



Lesson 5: Drafting, Adapting to Adverse Conditions, and Building Confidence and Endurance

This lesson is a review of the previous 4 lessons, and an opportunity to try open water swimming skills in deeper and more difficult (wavy/ choppy/ windy/ rainy/ smoky/ foggy) conditions (if the weather cooperates).

1) Review Topics

Have you been able to embrace all of the identified differences between pool swimming and open water swimming?

Do you have a reliable recovery stroke?

Have you been able to relax and regulate your breathing, and develop flexible breathing patterns, and integrate your breathing with your swim stroke?

Do you feel confident with your sighting abilities to swim straight?

Do you feel in control and can you establish your zone when swimming in a group?

Have you been able to adapt your swimming to adverse weather conditions?

2) More on Drafting

Drafting is the ability to follow another swimmer closely, so that you can be pulled along to save energy. You also have the benefit of letting someone else do the sighting. When you are closely behind someone, you will usually see a lot of bubbles in front of you, and you may even feel some turbulence when you are close to someone's feet. To get the benefit of the draft you can be either directly behind one or several swimmers, or you can be just off to their side, close to their knee or waist, where you are tucking into their bow wave (think Canada geese). If the swimmer(s) you are drafting behind is (are) slightly faster than you, and are competent sighters, you can cruise through your swim with less effort.

3) Building endurance, confidence

If you have mastered the skills learned in the previous lessons, your focus now should be building endurance, while remaining adaptive to the conditions of the day.

Across the Lake Swim

One option is to swim through a slightly weedy spot and some deeper water—away from the Gyro Swim Loop out to the turnaround at the end of the Manteo Mile. The total distance is 1800 meters (close to the whole distance of the ATLS!). Since it is an out-and-back, slower swimmers can turn back sooner, or as soon as the fastest swimmers have reached the turnaround buoy.

4) Swimming in adverse conditions (optional–weather dependent)

As discussed last week, swimming in waves and wind requires more breathing and sighting flexibility, gliding through troughs, staying calm, and breathing control. The only way to get better at swimming in these conditions is to never cancel a workout just because it is wavy or windy. Practice in all conditions. Remember that you will have no choice on the conditions of race days.