

# STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO SWIM IN THE OPEN WATER

## PREP WORK



For beginners, OW swimming can be daunting. Swimming in the sea, lakes and rivers have extra challenges with elements of the environment. Swimmers can transition successfully from the pool to the sea. Concerns and fears can be overcome.

Acclimatisation to cool sea water can be achieved within a few weeks.

You don't need fancy wetsuits and gear to have a go. Your body will begin to get used to the water after ten minutes so anyone with a standard swim-suit or shorts can get in and go for it. Here is a step-by-step guide to swim in the open water.

There is the Prep Work followed by four (4) basic steps to feeling confident at swimming in OW. (coming next week)

## GETTING READY

Check the conditions and water temperature. It's easy to google the water temperature for your local area.

Tip: You can look up [Seatemperature.org](http://Seatemperature.org) or [bom.gov.au](http://bom.gov.au) for your local ocean water temperatures. Any temperatures below about 18 C. This [Guide to Safe Cold Water Swimming](#) gives you a general picture of what to expect at low temperatures and some safety tips.

Checkout the [OW temperature guide](#)

## SWIMMING IN RIVERS AND LAKES

Freshwater is often colder than the sea so approach rivers and lakes with care. Freshwater doesn't have the same buoyancy as salt water so swimming can be a bit more tiring.

The sea water keeps you afloat more easily than water in the pool or freshwater in rivers and lakes.

## SAFETY IN THE OPEN WATER

The golden rules are:

- Swim in a group, never swim alone
- Don't stray far from shore
- Shorten your swim time in winter

# STRETCHES & EXERCISES FOR OWS

Spend 5-10 minutes stretching before you get in (to avoid cramping or staining your muscles):



## SHAKE YOUR ANKLES

Lift each leg and shake your ankles until they are loose and free of tension.



## LUNGES

Put some work into your big thigh muscles.

## LUNGES WITH A POINTY TOE ON YOUR BACK LEG

Stretch your feet and toes into a pointy 'ballet dancer' pose while doing lunges. That means pressing the top of your back foot down into the ground.



## REACH FOR THE SKY

Hands together and reach high into the sky in a streamlined 'rocket ship' shape. That means your arms are straight, without bending at the elbows. Get your head forward so your biceps are behind your ears. Get up on tiptoes and make yourself as tall as possible.



## THE SWIMMER'S STRETCH

This is one arm raised and bent behind the head. Grab your elbow with the other arm and pull it as far across behind your head as possible.

## SUPERMAN WITH KICKS

Lie on your stomach on the ground and reach forward with your arms. Raise your arms and legs as high as possible, working the lower back muscles. Point your toes and do at least 20 freestyle (scissor) kicks. Have a break and do it again.

## LEFT AND RIGHT-SIDE ELBOW PLANKS

Resting on your left (then right) elbow and feet, raise your body into a straight line and hold it, working your lateral (side) muscles in your core. Swimmers need to be able to twist from the waist without too much movement of the hips.