



**masters
swimming**
WESTERN
AUSTRALIA

HOW TO ADJUST YOUR STROKE WHEN

SWIMMING IN A WETSUIT

The reality of COVID-19 has meant that we need to adapt and find new ways to keep our swimming muscle memory while pools and gyms are closed.

Many of us are continuing to swim in the ocean or river or doing dry land exercises targeted at swimming muscles.

As we come into winter, our capacity to swim at length in the ocean and river becomes determined by our ability to withstand the cold-water temperatures.

If you are unable to warm up within 30mins of getting out of the water, it may be time to put on your wetsuit or swim skin. A wetsuit changes the way you need to swim and many of us don't make the necessary adjustments to our technique to maximise speed and reduce effort:

Here are 5 important adjustments to technique that will help you swim well and enjoy the water longer!

1- Increased buoyancy changes our body position making our feet higher in the water.

ADJUST by reducing the rate and size of your kick. A deep scissor kick needs to be adjusted to a narrow stable kick to match the cadence of the arm stroke.

2 - Long sleeved wetsuits can put additional load on arm movement.

ADJUST by reducing the cadence (rate) of your stroke and use a straighter arm recovery. This also helps with clearing the chop that is usually greater in winter swimming.

3 - Higher body position changes the way rotation occurs.

Rotate hips and shoulders together as a whole-body rotation allowing the opposite leg kick to be the anchor for each stroke.

4 - Restriction in neck movement due to neck seal and zipper.

ADJUST by whole body roll rather than turning just the neck to breathe which may cause chafing.

ADJUST sighting stroke by pressing strongly with the leading arm and sighting ahead with neck in line with back rather than lifting the neck up and down which may also cause chafing.

5- High stroke rate will build heat once the wetsuit has gained water from energy expenditure.

ADJUST stroke rate after the first few hundred meters once warm and settle into a slower cadence and a two-beat anchoring small kick. Drop stroke rate by about 10%.

Tips for getting wetsuit on and off.

- Body Glide or anti-chafe stick rubbed on the inside of the shoulder, forearm and calves before you put it on helps with getting it on, adjusted and off and does not destroy the neoprene.
- Unzip and pull the wetsuit down to waist level while getting out of the water before all the trapped water has drained out.