

## Rules of the Road..... Practice Etiquette

1. **Choose the right lane.** Because there are so many skill levels represented in each practice, it is important that you swim in a lane with swimmers of similar ability. Our coaches would prefer to see swimmers start off in skill levels they can easily handle and then gradually move up. This is especially true if you have been ill or for some other reason have missed a week or more of practice. Instead of jumping in with the "old gang" when you return to practice, it is usually best to try an easier level until you are back in shape. If you have any questions about which lane you should be swimming in, ask the coach.
2. **Keep to the Right.** If there are more than two people in a lane, it is always best to swim in a counter clockwise rotation. Serious accidents can occur when people swim down the middle of the lane.
3. **Always leave 5 or 10 seconds apart.** Unless the coach otherwise specifies, swimmers should always start (push off the wall) a swim or a swim set at least 5 seconds apart (10 seconds apart is better). In our 25-meter pool, when there are fewer than 5 in a lane, it is best to push off 10 seconds apart (the only exception to this is at the most advanced skill levels).
4. **Look before you leave.** Serious accidents can occur if you blindly push off the wall (especially with backstroke). Be aware of other swimmers who are either swimming into the wall or waiting next to the lane rope or side wall.
5. **When you finish, get out of the way.** When you finish a swim or are taking a rest, move to the side of the lane so other swimmers can have a clear path to finish or turn at the end of the pool.
6. **Pass on the left.** The correct way to pass someone in a lane is to lightly touch the feet of the person ahead of you. This tells the person being passed to keep to the right. It is usually best to wait until reaching the end of the pool before passing. The person being passed should continue swimming into the right hand corner of the lane, stop and give the swimmer that just passed 5 seconds head start. Also be sure and see if anyone else would like to pass before starting to swim again. Remember to give the swimmer ahead of you a 5 second lead.
7. **Who's going first?** For many, it seems to be much easier to swim behind someone than it is to lead. This is why you will sometimes see confusion at the start of practice about who should go first, second, third, etc. The best way to solve this problem is to talk with one another and find out who is swimming what stroke and/or what pace each swimmer would like to set. Don't be left at the end of the pool staring at each other when it is time to swim.
8. **Watch your swing.** Accidents can occur when swimming the butterfly or freestyle stroke and when using swim paddles. Because of the arm recovery characteristics of the butterfly, it is important for those of you who swim fly to time your arm recovery so that you don't hit another swimmer. Taking that extra kick when your arms are extended in front of you can avoid a collision. *Hand paddles should always be used with caution.*
9. **Know what's going on around you.** Being aware of what others are doing around you is one of the most important ingredients of good practice etiquette. Make sure everyone in your lane knows your intentions. This means communication to everyone what stroke and pace you plan to swim. While swimming make sure you keep a close eye on what people are doing behind and ahead of you, especially in a passing situation.
10. **Pick up after yourself.** Kickboards, swim fins, pull buoys, and other pool equipment are your responsibility. If you use it, please return it.
11. **Help keep the pool water clean.** Water carries disease organisms. People with open wounds (whether or not they are covered) or with known infections or sickness should not enter the pool.
12. **Listen to the coach.** Above all, listen carefully when the coach is giving instructions. If you don't understand something a coach has said, ask someone in your lane to explain it. If you still don't understand, don't be afraid to ask the coach to explain it again.

**Have a Great Practice!**