

## Brush up on your pool talk with this handy swimming glossary

“On the bottom, we’re going to descend 5 x 200’s at 3:00, even split, 3:1 with full gear.”

If the above sentence makes no sense, it may be time for you to brush up on your swimming vocabulary. Regardless of whether you are a masters swimmer or a weekend warrior who trains alone, it is helpful to familiarize yourself with swimming lingo should you come across a situation that requires it.

What follows is a brief list of terms that can handily be printed, posted, or memorized should you venture onto a pool deck and feel the need to blend in!

**50:** generally refers to 50 yards or meters, a common “repeat” distance for sprinters and endurance athletes alike.

**100:** twice the length of a “50,” and a common “pace” distance.

**500:** 500 yards or meters, this is a longer distance common in many endurance workouts (equivalent to 0.33 of a mile).

**Short course:** a 25-meter/yard pool where four lengths (or two laps) equal 100 meters/yards.

**Long course:** a 50-meter pool where two lengths or one lap equals 100 meters. Also referred to as “Olympic distance.” Nonexistent in yard format.

**Length:** distance swum in one direction in any given pool.

**Lap:** distance swum up and back in any given pool.

**Set:** a grouping of distances composing part of a workout or drill; 5 x 100’s is a set that is 500 meters long; 500, 400, 300, 200, 100 is a set that is 1,500 meters long.

**Interval:** the time given to complete a certain drill. A 2:00 interval for 100 meters means that if you can swim 100 meters in 1:40 minutes, you will have 20 seconds’ rest before repeating the next one.

**Repeats:** the components of a set; 5 x 100’s is a set of 100 repeats.

**Threshold:** the maximum time you can “hold,” or repeat, for a given distance, during a highly aerobic set.

**Pace:** the time per repeat you can hold consistently during a set, and ideally the time (per 100 meters, for instance) that you can “hold” during a race.

**Negative splitting:** the act of completing the second half of a set distance faster than the first half.

**Even splitting:** the act of completing both the first half and last half of a set distance at equal speeds.

**Descending:** increasing one’s speed incrementally during a set distance (“She is descending her one-mile race by 100 meters”)

**On the top:** starting a set on the 12 o’clock (or 60-second) mark on a poolside pace clock.

**On the bottom:** starting a set on the 6 o'clock (or 30-second) mark on a pace clock.

**Tapering:** the act of paring down your workouts (in length and intensity) for the weeks or days leading up to a specific race.

**Full gear:** all pulling equipment (buoy, tube, paddles) worn simultaneously during a pull set. The best way to get an upper-body swim workout.

**Buoy:** flotation device used to stabilize the legs and correct body position in the water.

**Tube:** a basic inner-tube from a small wheel used to bind your ankles while wearing a pull buoy; prevents kicking and helps keep legs together (and buoy from slipping).

**Paddles:** plastic hand-disks used to maximize an upper-body pulling workout. Available in several shapes and sizes, depending on your skill and preference.

**Dragsuit:** a baggy nylon unisex swimsuit, worn over a regular practice suit to add resistance to everyday training.

**Band training:** dry-land workout using rubber stretch cords to strengthen muscles used in all four strokes.

**Hypoxic training:** any type of set where a breathing pattern is the focal point of the drill.

**3:1:** Breathing pattern where you take one breath for every three strokes; this is a bilateral breathing pattern (you breathe on both left and right sides).

**2:1:** Breathing pattern where you breathe once for every two strokes (you only breathe on one side, your left or right).

**Circle swimming:** swimming in a lane in a standard counter-clockwise direction, up the right side and back down the left. Preferable when more than one person is sharing your lane.

**Catch-up stroke:** special drill where basic crawl (freestyle) is altered so that each arm "catches up" with the other before completing the next stroke (one arm is stationary above your head, in beginning stroke position, while the other completes a full stroke rotation).

**Sculling:** special drill using only your hands (not your arms) to "scull" your way through the water; arms at your sides, with your wrists whipping back and forth in a waving motion (designed to develop "feel" for the water). Good workout when lap swimming is not an option (hotel pools, crowded slow lanes).

**Vertical kicking:** special drill executed in deep water (diving wells and deep ends of hotel pools when lap swimming is not an option) where one kicks in a vertical position with arms crossed over chest, or extended above head for various intervals/sets.