

Slowtwitch Triathlon Swim Coaching Certification

The Slowtwitch Triathlon Swim Coaching Certification Clinic focuses completely on swim coaching primarily as it relates to the sport of triathlon. It is a 13 hour course delivered over 2 days with over half of the instruction on the pool deck/in the pool as a hands-on coaching practicum. Attendees are taken through the progression of assessing and improving different levels of athletes in addition to learning how to test athletes and monitor progress, teach crucial elements of stroke mechanics and race strategy and develop fitness.

All clinic attendees are given the opportunity to get as involved as they would like during the practicums. Some attendees are needed to play the role of the athlete in various simulations and demonstrations in the water, but this is completely voluntary and not required. Volunteers are rotated so that everyone gets a chance to observe and coach. Attendees are also asked to submit videos of themselves swimming for analysis, but a submission is not required, and not all submissions are used.

Topics Covered

There are 4 interactive classroom presentations/discussions and 5 hands-on practicums at the swim coaching clinic. The sessions vary in length from 45 minutes to 2 hours depending on the topic. Each session is listed below with a brief summary. Please note that the content of each presentation and practicum is subject to change and can vary based on the needs of the attendees.

Coaching Beginner and Intermediate Triathlon Swimmers (90 minute presentation)

Beginners and intermediates are the most common athletes a coach typically encounters. During this presentation, attendees are guided through the stages of working with an athlete from initial athlete assessments to a desired skills progression. The skills progression component focuses on the proficiency each level of athlete should achieve before moving onto the next element and how the skill development should be incorporated into training sessions. The focus for beginners is on long axis rotation, head position, and breathing. For intermediate athletes, the focus is on breathing, using different kicking speeds, and beginning to build swim fitness. Common errors and corresponding corrective drills are presented as well.

Coaching Beginner and Intermediate Triathlon Swimmers (2 hour practicum)

Attendees are taken to the pool where the previous presentation's information is enforced through hands-on training. Volunteer beginner and intermediate athletes are taken through the initial dryland and pool assessments before moving into to skill and drill development work in the pool. Attendees follow along on the pool deck during the demonstration and then have the opportunity to help coach and work through the different skill development drills with the volunteer athletes. Common errors and corresponding corrective drills are demonstrated as well.

Coaching Advanced Triathlon Swimmers (60 minute presentation)

Advanced athletes can be challenging to coach because it takes more intense training to see a modification materialize. During this presentation, attendees are guided through the stages of working with an advanced athlete from initial athlete assessments to a desired skills progression. The skills progression component focuses on how proper mechanics reinforcement should be incorporated into training sessions in addition to advanced skill development. The primary areas of skill development include stroke rate, arm turnover speed, distance per stroke, stroke length and kick speed.

Coaching Advanced Triathlon Swimmers (90 minute practicum)

Attendees are taken to the pool where the previous presentation's information is enforced through hands-on training. Volunteer advanced athletes are taken through the initial dryland and pool assessments before moving into to drill reinforcement work and advanced skill development. Attendees follow along on the pool deck during the demonstration and have the opportunity to help coach and work through the different skill development drills with the volunteer athletes. Common errors and corresponding corrective drills are demonstrated as well.

Swim Video Analysis (2 hour presentation)

Video analysis is an important tool for analyzing stroke mechanics. In addition to providing the coach with reviewable data that helps to identify areas of improvement in real and slowed down time, it also allows the athlete to see himself, which oftentimes makes it easier to make a correction. Videos from several sources and angles, including underwater, are used to analyze athletes of varying abilities. Attendees can also submit videos for analysis by the group. The presentation also discusses the necessary equipment and common software. Common errors and how to best capture them on video for assessment is presented as well.

Benchmark Testing (45 minute practicum)

Athletes can only show improvement if there is a starting point from which to measure their progress. Benchmark tests provide coaches with quantitative feedback on how the athlete is responding to training. Attendees are taken through the process of assessing an athlete, determining an appropriate benchmark test for varying skill levels, and using that test to measure progress throughout training. Sample benchmark tests are provided as well as guidelines for developing ones specific to an individual athlete's needs.

Open Water/Swim Start & Exit Training (60 minute practicum)

Swimming in a controlled pool environment is very different than the open water. Similarly, the swim starts and exits found at a race contrast significantly from those of a pool and often vary from race to race. Since many athletes do not often have access to open water, it is important for coaches to create training simulations that help athletes prepare for a race and develop a race strategy. Athletes are taken through training exercises to improve skills such as sighting, drafting, turning, dolphin diving, and dealing with chaos.

Swim Coach Training (90 minute practicum)

Attendees are given the opportunity to apply what they have learned over the last two days with real athletes in a coaching simulation. Attendees take turns playing the role of the athlete while those on deck assess and coach the attendees in the pool. The clinic instructor guides the on deck coaches and provides feedback and suggestions. Attendees are rotated between the coach and athlete roles so that they have the opportunity to learn both as a coach and from the perspective of an athlete.

Open Discussion/Q&A (45 minute discussion)

The final session of the clinic is completely guided by the attendees. During this time, attendees have the opportunity to ask questions about anything related to swimming, swim coaching and triathlon. It is an opportunity to expand on topics covered throughout the course as well as answer any outstanding questions. Attendees are encouraged to ask questions and engage in discussion to learn from one another as well as the instructor.

Triathlon Swim Coaching Certification Clinic Sample Schedule

Day 1

07:45 - 08:00 AM	Clinic Check-In
08:00 - 08:25 AM	Introduction
08:30 - 10:00 AM	Coaching Beginner and Intermediate Triathlon Swimmers (lecture)
10:15 - 12:15 PM	Coaching Beginner and Intermediate Triathlon Swimmers (practical)
12:15 - 01:15 PM	Lunch
01:15 - 02:15 PM	Coaching Advanced Triathlon Swimmers (lecture)
02:30 - 04:00 PM	Coaching Advanced Triathlon Swimmers (practical)

Day 2

08:00 - 10:00 AM	Swim Video Analysis (lecture)
10:15 - 11:00 AM	Benchmark Testing (practical)
11:00 - 12:00 PM	Open Water/Swim Start & Exit Training (practical)
12:00 - 01:00 PM	Lunch
01:00 - 02:30 PM	Swim Coach Training (practical)
02:45 - 03:30 PM	Open Discussion/Q&A (lecture)
03:30 - 04:00 PM	Certification Process