted in a natural body of water, such as a lake, river, or ocean.

**Meet:** Competition designed to be a measure of progress and a learning experience. By implementing what has been learned in practice, the swimmers test themselves against the clock to see how they are progressing.

**Middle Distance:** Term used to refer to events of 200 to 400 metres in length.

**Negative Split:** Swimming the second half of the race faster than the first half.

**Official:** A judge on the deck of the pool at a sanctioned competition who enforces SNC rules.

**Official Split:** The first portion of the full distance of an event raced at a sanctioned meet. Example – a 50 or 100 within a 200 meter event.

**Official Time:** A time achieved in a race during a sanctioned competition.

**Pace:** The often pre-determined speed with which a swimmer completes each segment of a race (e.g. 25m, 50m)

**Pace Clock:** Large clock with a large second hand and a smaller minute hand, used to check pace or maintain intervals in practice (may also be digital).

**Prelim:** Slang for preliminaries, also called heats, the races in which swimmers qualify for the championship and consolation finals in an event.

**Q-Time:** Qualifying time necessary to compete in a particular event and/or competition.

**Relay:** An event in which 4 swimmers compete together as a team to achieve a time.

**Safety Procedure:** Safety procedures are designed to prevent accidents, and must be followed to the letter.

**Sanctioned Meet:** All competitions in which records may be set and official times may be obtained, must be sanctioned (= approved officially) by a Swim Ontario Sanctioning Officer.

**Scratch:** To withdraw from an event in a competition. There can be a monetary penalty for a late scratch.

**Senior Swimming:** The program through which SNC and Swim Ontario provide fair and open competition in provincial and/or national swimming championships. It is designed to afford maximum opportunity for participation, provide an educational experience, enhance physical and mental conditioning, and develop a pool of talented athletes for national and international competition. There are no age restrictions on senior competitions.

**Short Course or SC:** A 25 meter long pool.

**SNC:** Swimming Natation Canada – National governing body for competitive swimming.

**SwimOn/SO:** Swim Ontario – Provincial governing body for competitive swimming.

**Split:** A swimmer's intermediate time in a race. Splits are registered every 50m and are used to determine if a swimmer is on a planned pace. Under certain conditions, initial splits may also be used as official times.

**Sprint:** Describes the shorter events (50 and 100m); in training, to swim as fast as possible for a short distance.

**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 and straight as it can be.

**Taper:** The final preparation phase. As part of this phase, and prior to major competitions, older and more experienced swimmers will shave their entire body to reduce resistance and heighten sensation in the water.

**Time Trial:** A practice race which is not part of regular competitions. Time trials may be sanctioned and used to qualify for specific meets.

**Touch Pad:** A large sensitive board at the end of each lane where a swimmer's touch is registered and sent electronically to the timing system.

**Warm-down:** Low intensity swimming used by swimmer after a race or main practice set to rid the body of excess lactic acid, and to gradually reduce heart rate and respiration.

**Warm-up:** Low-intensity swimming used by swimmers prior to a main practice set or a race to get muscles loose and warm, and to gradually increase heart rate and respiration.

**Watches:** Stopwatches used to time swimmers during a competition. When totally automatic timing equipment is used, watches serve as a back-up method.