

Chicago Blue Dolphins – Swimming Glossary

Term	Definition
Build-Up	Start each repeat at an easy pace and get progressively faster throughout the repeat. At the start of the next repeat, you'll begin again with the easy pace.
Descend	Descend means to start a given set EASY, and get progressively faster as the set progresses. Like doing the above set of 5 x 100 @ 1:45 and swimming them in 1:32, 1:30, 1:28, 1:26, & 1:20.
Descending Interval	In this type of set your REST will decrease, unless you are able to swim progressively faster to match the drop in the send-off time. Here the coach will use the interval to force you to descend. An example would be 5 x 100 starting at 1:50 dropping :05 off the interval each repeat. So the send-off times would be 1:50, 1:45, 1:40, 1:35, 1:30, 1:25. On the types of set it is of paramount importance to start of swimming EASY to conserve energy so it will be possible to make the interval when it starts getting tough.
Easy (EZ)	A very important term in swimming. It means to swim without expending much effort. It DOESN'T mean SLOW. They are not interchangeable words in my swimming glossary. It is possible to swim EASY without going SLOW. Swimming EASY allows one to maintain excellent stroke mechanics because the mind can think clearly since it is not in oxygen debt and body is not breaking down with fatigue. Most swimmers don't spend enough time in this mode "burning" in proper mechanics. The more intensity increases the more stroke mechanics will begin to break down. Swimming EASY allows the mind and body to stay FOCUSED on perfect form.
Even Split	Means that you should hold a constant pace throughout a swim. For example, if you swim a 400 yard repeat on the 5:00, you want to hold 1:15 pace on each 100 in the swim.
Fast	Like the difference between EASY & SLOW, FAST does not equal HARD. It is possible to swim FAST without expending too much energy – easy speed. Speed should be established through slippery body positions and rhythmic core body movements -- not through high arm turnover rate or a bionic kick (both of which are common with HARD swimming). When thinking about going fast, you should look for “maximum speed with minimum effort” depending on the distance you are going.

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Fixed Rest Interval (ex. @ :20R)	<p>Fixed rest intervals are the next most common intervals that we do. Fixed rest intervals represent the amount of time that you spend resting after each repeat regardless of the pace at which you swim the repeat. Example, 5 x 100 @ :20R means: “Swim five one hundreds (4 lengths in a 25 yard pool), leaving the wall 20 seconds after you complete the last repeat.”</p> <p>We use fixed rest intervals a lot during warm-ups, cool-downs, and recovery segments when we are more concerned with how the swims are done than in how fast they are completed.</p>
Forearm Fulcrums	A product made by Finis, this plastic infinity signs hold the forearm into a firm shape creating a line from fingers to wrist to elbow. They prevent the swimmer from breaking this line during the pull and the recovery. Since the elbow is the only joint that can bend, they can also help isolate the high-elbow catch.
IHR	Means “immediate heart rate,” the heart rate at a particular point in practice, usually the end of a set. If you have a heart rate monitor, it’s the number displaying at the time of the test. If you don’t have a heart rate monitor, take your heart rate for 6 seconds, add 2 beats, and multiply by 10 to get an estimate.
Negative Split	Means that you should swim the second half of a repeat faster than the first half of a repeat. Negative splitting is excellent practice for distance swimmers because it forces you to finish each repeat strong. Often combined with “descending,” so that you not only need to negative split each repeat but you need to make each repeat in a set faster than the one before it.
On the (Next) Bottom	On a rotary clock, this means to go on the “30,” the number at the bottom of the clock. If you are working off a digital clock, your lane mates or coach mean to go on the “30.” If “next” precedes, it means that you will leave not on the first “30” but on the next one given you more than a minute of rest.
On the (Next) Top	On a rotary clock, this means to go on the “60,” the number at the top of the clock. If you are working off a digital clock, your lane mates or coach mean to go on the “00.” If “next” precedes, it means that you will leave not on the first “60” but on the next one given you more than a minute of rest.
Pace	The time at which it takes you to complete a given repeat without the rest factored in. It’s important when doing the sets to know what your pace should be to determine the intensity of the set. It’s also important to read the clock and to know if you are matching that pace goal.

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RPE	<p>Means “rate of perceived exertion,” a scale developed and updated by Gunnar Borg that allows you to assign numbers to how you feel during exercise. The scale ranges from 6 (no exertion) to 20 (maximal exertion). By monitoring how hard you are working, you can adjust the intensity of the activity to the prescribed level of the scale.</p> <p>You want to assess your RPE WHILE YOU ARE STILL EXERCISING rather than after you stop. For example, if the practice specifies a moderate intensity, you should shoot for a Borg scale level of “somewhat hard” (RPE of 12 to 14). If midway through the set, your muscle fatigue and breathing are light (RPE of 9), you should go faster. If you are swimming in the extremely hard range (RPE 19) and your breathing is very heavy and acid is building up in your muscles, you should slow down to move back into the moderate intensity range.</p> <p>You can find the full scale on the “Personal Training Zones Chart” for the T-Swim Performance Set.</p>
Relative Interval (ex. @ 3 rd person)	<p>Relative intervals allow us to manage how the lane does the set by starting repeats when a particular person in the lane finishes the last swim. Example, 5 x 100 @ 3rd person means: “Swim five one hundreds (4 lengths in a 25 yard pool); the first person in the lane starts the next repeat when the third person finishes the last repeat.”</p> <p>We’ll use a Relative Interval when the skills in the lane are diverse (e.g., fast swimmers with slower swimmers, or faster kickers with slower kickers), and we want to keep the lane together. With a relative interval, the faster swimmers will get more rest and the slower swimmers will get an appropriate amount of rest for the set. Like Fixed Rest Intervals, we’ll use a relative interval in warm-ups, cool-downs, and recovery sets when the pace held isn’t quite so important.</p>
Repeat	<p>A chunk of swimming in a set. In a set of 5 x 100 @ 1:45, there are five 100-yard repeats.</p>
Swimming Golf	<p>A type of set where you add the time that it takes you to finish a repeat to the number of strokes that you take throughout the repeat. 100 yard or meter repeats are about as long as you can do Swimming Golf for. Your golf score is a measure of how effectively you are swimming your repeats. If you go faster and your golf score goes up, you want to consider whether you lost too much efficiency (i.e., added too many strokes) for the time drop that you achieved.</p>

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Stroke Count (S/L)	<p>Count every time a hand hits the water. In a 25 yard pool the range would be from somewhere around 10 for a very efficient swimmer to nearly 30 for a novice "thrasher". A reasonable goal is to be consistently under 20 strokes a length in freestyle. Backstroke counts should be nearly identical to freestyle, while Breast and Fly should be approximately half the number of strokes you take in Free.</p> <p>Get used to counting. Swimmers should be counting strokes throughout workout. Maybe not every lap, but darn close to it. It is by far the best feedback mechanism to see how efficiently you are swimming. When a swimmer asks one of our coaches how their stroke looks, the first thing we ask them is how many strokes they are taking.</p>
Stroke Rate	<p>How fast your arms are moving. Basically the same as cadence on a bike. The difference is that high cadence on a bike is generally good, and in swimming it's generally not. People using a high stroke rate are usually ripping and tearing through the water instead of holding it to slice smoothly through the water. Generally high SR swimmers can't hold their rate or pace very long either. Most of our experienced men swim repeats in practice with a stroke rate of 55-65 strokes per minute (or 1.1 to 0.9 seconds per stroke); most of our experienced women swim repeats in practice with a stroke rate of 60-75 strokes per minute (or 1.0 to .80 seconds per stroke).</p>
Swimmer Snorkel	<p>Another product made by Finis, this snorkel's tube runs directly over the head rather than off to the side. It's an excellent tool for working on body position, timing, the arm stroke, and the kick as breathing is taken out of the equation. You might need to wear a nose-clip with this product to keep the water from shooting up your nose.</p>
Tempo Trainer	<p>This is a device made by Finis to control stroke rate. It is a small beeper that that you can set to different rates and put it in your cap to help you swim at the right SR.</p>
Time Interval (ex. @ 1:45)	<p>Time intervals are the most common type of interval that we do – so much so that when your coach or lane mates talk about “the interval” it's probably this type of interval. Time intervals represent the clock send-off time for a given number of repeats. Example 5 x 100 @ 1:45 interval means: “Swim five one-hundreds (4 lengths of a 25 yard pool), leaving from the wall every minute and forty-five seconds.”</p> <p>We use time intervals when we want to force you to swim in a particular pace range and to ensure that everyone in the lane is starting at a common time.</p>