

COVID-19 RETURN TO SWIMMING RESOURCE DOCUMENT



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LEGAL DISCLAIMER

Swimming Canada and the Return to Swimming Working Group have prepared this document based on the latest information available to date from third-party sources, including the World Health Organization and local public health authorities. The document will be updated periodically as the situation evolves and more information comes available.

This document is meant to provide information and guidance as to best practices based on current information. Each club is however responsible for assessing the risks in its particular environment and establishing the appropriate safety procedures to minimize those risks, while following the advice guidelines and directions of their Provincial Section and instructions of public health and government authorities.

Additionally, it is an individual's responsibility for assessing his or her personal risks in consultation with medical professionals and for the outcome of his or her decisions and actions.

DOCUMENT UPDATES

Version 1 published May 29, 2020

Version 2 published July 10, 2020

Version 3 published November 10, 2020



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Swimming Canada would like to thank the following people for their contributions to the Return to Swimming Working Group. The development of this resource document has truly been and will continue to be a Canadian swimming initiative.

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VERSION 3 UPDATES – NOVEMBER 10, 2020

We are pleased to be sharing Version 3 of the Swimming Canada Return to Swimming Resource Document. As the new competitive swim season has begun, we've updated this document to reflect the current information related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Version 1 and 2 of this document focused mainly on the return to training. In Version 3 we've added in some additional information about what a return to competition looks like. The health and safety of the swimming community and the community at large continues to be our top priority and strict adherence to the public health mandates is critical.

We would like to re-iterate that this Return to Swimming Resource Document should be utilized to inform the resumption of competitive swimming in Canada, and presents what we believe to be best practices that reflect a minimal risk approach for a safe and controlled return to the sport. Clubs must adhere to all provincial section requirements, as well as all provincial and municipal public health information and guidelines. The restrictions on public gathering sizes varies greatly from province to province. This means that the number of swimmers who may be able to train at any one time will vary from province to province (or even region to region within a province) and the types of competition may also vary. As we have shown through the survey results completed and shared at the end of October, the return to swimming and training has been done safely with strong plans in place with successful mitigation strategies.

In the sections that follow we've noted in red where we have made changes or additions.

Swimming Canada would like to thank all the members of our Return to Swimming Working Group, the Provincials Sections, the CSCA, the Officials, Competition and Rules Committee (OCRC), Lifesaving Society Canada and our Aquatics Canada partners in the development of this document. In addition, the input from our medical and scientific experts and the advice from the National COVID-19 Return to High Performance Sport Task Force as coordinated by Own the Podium was essential in the development of this document (see appendix 6 for more details).

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SWIMMING CANADA RETURN TO SWIMMING WORKING GROUP MANDATE

The Swimming Canada Return to Swimming Working Group is comprised of representatives from many key stakeholders in our sport. Included on the Working Group are representatives from swimmers, coaches (via the CSCA), officials (via the OCRC), provincial sections, science and medicine experts and Swimming Canada staff. The mandate of the Working Group is to develop a resource document and a framework to inform the resumption of competitive swimming in Canada.

In Canada, the provincial and territorial governments are responsible for the management, organization and delivery of health care services for their residents. The regulations and guidelines at the Provincial/Territorial government level will ultimately drive the timelines for when a return to swimming is possible. The 10 provincial section members of Swimming Canada are responsible for adapting the resources and framework outlined in this document based on the guidance they receive from their provincial governments. Clubs must adhere to all provincial section requirements in their return to swimming plans. It is important to note that the provincial section guidelines may differ from what is presented in this resource document in some cases.



OVERARCHING HEALTH, MEDICAL AND SAFETY INFORMATION AND CONSIDERATIONS:

VERSION 3 NOTE: All of the information in this section remains relevant and should be considered in the development of a return to swimming plan.

GENERAL INFO ABOUT COVID-19 AND SWIMMING

COVID-19 is a type of coronavirus mostly found in animals, but when humans become infected, symptoms can range from mild to severe depending on a number of variables. The World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic on March 11, 2020. Tragic consequences of this virus are being experienced around the world, including within Canada. There are many ongoing challenges for all of us to manage, and for our Canadian aquatics community, a safe and responsible return to swimming is paramount. The intent of the following information is not to provide permission to return to sport, but rather to supply the reader with a guide to current medical recommendations in an attempt to mitigate risks related to COVID-19. The goal is to avoid becoming infected, and spreading to other people in the community. This document is meant to complement not replace local public health and recreation facility advice.

COVID-19 has a fragile lipid outer membrane, and is therefore highly susceptible to soaps and oxidants, such as chlorine. According to the Centre for Disease Control, there is no evidence that COVID-19 can be spread to humans through the use of pools, hot tubs or spas. Proper operation maintenance, disinfection with chlorine or bromine of pools should inactivate the virus (CDC 2020). A related coronavirus which caused the SARS epidemic in 2003, was found to be inactivated by UV treatment and disinfectors.

The following health, medical, and safety information are considered to be applicable to all aspects of the Return to Swimming Framework until such time that public health information and guidelines change. In addition, this information is generally applicable to all training/competition environments including indoor pools, outdoor pools, open water, gym and outdoor land training. Provincial and Municipal Public Health information and guidelines must be respected at all times and supersede the information below.

HEALTH MONITORING

- While the potential signs of COVID-19 does cover a wide range of symptoms, many can be quite 'normal' and routinely encountered on a regular basis. Part of the issue with this virus in the early stages was how quickly it overwhelmed the public health system in many countries. Similarly, we do not want to overwhelm our own health resources through persistent contacts with our physicians over health concerns that are fairly normal for you. While Swimming Canada is firmly committed to a safe and responsible return to sport, we all have to consider that our medical resources are finite. Please exercise sound judgement when performing the daily health monitoring and contact your physician if you are concerned that symptoms you are experiencing coupled with potential exposure in a social/public setting makes you think you could have contracted the virus.



- Athletes, coaches, **officials, volunteers**, and staff must answer 'NO' to all the following questions prior to attending any training session or competition:
 - Do I have any of the symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, chest pain, difficult breathing, fever, chills, repeated shaking with chills, abnormal muscle pain, headache, sore throat, painful swallowing, runny nose, new loss of taste or smell, gastrointestinal illness?
 - Have I been in contact with or cared for someone with COVID-19? (please check Provincial Health mandates for the appropriate exposure or isolation timelines e.g. 14 days)
 - Have I returned from a trip outside the country within the last 2 weeks?
- Stay home when sick, even with mild symptoms
- Provincial Health authorities may have additional required daily health monitoring, screening checklists or quarantine requirements
- Any athlete, coach, official, volunteer, or staff member that is required to leave a competition or training session as a consequence of experiencing signs or symptoms consistent with COVID-19 is required to contact their physician or local public health authority to consider the appropriateness of further investigations. Further investigations may include a test for COVID-19, which then may lead to the notification of appropriate public health officials regarding a positive test result. Public health officials will determine any requirements related to facility and/or group operations, as well as any requirements around contact tracing as it relates to managing the spread of the virus. The athlete, coach, official, volunteer, or staff member may not return until receiving clearance from the physician or local public health authority, and if a test for COVID-19 was completed, a negative test result will be required before further training or a return to competition is permitted. If home isolation is required, guidelines have been provided in a subsequent section below.
- **Officials, volunteers**, staff or athletes at risk for severe illness from COVID-19 are recommended to review their specific health concerns with their primary care provider prior to attending any competition or training sessions.
 - Common underlying health conditions which may place an individual at higher risk would include hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, obesity, chronic respiratory diseases such as asthma and those who are otherwise immunocompromised.

PROTOCOL FOR POSITIVE TEST

If any athlete, staff, **official or volunteer** test positive for COVID-19, the following steps must be taken:

- The athlete or staff member is removed from the training group immediately.
 - Team training may be suspended and any or all team members may be placed in self-isolation based on guidance from public health officials. If away at a training camp local public health authorities will advise on an isolation protocol that may involve the infected individual and/or the rest of the attending athletes and staff.
- The local public health authority will provide further management recommendations which may include further testing, and arrange for contact tracing.
- Any further team members who develop symptoms will be referred to the appropriate public health authority or help-line for guidance on testing and appropriate management.



- Team training could resume if:
 - Any athletes required to self-isolate have done so for 14 days.
 - Any athletes suspected of potential exposure to the virus have been cleared to return to group training by their physician in accordance with Provincial guidelines.

HOME ISOLATION RECOMMENDATIONS

If you find yourself ill with symptoms suggestive of COVID-19,

- Remain at home except to get urgent medical care.
- Do not go to work, school, pool or other public places.
- Cancel non urgent appointments.
- Do not use public transport.
- Notify your doctor or local health department by phone, as testing may be required.
- Monitor your symptoms and seek medical attention if you are having difficulty breathing, are unable to drink fluids, or if your illness is significantly worsening.
- Wear a face mask when around others, particularly when physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Separate from household members, at least 2 metres at all times.
- Do not have visitors.
- Stay in a well ventilated room (open windows) and use your own bathroom if possible.
- Sanitize common use surfaces frequently.
- If close contacts are vulnerable in terms of their health, consider alternative accommodations.
- Avoid sharing household items.
- Maintain excellent hand hygiene.
- Follow any other local health regulations

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- Avoid being exposed to COVID-19 by physical distancing (minimum 2 metres). Keep a safe distance at all times. **This is critical as COVID-19 can be spread prior to symptom onset.**
- Avoid crowded places.
- Avoid greetings with handshakes, hugging, high fives, etc.
- Athletes, **officials, volunteers**, and staff must respect physical distancing during all aspects of training and competition.
- Athletes, coaches, **officials, volunteers**, and staff may consider the use of protective masks or face covering. Masks should be considered when physical distancing isn't always possible such as on public transit on the way to training, crowded areas, and for those with chronic medical conditions. Remember that using a mask is not enough alone and should be combined with other preventative measures such as frequent hand washing and consistent physical distancing.



- Provide facility access with one entry point and a separate exit point.
 - If both entry and exit points are located at the same place, put in place measures that provide physical distancing of at least 2 metres.
 - Install signage to direct athletes, coaches, **officials, volunteers**, and staff to enter one at a time.
 - Provide floor markings to guide athletes, coaches, **officials, volunteers**, and staff movements through and out of the facility.
- Install physical markers on the floor or walls (cones, lines, stickers, wooden structures, etc.) that indicate appropriate two metres spacing distances for athletes, coaches, **officials, volunteers**, and staff working on deck or in dryland areas.
- Athletes, coaches, **officials, volunteers**, and staff must maintain appropriate distance from each other and facility staff members throughout the entire duration of time spent in the facility.
- Athletes should arrive in their training or competition suit as appropriate.
- **Officials should arrive in their uniform ready for the competition.**
- Showers should be mandatory only if a shower is available near the pool deck (without the need to enter the changing room).
 - Athletes should encourage good pool hygiene by showering at home before and after swimming.
- **The Government of Canada's community-based measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in Canada indicate that minimal risk can be maintained by avoiding prolonged (more than 15 minutes) of close contact within 2m of other individuals. As such, physical distancing of 2m should be strictly maintained when athletes and staff are in static positions. This would include on-deck instruction, waiting at the wall, congregating at white boards, etc. Multiple swimmers can train within a single lane with appropriate guidelines and protocols in place to ensure that any close interaction only occurs briefly when athletes pass each other on opposite sides of the lane. (Note: Some provincial health authorities have permitted sport activities to resume in some instances that permit cohorts/bubbles to train without physical distancing. The provincial guidelines of both the health authority and provincial section should be closely followed in these instances.)**
- Keep the same group of athletes for each training session
 - High Performance Centre and Senior Team athletes may relocate from within Canada to train with a resident group upon review and approval from Swimming Canada's National Team Physician and in line with provincial and municipal travel regulations.
 - Other athletes looking to relocate to train with a resident group (e.g. University Team) must follow all provincial and municipal regulations related to travel along with any Provincial Section guidelines that may be in place. Registration policies and procedures must be adhered to.
 - Athletes should only participate in one training group and should not move between multiple training groups.



- Dryland training in the pool facility should only resume when the provincial health authority and the facility permit it. Maintaining physical distancing and keeping contact surfaces clean are key factors in keeping dryland activities safe. Where provincial health guidelines/restrictions can not be adhered to, dryland training should not occur at the pool. Dryland training in an outdoor greenspace may be an option.
- Do not arrive any earlier than necessary for training or competition.
- Physical therapy treatments (which includes hands-on services provided by massage therapists, physiotherapists, chiropractors, athletic therapists and strength and conditioning practitioners) are higher risk. All athletes and staff utilizing these services must strictly follow all provincial health authority guidelines for the safe operations of treatment clinics. Other virtual and non-contact means of providing feedback and therapy advice should be considered as alternatives to physical treatment.
- Spectators/parents are required to follow facility rules and are expected to adhere to the physical distancing rules.
- Athletes are encouraged to act responsibly and promote appropriate behavior on social media with their peers.

HAND AND PERSONAL HYGIENE

- Clean/wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use a hand sanitizer (>60% alcohol). Coaches, swimmers, **officials, and volunteers** are encouraged to carry a personal supply of hand sanitizer for use as needed before, during and after training.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- On arrival, athletes, coaches, **officials, volunteers**, and staff must wash their hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer for at least 20 seconds.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a disposable tissue or the crease of your elbow when you sneeze or cough.
- Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Do not share food and drinks.

USE OF EQUIPMENT

- Clean equipment thoroughly with a disinfectant pre and post training session or competition. Remember that COVID-19 can last between two hours and nine days on surfaces depending on a number of factors. Simple cleaning measures can inactivate the virus.
- Personal items and clothing (backpacks, jackets, shoes, etc.) brought in by athletes, coaches, **officials, volunteers**, and staff should be kept to a minimum. Where bags must be brought in, they should be stored separately, with adequate space between each member's items (re: backpacks left 2 metres apart along pool deck).
- Limit the amount of equipment to be brought into the pool throughout the return to sport process. The coach is required to communicate necessary swim training equipment prior to each session.
 - Athletes are not permitted to share any training equipment.
- There is no permitted sharing of water bottles. Athletes, coaches, **officials, volunteers**, and staff are required to fill their personal water bottles at home, prior to leaving for the facility.



- Swimmers should not congregate around whiteboards and coaches should only use whiteboards if permitted by the facility. Coaches should bring a personal whiteboard kit (markers, erasers and wipes to disinfect board) for their own individual use. Whiteboard kits should not be shared.
- Officials and coaches are not permitted to share hand-held equipment such as stopwatches, clipboards or pens, with colleagues or others. Reminder to clean this equipment with disinfecting wipes pre and post training session or competition.
- In general, pool set-up such as putting in lane ropes and backstroke flags should be left to the facility to complete. Where this is not possible, specific protocols should be developed and hand washing should occur before and after setting up the equipment.

SAFE SPORT

- All efforts should be made to ensure that Open and Observable environments are maintained at all times. Open and observable environments means making meaningful and concerted efforts to avoid situations where a coach, official or other representative might be alone with an athlete (of any age) and/or vulnerable individual (of any age). All interactions between an athlete and an individual who is in a position of trust should normally, and wherever possible, be in an environment or space that is both “open” and “observable” to others.
- Open and Observable environments also apply to online communication. All forms of electronic communication (email, text, Zoom, Skype, etc.) should never be in the form of a one-on-one interaction and should always be done in a group setting.
- Training sessions should include a minimum of 3 people.

RETURN TO SWIMMING FRAMEWORK

The focus of the framework is a safe return to swimming that adheres to the overarching health, medical and safety considerations outlined in this document. It is highly recommended that programs should initiate their return to swimming in a progressive manner.

It is recognized that each situation will vary from location to location, but the principles included in the framework below should be applied when developing a programs plan. All return to training plans must adhere to the local public health information and guidelines, provincial section requirements and facility specific procedures.

DEVELOPING A PLAN

A return to swimming plan should only be initiated once municipal, provincial and federal regulations permit the resumption of this type of activity.

All the overarching health, medical and safety considerations must be adhered to along with any provincial section requirements.

Only swimmers who can successfully complete a swimming session without any physical manipulation and are not immunocompromised should be included initially.



Key Considerations

1. It is recommended that the initial return is completed with small controlled groups of swimmers. This will allow for the testing of protocols and ensuring that a safe environment can be maintained.
2. It is recommended that a progressive return of the various groups within a club is planned in consultation with the facility. Consider starting with the reintroduction of a limited number of groups of mature swimmers within the club that are capable of adhering to the physical distancing guidelines. There should be a minimum time period of two weeks, but three weeks is recommended, before introducing other groups to start training as well. By slowly reintroducing other groups over a number of weeks, it will be possible to assess both operations and health aspects of the return process.
3. As groups are added, a detailed plan will be required to stagger the arrival and departure of each group in order to alleviate potential congestion. A buffer of 10-15 minutes should be planned between groups in order to allow for an appropriate changeover.
4. As groups of swimmers are added, clubs should work with their facilities to ensure the group size, including coaches and swimmers, allow for physical distancing at the facility
5. All swimmers have been out of the water for a minimum of three months, it is recommended that a group only do a single session per day for a minimum of three weeks. From the fourth week, multiple daily sessions can be progressively added.
6. As clubs formulate groups to return to the pool, it is recommended that not all swimmers return at once. Consideration should be given to the experience and maturity of the swimmer(s) when determining the order of return.
7. As club's return to the pool, they should be cognizant of the fact that things have not returned to normal. As such, contingency plans should regularly be considered and evaluated as the current public health situation evolves. Should facilities once again be closed or access restrictions increase, the ability to quickly transition to an alternative plan will be important

GROUP SIZE

Group size must fall within any group gathering limitations that are in effect provincially. The practical application of group size limits should be evaluated based on published guidelines at the time of facility opening and may be specific to individual facility policies. The group size will also be limited by the number of available lanes, how they are configured and the available deck space in order to maintain physical distancing.

Multiple Swimmers & Single Lane Swimming for Competitive Swimmer/Club Training – Risk Mitigation
Swimming Canada in consultation with Lifesaving Society Canada recently published a document outlining how multiple swimmers can train in a single lane in club training, with proper risk mitigation strategies, can be done safely with minimal risk of COVID-19 transmission. Both Swimming Canada and Lifesaving Society Canada are committed to ensuring the safety and health of all aquatic participants. Both organizations also recognize the primary role that provincial/territorial health departments, provincial sections/branches and facilities play in ensuring the health and safety of all involved.

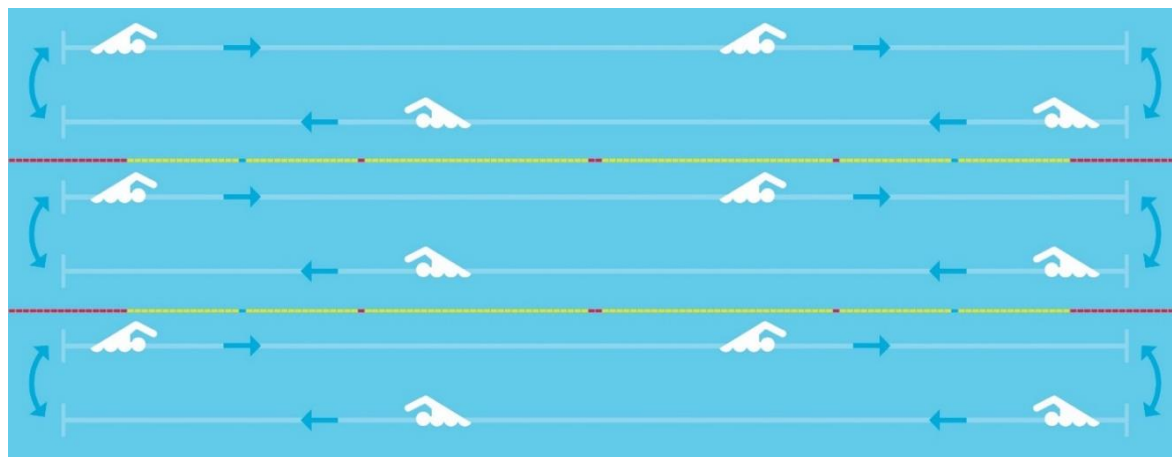
The full document can be found [here](#).

Double lane environments

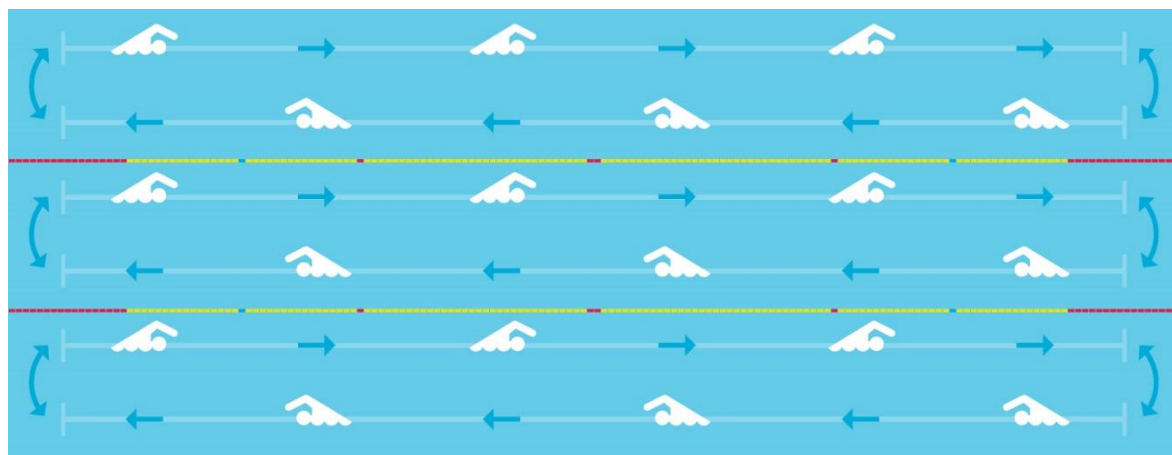
In the scenario where the pool is set up with double-lanes, it is possible for multiple swimmers to swim in each double-lane while maintaining physical distancing.

In these scenarios, it is important to clearly define a swimmers start/finish point as all swimmers will be unable to congregate at the wall and maintain physical distancing.

Swimmers will also need to be instructed to keep at least two metres between each other



E.g. Double-lane (SC) with four swimmers doing a large circle in the two lanes, swimming on top of the lane lines.



E.g. Double-lane (SC) with 6 swimmers doing a large circle in the two lanes, swimming on top of the lane lines.

Cohort/Bubble Swimmer Environments (Permitted only in those provinces where approved)

Where sport co-hort or sport bubble groups are permitted to form, the club should closely follow all guidelines/restrictions as set out by the provincial public health authority and the provincial section. All efforts to maintain physical distancing should occur within the sport cohort/bubble.



COACHING RECOMMENDATIONS

- Coaches and athletes should recognize the potential health implications of reduced training volumes experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many athletes will have experienced diminished strength, conditioning, and endurance capacity during their prolonged time away from swimming. To reduce the risk of over training injuries, it is advisable to begin with a gradual resumption of training, with the initial focus on low intensity and technique. If available, follow the advice of your local support team for advice in this area.
- Coaches should familiarize themselves with all aspects of the Overarching Health, Medical and Safety Information and Considerations section of this document (pg. 5-8)
- Coaches must familiarize themselves with the COVID-19 facility specific procedures and guidelines
- Coaches should keep a detailed attendance sheet and should ask themselves and their athletes the following questions prior to each training session. All questions must be answered “no” prior to attending any training session:
 - Do I/you have any of the symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, chest pain, difficult breathing, fever, chills, repeated shaking with chills, abnormal muscle pain, headache, sore throat, painful swallowing, runny nose, new loss of taste or smell, gastrointestinal illness?
 - Have I/you been in contact with or cared for someone with COVID-19?
 - Have I/you returned from a trip outside the country within the last 2 weeks?
- Coaches and staff must ensure they maintain appropriate distance from each other, lifeguards, and swimmers.
- Coaches should consider how they will educate their athletes on the importance of physical distancing and how they will reinforce this message during training.
- Workout presentation should not be in groups. i.e. not around whiteboards.
 - Examples:
 - Workout should be sent out via group electronic message in advance of the session (no one on one communication).
 - Review the workout with the group in advance of the session in an online environment. Show a pool diagram of where everyone needs to be and what they are going to be doing ahead of time to limit the amount of time they need to congregate on deck.
 - Athletes should print and bring their own copy of the workout to the session.
 - Swimmers could write workouts on laminated sheets/ small individual whiteboards.
- Video analysis should respect physical distancing requirements. Sharing videos electronically post workout is a good option.
- Coaches should not share handheld equipment such as stopwatches, clipboards, white board markers.
- Where do you stand on deck? Create visible markers on the floor to indicate appropriate spacing on the pool deck.



- Athlete interventions?
 - Think about the spacing in the pool during workouts:
 - i.e. staggered starts, opposite ends, how you communicate with athletes, have stations in the pool (Similar to a circuit), ensure markers are visible to athletes for start and stop points, (i.e. visible spacing marks on pool deck, on lane lines, etc.)
 - Make sure you are maintaining physical distancing during all interactions.
 - Have the swimmers rotate their training lane each practice so they can be in an outside lane for feedback.
 - Develop processes to deliver feedback post workout via online platform (always in a group setting).
- Workout content
 - Re-imagine swimming. There may be less water time and more land work – be creative.
 - Be creative with the structure of your practice times, the time between sessions, the numbers of workouts per week, dryland, etc.
 - Leave enough time between workouts and between land and water work to ensure that you can maintain all physical distancing and hygiene protocols.
 - Ensure there is a plan in place for linking land and water sessions ensuring that you can maintain all physical distancing and hygiene protocols.
 - Train the same hours but this will be a mix of dryland and water.
- Other
 - Make it clear that there is no penalty for missing practice and that if an athlete, or any member of their family does not feel well, they should stay at home.

TRAINING SESSION PROCEDURE

A “Training Session Procedure” should be documented for all athletes and staff and should follow your Provincial Section regulations and all facility regulations. This procedure should clearly explain:

1. The entry point to the facility for all participants, including where to park
2. The pathway to the pool, changeroom or other training facilities once inside
3. Departure process and pathway for all participants

CLUB PROGRAMMING CONSIDERATIONS

Please see Appendix 7 for additional information and resources on club programming for the 2020-2021 season.



RETURN TO COMPETITION

Safety is a key priority with all aspects of return to competition. Clubs need to adhere to provincial and national guidance regarding large gatherings. This may impact the number of swimmers at a competition, the officials and volunteers required and the attendance of spectators. The competitive environment (training and competition venues) should be continually assessed to ensure precautions are taken to minimize risk to the swimmers, officials, volunteers and those attending events as spectators (where and when permissible). Initially, return to competition may only take place locally, as clubs/programs consider the impacts of travelling away to competitions (hotels and restaurants).

Each Provincial Section has the authority to determine appropriate competition guidelines within their jurisdictions. A variety of meet formats/competition opportunities may be offered across the country including Time Trials, In-house competitions, Dual meets, Virtual meets, and non-sanctioned competitive opportunities.

RETURN TO COMPETITION – RECOMMENDATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES FOR OFFICIALS

Special Acknowledgement: The majority of the content created was derived based on input and feedback from a sub-committee of officials from the Officials, Competitions and Rules Committee (OCRC), who are also members of their provincial officials' committee, from across the country. Swimming Canada would like to thank all of the officials and provincial partners who contributed to this document.

The Recommendations and Best Practices for Official's resource and Virtual Meet User Guide was shared with the provincial sections so they may adapt to the realities in their province.

RETURN TO COMPETITION – NATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND INITIATIVES

From John Atkinson – "Returning to competition will happen and it can be planned to ensure the requirements are always in place i.e. health and safety. Racing from September 2020 to March 2021 for the Olympic and Paralympic Trials level swimmer should be looked at within in each province and what can be offered and organized, this can cut down travel (and flights) and provide opportunities. This will give them the racing and quality swimming expose that is important as they prepare for the trials in April of 2021.

There are always things coaches can organize in their program's such as suited effort's and or time trials and make them effective. For example, 'cold swims' in which swimmers who came in to train are asked to swim an unannounced a time trial targeting within 3% of their best time. Or we look to have these type swims under time trials conditions on off distances, i.e. 75m (for 100m events) or 150m (for 200m events) and so on. We are developing examples of this to be shared with our coaches, and that will be available soon.

Many of these innovations can be easily adapted for both Olympic and Paralympic Program swimmers, senior swimmers, junior swimmers and masters swimmers; the key is to use imagination, technology and stay in contact with coaching colleagues in your city, region or province to see what is possible while maintaining a focus on health.



Another thing to consider is making age group and club competitions more attractive to swimmer's and families, like we all know needs happen. This is required to perhaps retain our 12 and 13-year old swimmers in the sport, we do need to seriously address the 15 hour days at swim meets over a long weekend (3 days), and remember other sports will become more attractive for an experience sport that these swimmers' and their families may move towards. We want all the swimmers and their families back to the pool and we want them to stay in the sport.

With social distancing that is still required we will need to have less swimmers in warm ups at competitions, we need more space in the stands and on the pool deck. This can all happen as a result of the pandemic and now is perhaps time to make the changes we should do for the sport of swimming. There will be other things to consider, like how many officials are really required, and how coaches rotate through more competitions that the clubs attend (and not attend all competitions, be sensible like we need to be with the swimmers).

The swim meets may have fewer age groups in them i.e. only 11/12 year old's one weekend and then 13/14 year old's the next weekend, and other combinations of these examples. Training and the right fundamentals need to continue, and we don't need swimmers doing more competitions, but there may be more competitions organized that can achieve shorter sessions and make the sport more attractive to all (and allow the new normal to happen with regard to health, safety and social distancing) and we retain swimmers in clubs and therefore in the sport. Swimming Canada and the provincial sections are already developing resources for a return to competition. ***There is an opportunity here that swimming as a whole can grab and we all make the sport better, don't let it pass you by!***

National Initiatives:

- #SwimAgain Challenge – 6-week challenge, to re-engage and re-connect our swimming community, for all swimmers in all programs, began the week of September 28th and continued each week through to November 7th. Prizes were awarded each week with a grand prize at the end of the challenge. Swimmers at all levels, Olympic Program, Paralympic Program and Masters were all encouraged to take part.
- #SwimAgain Competition Challenge – provincially based, nationally supported, competition targeting Trials level swimmers in each province with a unique racing opportunity to compete against the best 8 or 10 swimmers in each event in the fall (SC) and in the winter (LC) ahead of Trials.
- #SwimAgain Racing Challenge – virtual club based, provincially and nationally supported competition, held across 4 stages running December to March, targeting all registered swimmers culminating in the Eastern and Western Canadian Championship Finals. More to be shared on this initiative in the coming weeks.
- Non-traditional racing recommendations, such as 'cold' swims and off-distance event racing.



RETURN TO COMPETITION – COACHING CONSIDERATIONS

Obviously, competitive programs, coaches and swimmers will be excited about the return of racing opportunities as facilities re-open and training is re-established. However, there are three aspects that need to be carefully considered and understood by everyone. First of all, there is a very real need to establish a strong foundational technical, energy systems, and mindset basis for possible targeted competitive opportunities in the Spring and Summer of 2021. Second, aside from the expectations of an Olympic and Paralympic Trials event and the Games themselves, it will take time to establish a calendar of appropriate and meaningful competition, including the increased complexity of holding such events given the COVID-19 restrictions. Finally, we likely need to remind ourselves that we are in the ‘long game’; that is, we coach and train to compete when it really counts at some point in the future and, therefore, the distraction of short-term competition can obstruct our long-term goals. It is imperative that the next few months are seen as a golden opportunity to really build a training basis and launch pad for competition outcomes over the next 12-24 months.

Over the course of the past few months, despite the best efforts of programs, coaches, and the swimmers themselves, a number of factors will have come into play. Without doubt swimmers will have ‘lost’ some level of specificity both for in-water training and competition, from the standpoint of technique, energy systems, and even mindset. On the other hand, other elements may well have progressed, such as an overall general level of conditioning and physical work capacity. Perhaps overall and specific movement strength (land-based) may have improved significantly. However, all of these changes should signal to coaches and swimmers the need to take a sensible and measured approach to swimming training over the next few months, so as to build the strong launch pad referred to earlier. Therefore, it is strongly recommended to take a ‘speed through technique and endurance’ approach to the first 3 months of a return to training. Improving technical execution (including starts, turns, & transitions) and establishing a strong aerobic capacity will allow programs to gradually push into higher intensities of training more effectively.

APPENDICES AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1) SWIMMING CANADA HIGH PERFORMANCE CENTRE RETURN TO SWIMMING PROCESS

Prior to receiving clearance to initiate Step 1 of the Swimming Canada Return to Swimming Guidelines, each High Performance Centre (HPC) will be required to complete the following process:

1. An assessment group consisting of the following people will meet to review the return to swimming plan with the assistance of the COPSI Network/OTP “COVID-19 Risk Assessment Tool for Sport”.
 - HPC Coach(es)
 - Swimming Canada IST Director
 - Swimming Canada National Team Physician
 - Swimming Canada Senior Coach, Olympic Program (for ONT, VAN, VIC)
 - Swimming Canada Senior Coach, Paralympic Program (for QUE)
 - Swimming Canada Senior Manager, NextGen HP Pathway (for ONT, VAN, VIC)
 - Swimming Canada Associate Director HP & Para-Swimming National Coach (for QUE)
2. Following the development of an acceptable plan, a virtual briefing session will be delivered to the HPC coach(es) and HPC swimmers in order to clearly explain the procedures and the responsibilities that all must adhere to. This briefing will review all pre-training, training and post-training procedures that are in place to protect the health and safety of all participants. The briefing will be delivered by the IST Director, Senior Coach, Olympic Program and Senior Manager, NextGen HP Pathway for Ontario, Vancouver, Victoria. The briefing will be delivered by the IST Director, Senior Coach, Paralympic Program and Associate Director HP & Para-Swimming National Coach for Quebec.
3. Following the briefing, the Senior Manager, NextGen HP Pathway (for ONT, VAN, VIC) or Associate Director HP & Para-Swimming National Coach (for QUE) will inform the applicable facility manager that the briefings have taken place. Once completed, the HPC coach(es) will be informed that training can resume according to the plan.
4. HPC coaches will be required to strictly monitor all established protocols. Any issues should immediately be reported back to the Assessment Group through the Senior Manager, NextGen HP Pathway (for ONT, VAN, VIC) or Associate Director HP & Para-Swimming National Coach (for QUE). During Step 1, the assessment group will convene a conference call daily during the first week, twice during the second week, and once at the end of third week in order review the current situation and address any issues or concerns.



2) RECOMMENDED RETURN TO SWIMMING PROCESS FOR CLUBS

The priority in a return to swimming plan is to protect the health and safety of athletes, coaches and practitioners. The plan must be developed with this principle in mind and all municipal, provincial and federal public health guidelines must be respected.

Prior to returning to training, each club should form an assessment group to create, review and approve the club's return to swimming plan. It is recommended that this group consist of 4-6 individuals that include the club's Head Coach and President, a medical doctor or public health professional (where possible), and aquatic facility manager. Clubs must be in communication with their Provincial Section prior to returning to training and it is recommended that Clubs share their return to swimming plan with their Provincial Section prior to initiating a return to training. Provincial Sections may have additional requirements, guidelines or approvals for return to training that must be adhered to.

Swimming Canada has adapted the COPSI Network/OTP "COVID-19 Risk Assessment Tool for Sport" to provide clubs with a list of key considerations when reviewing their return to swimming plan. This tool was developed from the general World Health Organization's risk assessment and mitigation checklist.

Following the development of an acceptable plan, a virtual briefing session should be delivered to all club coaches, swimmers and parents in order to clearly explain the procedures and the responsibilities that all must adhere to. This briefing will review all pre-training, training and post-training procedures in place to protect the health and safety of all participants.

Once training resumes, the head coach should be required to strictly monitor all established protocols. Any issues should immediately be reported back to the assessment group for further review. During Step 1, the assessment group should convene a conference call daily during the first week, twice during the second week, and once at the end of the third week in order review the current situation and address any issues or concerns.

RETURN TO SWIMMING PLAN KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The following questions should be at the forefront of the return to swimming protocols:

Specific Measures to Limit Transmission

What specific measures will you take to reduce the risk of transmission for athletes and staff? Be sure to be venue specific.

Staff Knowledge

What specific plans will you implement to increase the understanding, amongst your staff (including venue support staff), of the current COVID-19 situation?

Public Health Awareness

What specific steps will you take to keep athletes & staff fully apprised of current public health information regarding COVID-19?

Emergency Preparedness

What specific strategies are you preparing in order to respond effectively to emergencies? Please include any screening measures you will implement and the type of diagnostics tests (if any) that are being utilized to screen asymptomatic individuals.



Coordination & Logistics

1. What specific plans are you making to enhance communication and collaboration with your partner organizations?
2. What specific policies and procedures will improve the coordination of logistics between agencies?

Risk Communication

1. What specific action will be taken to communicate the risks associated with training during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What processes will limit the impact of misinformation from other sources

3) FEDERAL, PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL – COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH LINKS

Canada	Nova Scotia
Alberta	Nunavut
British Columbia	Ontario
Manitoba	Prince Edward Island
New Brunswick	Québec
Newfoundland and Labrador	Saskatchewan
Northwest Territories	Yukon

4) PROVINCIAL SECTION LINKS

Fédération de natation du Québec	Swim Nova Scotia
Swim Alberta	Swim Ontario
Swim B.C.	Swim Prince Edward Island
Swim Manitoba	Swim Saskatchewan
Swim New Brunswick	Swimming Newfoundland and Labrador

5) RELEVANT LINKS

Please visit the Swimming Canada COVID-19 Resource Hub for additional information:
<https://www.swimming.ca/en/resource-hub/>



6) NATIONAL COVID-19 RETURN TO HIGH PERFORMANCE SPORT TASK FORCE

Under the leadership of Own the Podium, a national task force has been created to address the return to sport for high performance athletes across all Olympic and Paralympic sport.

The National COVID-19 Return to High Performance Sport Task Force is operating under the following overriding values for High Performance Sport re COVID-19:

At a high performance level, sport transforms the lives of Canadians and provides role models for our youth and helps define our Canadian culture. For the purpose of this document, high performance athlete is referred to as:

An athlete or representative nominated by the NSO, and

- Identified on the NSO podium pathway as a senior or Next Gen athlete, or
- Receiving AAP funding support

A resumption of high performance sport is predicated on overarching value-based principles:

- 1) First and foremost, high performance athletes, coaches and support staff, respect the need to return to play/work in a manner that respects the guidelines and procedures developed by public health authorities at the federal, provincial and local level.
- 2) High performance athletes, coaches and support staff want to return to play/work in a manner that protects the health and safety of all participants and the communities they live and train in.
- 3) High performance sport is valued by Canadians and is a proven mechanism to strengthen, unite and build Canadian communities in times of crisis.
- 4) High performance athletes demonstrate resilience and adaptability to situations of crisis and adversity. High performance athletes can be role models for every Canadian in navigating through adversity created through COVID-19. High performance athletes can provide a beacon of hope, show a way forward for all Canadians and build civic pride.
- 5) High performance sport develops Canada's next generation of community leaders. The pursuit of excellence for Canada's high performance athletes is their chosen profession and as such return to play is essentially "return to work".
- 6) Return to play/work is a means to help Canadian communities heal, re-build and re-unite post COVID-19.

The Swimming Canada plan aligns with these National values and goes a step further and will allow for our Step 1 approach to returning to training to be used within Clubs and University programs as well as our High Performance Centres.



National COVID-19 Return to High Performance Sport Task Force Members

Anne Merklinger - Task Force Chair, CEO, Own the Podium
Dr. Mike Wilkinson - Chief Medical Officer, Canadian Olympic Committee
Dr. Andy Marshall - Chief Medical Officer, Canadian Paralympic Committee
Lorraine Lafreniere – CEO, Coaching Association of Canada
Paul Melia - CEO, Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport
Catherine Gosselin-Després - Executive Director of Sport, Canadian Paralympic Committee
Dave Mirota, Director, Olympic Performance, COC
John Atkinson – HPD, Swimming Canada
Rowan Barrett – HPD, Canada Basketball
Eugene Liang - HPD, Triathlon Canada
Marshall Starkman- General Manager, Hockey Canada
Mike Slipchuk – HPD, Skate Canada
Carla Nicholls – Para Performance Lead, Athletics Canada
Ian Mortimer - Director of Development, Canoe Kayak Canada
Kate Boyd - High Performance Manager and NextGen Coach, Nordiq Canada
Dave Ellis – Athletic Director, Canada Ski Cross
Inaki Gomez – Athletes Commission, Canadian Olympic Committee
Erica Gavel – Athletes Commission, Canadian Paralympic Committee
Jocelyn East - Co-Chair, Federal-Provincial/Territorial Work Group on Ethics, Safety & Integrity in Sport
Dale Measner - Co-Chair, Federal-Provincial/Territorial Work Group on Ethics, Safety & Integrity in Sport
Kelly Dearborn - Senior Program Analyst, Sport Canada
Jason Poole - Performance Services Director, Canadian Sport Institute Calgary
Dr. Suzanne Leclerc - Chief Medical Officer, Institut National du Sport du Québec
Dr. Taryn Taylor- U Sports
Mark Hahto -, Director, Summer Sport, Own the Podium
Dr. Patricia Chafe – Director, Winter Sport, Own the Podium
Dr. Andy Van Neutegem – Director, Performance Sciences, Research and Innovation, Own the Podium



7) CLUB PROGRAMMING CONSIDERATIONS

Special Acknowledgement: The majority of the content in this section was derived based on input and feedback from a subcommittee of club coaches from across the country. Swimming Canada would like to thank all of the coaches who contributed to this document.

In preparation for the 2020-2021 swim season there remain several unknowns as to what training and competitions will look like. The intent of this section is to provide clubs and coaches with some ideas and key considerations as they develop their programming (training) plans for the 2020-2021 season.

As swimming pools start to re-open across the country it is possible that the health restrictions will dictate that a club's programming plans will look very different for the 2020-2021 season. Collectively, as a sport, we can embrace this opportunity to be creative and think outside of the box to move the sport forward.

Competitive swimming is ultimately about developing great people in and out of the water. Much of this development has traditionally taken place in the pool. Given the importance of physical distancing in combatting the pandemic, clubs may be in a situation where they can't offer the same amount of pool training that they traditionally would. While this is a unique challenge, it does not need to compromise our ability to develop our swimmers both as athletes and as people.

Below are some ideas and consideration to help clubs think creatively about their programming that will hopefully help them provide value to their membership and maintain their financial viability.

In determining the programming plan for next season, a good idea is to survey to the swimmers and parents within your club to ask them what they are expecting and what they are looking for in the upcoming season (e.g. give them a menu of options and ask them to prioritize). Explain the situation, the limitations, how you see the future and what added value you can provide out of the water.

EXAMPLE PLANS

The following are some examples of how clubs can maintain the overall value and programming hours for different group configurations. Obviously this will differ greatly from program to program and the options are endless.

Example 1: Junior Group

Season	Group size	Water	Land	Added value	Total
"Normal"	24 (1 group)	12 (6x120 min)	2 hr	0	14 hours
2020-21	12 (2 groups)	6 (6x60 min)	5 hr	3 hr	14 hours

Example 2: Senior Group

Season	Group size	Water	Land	Added value	Total
"Normal"	16 (1 group)	18 (9x120 min)	4 hr	0	22 hours
2020-21	8 (2 groups)	13 (5x60 min+4x120 min)	6 hr	3 hr	22 hours



APPROPRIATE ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT INFO

What is the Athlete Development Matrix (ADM)?

The ADM is a broad roadmap for the development of swimmers and describes the observations, actions, and words we want them to portray, demonstrate, and display across each stage of development.

There are 4 separate but interconnected components of the Athlete Development Matrix. The following has been copied from The Athlete Development Matrix, Sport for Life Version 1.1 November 2016, page 4)

Physical Capacity Development

The development of stamina, strength, speed, suppleness (flexibility) appropriate to the stage of development of the athlete, and undertaken when the body is best able to respond to the training stimulus. This also includes the development of ancillary skills, such as warm-up, cool-down, nutrition, hydration, rest, and recovery.

Technical/Tactical/Strategic Skills Development

The learning of basic human movements, fundamental movement skills, foundation sport skills, and the whole range of sport-specific skills required to reach the highest level of performance. These are sometimes called psycho-motor or just sport skills. This component also includes the tactics and strategy of sports in general, and eventually the tactics and strategy specific to the sport of choice and event or position in which the athlete specializes. In developing their sport-specific ADM, sports may elect to separate the sport technical skills from tactics and strategy.

Competition and training skills form part of this pillar for Swimming Canada.

Psychological (Mental) Skills Development

The development of sport psychology skills, appropriate to the stage of development of the athlete.

Swimming Canada has identified the following key elements in the development of mental skills:

- positive attitude,
- motivation,
- goal setting,
- emotion identification and control,
- attention/focus, and
- reducing errors.

Life Skills Development

Development of the skills required for successful growth to become a confident, self-sufficient individual capable of effective, independent, and harmonious group action, in the pursuit of individual or team sport participation and performance.

Social and Emotional Learning Skills (SEL) are highlighted in the development of Life Skills in the Swimming Canada ADM.



ADDED VALUE

If pool time is limited, there are many ways to create other relevant content that will contribute to an athlete's development. Below are a few examples of ways to create additional content and added value to your program. Adding additional content to a program often comes with additional time and effort. Starting small and gradually adding new programming elements is recommended. The list below should be considered a list of options and not a list of must do's.

Communication

- Have mass Zoom calls with parents to explain what's going on and why? Essential to educate them, keep them engaged now, so they come back when the pool opens.
- Host Zoom parent groups on specific topics.
- Create a YouTube channel and use all social media platforms to keep in touch and promote the club.

Physical capacities

- Hold group Zoom workouts, coach led – i.e. 20 min skipping/core, etc.
- Look at different sports to do cross-training and fill in some hours (gymnastic workout, track workout, etc.).
- Ask senior athletes to create a dryland practice.
- Asking the swimmer what equipment and space they have at home so you can cater the dryland specific to the swimmer.
- Teach and reinforce the basics.
- Use mini white boards 1 per swimmer/lane to log set parameters, then coach takes a picture and reviews and feeds back by text.
- Cycle workouts allowing for 1 longer session per swimmer once/week.
- Some sort of online competition piece against other clubs.
- Rest and Regeneration – sleep and impact.
- Competition and Recovery nutrition.

Technical/tactical/strategic competencies

- Use online underwater stroke videos for technical demonstrations.
- Watch old race videos to discuss strategies and tactics with swimmers in small groups.
- Show international races to illustrate strategies and for motivation, host race nights where you talk through famous races pointing out technique/ strategy etc.
- Get officials to run Zoom clinic series:
 - One for each stroke and swimmers learn how they get DQ'd.
- Teach swimmers to understand energy systems.



Mental or psychological skills

- Zoom education sessions on doping, anatomy & physiology, etc.
- Guest speakers to come talk to the swimmers (doesn't have to be swimming related can just be life related).
- In person team bonding exercises outside the pool that fit into the government guidelines.
- Set up an online log book for each swimmer or collectively with a group.
- Sessions on goal setting.

Life Skills (cognitive, social, and emotional learning skills)

- Come up with a 12-week education series that the coach can run for the swimmers, the parents.
- Set daily tasks for the swimmers (Younger ones): Clean your room, etc.
- Hold Zoom interactive cooking (Healthy angle and slip in nutrition) – set a 12-week progression?
- Host a Zoom team quiz.
- Host Zoom socials.
- Team building exercises outside of sport as a way to connect to swimmers.
- Nutrition and hydration basics.



Example 1 - Junior Group Weekly Plan

Season	Group size	Water	Land	Added value	Total
"Normal"	24 (1 group)	12 (6x120min)	2 hr	0	14 hours
2020-21	12 (2 groups)	6 (6x60min)	5 hr	3 hr	14 hours

Example Weekly Template

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
AM		Zoom 60 min Club challenge		Zoom 60 min Cooking		Water 60 min Land 45 min	
PM	Water 60 min + Land 45 min (Group 1 starts in water, Group two on land)	Water 60 min Land 60 min	Water 60 min Land 45 min	Water 60 min Land 60 min	Water 60 min Land 45 min	Zoom 60 min Team Quiz/ social	

Notes:



Example 2 – Senior Group Weekly Plan

Season	Group size	Water	Land	Added value	Total
“Normal”	16 (1 group)	18 (9x120 min)	4 hr	0	22 hours
2020-21	8 (2 groups)	13 (5x60 min+4x120 min)	6 hr	3 hr	22 hours

Example Weekly Template

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
AM	Water 120 min Land 45 min		Water 120 min Land 45 min		Water 120 min Land 45 min	Water 120 min Zoom 60 min Team Quiz/social	
PM	Water 60 min Land 45 min Zoom 60 min Stroke analysis	Water 60 min Land 45 min	Water 60 min Land 45 min	Water 60 min Land 45 min	Water 60 min Land 45 min Zoom 60 min Education series		

Note