Six-week open-water swim-confidence programme: Open water available every week

Three swims a week, from first float to race-distance rehearsal

Brick to Brick

Week	Mon	✓	Tue	✓	Wed	✓	Thu	✓	Fri	✓	Sat	✓	Sun	✓
Week 1 Calm in the water	—		Pool 30 min: 10 × 25 m easy with 30 s rest, breathing out fully under water; float on front and back in the deep end		—		Pool 30–40 min: 4 × 50 m easy; 4 × 25 m looking forward every 6 strokes; stop mid-length, tread water 30 s, restart		—		Open water, supervised, 20–30 min: wade in, face in, float, blow bubbles; 4–6 swims of 1–2 min along the shore in standing depth		—	
Week 2 Longer and steadier	—		Pool 35 min: 6 × 100 m easy; look forward for the last 25 m of each		—		Pool 35–40 min: 2 × 200 m without stopping at the walls; 4 × 25 m head-up or breaststroke recovery		—		Open water, supervised, 30 min: 3 swims of 3–5 min along the shore; practise a back-float rest; sight a fixed landmark		—	
Week 3 Away from the edge	—		Pool 40 min: 3 × 300 m continuous with no push-offs, breathing to both sides		—		Pool 40 min: 6 deep-water starts (tread water, then 15 m brisk, then settle); swim beside a friend		—		Open water, supervised, 30–40 min: 2 × 10 min between landmarks with support nearby; practise your reset once on purpose (stop, roll on back, breathe out slowly, restart)		—	
Week 4 Swimming with others	—		Pool 40 min: 400 m continuous, looking forward every 6–8 strokes; 4 × 50 m easy		—		Club or group session: swim close to others at a gentle pace; practise drafting on feet		—		Open-water group session: 2 × 10–15 min with swimmers around you; turns round a buoy; starts from deep water		—	
Week 5 Race skills	—		Pool race rehearsal: deep-water start, 50 m faster, settle, then your race distance continuous		—		Pool 30 min easy; 6 × 25 m looking forward		—		Open water in your wetsuit: 70–80% of race distance continuous, with a start and two buoy turns		—	
Week 6 Rehearse and taper	—		Pool 30 min easy with 4 × 50 m at race effort		—		Pool 20–25 min easy, then 10 min picturing the swim start to the exit		—		Open water: full race-distance rehearsal in a supervised session or practice event		Optional: 15 min easy float and swim, or rest	

Effort guide

- Easy: you can breathe every two or three strokes and feel in control.

- Brisk (starts only): faster for 15–50 m, then settle back to easy.
- If panic rises: stop, roll onto your back, breathe out slowly, sight the shore or a kayak, then restart with breaststroke or easy front crawl.

Notes

- Days marked — have no swim; keep your bike, run and rest days as your plan says.
- Never swim alone in open water. Use supervised sessions with lifeguards or kayak cover, a bright cap and a tow float.
- Repeat any week that did not feel manageable. Some swimmers need a season; that is normal.
- Swim in your race wetsuit at least two or three times before race day.
- See a doctor before open-water swimming if you have a heart condition, have fainted when exercising, or have panic attacks outside the water.
- **Week 1:** Only move on when getting in and putting your face in feels routine.
- **Week 4:** If the group feels too close, start at the back or side, as you would in a race.
- **Week 6:** If the rehearsal felt hard, repeat weeks 5 and 6 before you race.

Race date and start

Race / goal date: _____

Week 1 starts (Monday): _____