



Essential Components of Planning an Aquatics Training Session

Each training session needs to contain the same essential elements. The amount of time spent on each element will depend on the goal of the training session, the time of season the session is in and the amount of time available for a particular session. The following elements need to be included in an athlete's daily training program. For more in-depth information and guidance on these elements, refer to their specific sections in this guide.

The Warm-Up	25-30 minutes
Specific Event Workout	15-20 minutes
Conditioning or Fitness Workout	15-20 minutes
The Cool-Down	15-20 minutes

The final step in planning a training session is choosing what the athlete is actually going to do. Remember, when creating a training session that includes the essential components, the progression allows for a gradual buildup of physical activity.

- ♦ Easy to difficult
- ♦ Slow to fast
- ♦ Known to unknown
- ♦ General to specific
- ♦ Start to finish

In organizing the team for effective teaching and learning experiences, the coach should always arrange the session so that:

- ♦ The safety of the athlete is ensured.
- ♦ Everyone can hear the instructions.
- ♦ Everyone can see the demonstration.
- ♦ Everyone will have an opportunity for maximum practice.
- ♦ Everyone will have an opportunity to be checked regularly for skill improvement.

The most important factor is to provide for the safety of the athlete. Every effort must be made to prevent an accident from occurring. A certified lifeguard must be on duty during all aquatics activities. Rules, such as no running, no dunking, no horseplay and no diving into shallow water, must be explained and enforced. Potential hazards should be pointed out. All athletes must be accounted for at the start of a period, at regular intervals during the period and at the close of the training. Coaches should remain in the pool area until the end of training and all swimmers are accounted for and have left the area. A lifeguard must be in a position to observe the safety of the swimmers at all times. The coach needs to be aware of any special medical conditions, such as seizures.



The procedures used for learning and practicing skills in the water are determined by the skill to be learned, the skill level of the swimmers, the size and shape of the facility, the extent of shallow and deep water areas available for practice, and the number, sizes and ages of the athletes. Following are factors to ensure successful learning, regardless of the type of teaching approach implemented.

1. Athletes, if at all possible, need to face away from the sun, bright light from windows or distracting influences during demonstrations.
2. Athletes must be able to see and hear the instructions during demonstrations and practice sessions.
3. Athletes must have the opportunity to:
 - ♦ make the physical and mental adjustment to the water in relation to the skill to be learned;
 - ♦ find and maintain a good working position in the water as determined by the skill to be learned; and,
 - ♦ have maximum practice for accuracy, coordination, speed and expenditure of energy. This practice must include an analysis of each athlete's movements and appropriate and timely suggestions for improvement by the coach, an assistant coach or a buddy.
4. Swimmers must have ample space to practice without interference by other athletes.

Hints for Organizing a Good Training Session

1. Use the pool to your best advantage.
2. Organize stations by ability. Color code ability groups (i.e. Green-Beginner; Blue-Rookie, etc.). No one should be standing around while you arrange things. Keep everyone busy.
3. Keep athletes informed of changes in schedule or activities.
4. Introduce athletes to one another, and orient them to the instructional setting.
5. Demonstrate the sports skill as frequently as possible.
6. Keep the "fun" in fundamentals. Use a game approach.
7. Devote a part of each training session to group activity.
8. If an activity is going well, it is often useful to stop the activity while interest is high.
9. If a swimmer joins the team after training has begun, skill assessment should be done in shallow water.



Principles of Effective Training Sessions

Keep athlete's attention	Athlete needs to be an active listener.
Create clear, concise goals	Learning improves when athletes know what is expected of them.
Give clear, concise instructions	Demonstrate – increase accuracy of instruction.
Record progress	You and your athletes chart progress together.
Give positive feedback	Emphasize and reward things the athlete is doing well.
Provide variety	Vary exercises – prevent boredom.
Encourage enjoyment	Training and competition is fun; help keep it this way for you and your athletes.
Create progressions	Learning is increased when information progresses from: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Known to unknown – discovering new things successfully• Simple to complex – seeing that “I” can do it• General to specific – this is why “I” am working so hard
Plan maximum use of resources	Use what you have, and improvise for equipment that you do not have – think creatively.
Allow for individual differences	Different athletes, different learning rates, different capacities.