



April 3, 2020

With the disruption to 'normal' training that the COVID-19 pandemic has created, most (if not all) swim programs and athletes are looking for solutions to fill in or replace the absence of pool training. While we recognize that dryland training can't replace pool training, it can help to create stability, routines, and assist with maintaining mental health during some very strange and troubling worldwide circumstances. High-performance athletes are currently being directed on dryland programming that is a 'normal' part of their daily routines...it's just becoming the sole training stimulus to help maintain habits and a focus on an athlete lifestyle.

While my personal attention in this area has remained on high-performance swimmers and programs, that narrow perspective does not adequately address the breadth of issues that the sport currently faces across the country. With that in mind, Swimming Canada has worked with its national experts in this area to provide some general recommendations and best practice considerations that would apply to nearly all club swimmers in this country. Following both public health and government recommendations are critical at this time, but we also need to keep in mind that this is a population of people who are accustomed to regular exercise and schedules that have been completely disrupted at this time.

We sincerely hope that these basic guidelines will help provide a framework for clubs to work within in order to ensure that swimmers are being provided with safe, healthy, and beneficial programming ideas that they can do at home.

Stay healthy and safe,

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The closure of our aquatic facilities & gymnasiums - coupled with the national & provincial government recommendations around social distancing - has created a challenge for our athletes to maintain their physical conditioning over an undetermined period of time. In response, coaches are exploring different methods (both on and offline) as a means to deliver activity content & advice remotely to their athletes. Whilst many of these methods present an excellent opportunity to creatively engage effectively with an active audience, it is essential that some important guidelines are adhered to. **Most importantly, registered coaches should only deliver activity content/advice at the level for which they are trained.** In addition, irrespective of the chosen method of delivery, good coaching practices should always be employed. All activities should be risk assessed and appropriate for the audience's skill level - it is essential to recognize that, at the current time, most athletes will not be in close proximity (as is normally the case in the DTE) and are very likely to be undertaking activity in 'non-specialized' environments. Adjustments should be made accordingly to ensure athlete safety. Additionally, implementing good safeguarding practice is extremely important to protect everyone involved.

General best practice considerations

- Apply all of the usual safety considerations for the activities involved in the program - from correct exercise execution through to appropriate clothing & nutrition/hydration.
- Consider the environment that the athlete will be training in - space, ventilation, equipment, hazards, cleanliness, supervision, etc.
- Ensure that athletes are fit and healthy enough to participate in the intended training.
- The type of exercise activities must be geared toward the level of athlete and any equipment used must be for its intended purpose.
- Check that the athlete understands the program (establish a feedback mechanism) and always debrief post session.
- If there are any health & safety concerns advise that training is stopped immediately, and participants seek medical advice.
- For those under 18, parents should be aware of this type of programming and have given their consent for their child to participate.
- For athletes under 18, ensure a responsible adult is always present (indeed, from a health and safety perspective, it is good practice to ensure that no athletes train by themselves) and provide information on purpose of training, method of delivery, requirements, etc.
- During online training sessions make sure these sessions are taking place with a full group and not one on one with an athlete and a coach.
- Encourage athletes to set up the online sessions in areas of their home which is also open and observable to others. An example of a room that is open and observable might be a family room whereas, a closed bedroom would not be seen as open and observable. Please visit Swimming Canada's Safe Sport page for more information (<https://www.swimming.ca/en/safe-sport/>).

Please remember that any and all activities should adhere to any regulations and guidelines as established by your local municipality and provincial health authority during this period of COVID-19.