

ALERT!!! Nutrition Clinic **March 10** featuring Denise Cook!

Schedule Changes this month:

New Saturday Morning Workouts:

6:30-8:00 am

No swimming the following evening:

- Thursday, March 1st
 Due to home basketball game

If you missed the clinic and would like a packet of Ed's dozen+ articles and other information, please bring a check for \$5 to Red River Masters.

Happy March Birthdays!

Peet Booyesen—3rd
 Maryanne Cummings—26th

Welcome New & Returning Swimmers

Kris Gavin
 Rosemary Kimball
 Kim McLain
 Jonnene Moore
 Anna Beth Sanford
 Lee Stevens
 Joyce Willey

Great Swim Clinic February 2-4

We held a clinic on Feb. 2-4 with guest clinician Ed Nessel. There was a lot of learning and idea exchange. You can be sure that the experience will continue to influence our program.

The use of underwater video was very instructive and we plan to continue to use this important tool. As well, we would like to set up some longitudinal studies to capture the benefits of the physiological testing done by a handful of folks.

Among some of the new ideas you will see more of:

- We will continue to add opportunities to build leg strength and ankle flexibility

with the use of fins and special kicking drills such as kicking on the side with a board to stretch the lats were reviewed.

- Weights are important part of training. Those under 40 can do 3x per week, those over 40 are limited to 2x a week with a minimum of one day of rest between sessions. If anyone is seeking advice for their own weight training, please let us know.
- To check proper roll and good direction, blacked-out goggles were used. We will use this tool to help with freestyle, especially for open water.

- Hydrodynamics dictate the length of the body line and a narrowing of this line toward the feet dramatically increase speed. We will be working this idea into our streamline drills
- 300 meter distances are sufficient for most individuals to activate all metabolic systems. We will be using this as one benchmark in our training.
- "Walking the Water" helps to get the feel for good mechanics—we will be doing drills to emphasize.
- Easy Speed is as fast as you can go while controlling your breathing and this will be a focus for pace sets.

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New Saturday Workouts & March 10 Clinic

We will be starting Saturday morning workouts on **March 3**. The workouts will be from 6:30-8:00 am and should give a good opportunity to get in a nice long workout before weekend donuts! The Saturday workouts will give us a chance to

introduce some new skills and do two main sets.

Kris Gavin will be joining us to lead these workouts. Kris has been around swimming for a long time and is an instructor at the Swim School. Please be sure to welcome Kris.

To help kick off the Saturday workouts, we will have a clinic "Nutrition for Optimal Training" on **March 10**. This will be lead by our own Denise Cook. The clinic will be right after the workout, 8:15-9:00 am. Cost is \$10 to cover the cost of the FOOD!



Sprint & Distance Test Sets

Y'all likely noticed we got the stopwatch out a number of times again this month. This will recur to help measure your improvement.

This month we did a set of 100s and 50s comparing swimming with fists and with the fingers extended. This set helps to reinforce how just a couple of square inches makes a difference, often more than 10% in your time. It also illustrated vividly how improper mechanics in breathing can be underlined when the crutch of the hand moving down and

away to push the head up to breathe is removed—especially when you are needing air!

The 300/400/500 swim was a chance to compare to last month's set and again check in with an appropriate 100 pace for you.

So many people ask us how to increase their pace in longer swims. Pushing the highest end of speed is one proven way to improve overall speed. By seeing how fast you can go, you gain new insights, sometimes unconsciously, how to move efficiently through the



water. Having a firm understanding of your top speed can be valuable when it comes to starting races and managing bursts of speed when catching and passing people in races.

WOW! Records & National Triathlon Ranking!!!

Congratulations are in order for the Red River Masters that set records at the Short Course Meters championships in December. These include some very fast swims and breaking some old records. Among the RRM honorees include:

Linda Cleveland with a blazing 29.93 in the 50 meter freestyle, breaking a 10-year old record by over 1/3 of a second.

The quartet of Randy Patton, Leah Ramoz, Linda Cleveland, and Bill Cleveland shattered the 9-year old record in the 400 meter mixed free relay by over 33 seconds, finishing in 4:49.49.

This same quartet of Ramoz, Patton, Bill, and Linda Cleveland screamed past the previous record in the 400 meter mixed medley relay by over 32 seconds, finishing in 5:24.56.



Congratulations to Linzie Hebert for earning a fifth place standing in the 2006 triathlon rankings in the 20-24 women's age group. This is a fantastic achievement and we know that Linzie worked hard to achieve this ranking.

Linzie is just a couple spots behind Kate Ripple of Baton Rouge. It will be great to follow Linzie's progress this season to see how she fares against some great competition. It is a blessing that she has some great competition nearby.

If you don't know, Kate's mom Jan Ripple was a world class triathlete in the 1980's and her sister Shelley was a world class swimmer in the 1990s.

It is a blessing to have such great athletes in our midst—both as an inspiration and a challenge. Let's do all we can to support these great folks achieve a better standing in 2007! Maybe some of their dedication can help all of us learn how to be more focused in our pursuits.



Upcoming Events & Workout Reminder

We have a number of events planned for later this year—mark your calendar now if you are so inclined.

First, thank you for spreading the word about Red River Masters. We continue to get new swimmers. We swim at **NOON on Monday, Wednesday, & Friday.** In addition, we continue all weekdays at 5:30 am and **Mon., Wed., & Thurs.** 6-7pm. We will add Saturday mornings starting March 3.

On **March 10** we will have a clinic “Nutrition for Optimal

Training” featuring our own Denise Cook. Only \$10 right after the workout—includes **FOOD!**

On **March 24-25** the Southern Masters Short Course Yards Championships will be held in **Jackson, MS.**

On **April 14**, we will likely have a one-day **clinic** featuring **Dick Bower** and his thoughts on the ergonomics and physics of swimming.

On **May 12**, the **Senior Olympics** will be at **Centenary** for ages 40+. **NOTE THE**

DATE CHANGE FROM EARLIER COMMUNICATION. We also plan to have a 1,650 swim at this meet that we expect to open to all masters swimmers.

On **June 23**, English Channel Swimmer **Marcia Cleveland** will join us for an **Open Water Clinic.** We are looking into staging an **open water race** sometime in **September** (isn't this when the alligators are hungriest?)

August 10-13 the USMS Long Course Nationals will be at **The Woodlands, TX.**



Check-Off Challenge

USMS annually conducts a check-off challenge to motivate swimmers to complete a wide range of events. The objective of this event is to challenge yourself by making a check list and swimming each of 18 swimming events found in pool competition.

The participating swimmer gets a T-shirt in advance, which will list the 18 swimming events

on the back. These events include: 50, 100, 200, 400 or 500, 800 or 1000 free, and 1500 or 1650 free, half-mile and one-mile open water, 50, 100, and 200 back, 50, 100, and 200 breast, 50, 100, and 200 fly, 100, 200, and 400 IM.

As you swim the events, simply check them off on the back of the T-shirt using an indelible marker. You can swim

them during practice, during a swim meet, during an organized open water event, or during an organized open water training session -- any time, any place, at your own pace!

Enter this event by February 28th to get your shirt in mid-March and get swimming! The entry form can be found at:

<http://www.usms.org/fitness/2007checkoff.pdf>



Use our Website!

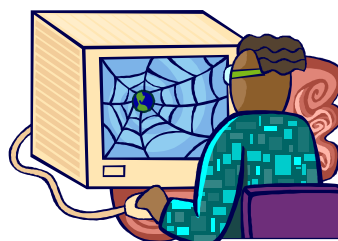
We continue to expand the use of our website. It will have current information along with program descriptions. A number of important things to look for include:

- Schedule changes and other important news: Home page
- Test set results: link from Home Page and “Training”
- Email links to all our coaches
- Upcoming clinics and com-

petitions on the Events page

- Forms such as the Bank Draft and registration forms
- Archive of newsletters and articles
- Contact information for the vendors with which we have discount arrangements

IF you have friends that you would like to invite to our program, a great introduction is the website. Not only does it cover all the basics about our club, it also provides contact



information.

Check us out at <http://www.redrivermasters.com>



Elements of Swimming FAST

At the February Clinic, Ed Nessel talked about three elements of swimming faster. He talked about technique, strength, and conditioning in the order of priority for fast swimming. I would like to extend his ideas, especially in the technique area and prioritize the most important elements of technique to improve speed and lower the amount of effort needed to go a certain speed. Within the area of technique, the most important elements for focus are drag, mechanical efficiency, hand speed, and turnover. When these are done properly with sufficient frequency, the strength and conditioning elements should take care of themselves.

The first and most important element of swimming fast is a constraint compared with the other s which are propulsive elements. Drag is by far the most important element of improving swimming. Water is about 1,000 times denser than air and has the unusual property of increasing resistance as your speed through it increases. Drag is important for the newer swimmer and the experienced swimmer since it is such a limiting factor.

What can be done to optimize the body movements to minimize resistance? Let's start from the head down; controlling what the head does has a tremendous impact on the rest of the body. The first is head position. Many people were taught to swim looking in the direction they are going. This thinking was revised in the mid-90s with the advent of Pilates and its positive influence on several world class swimmers. The current thinking is to look at the bottom of the pool with the water line at the hair line (at least where it should be, gents). Moving the head higher lowers the

hips and causes a lot of frontal resistance. Dropping the head lower causes a "snowplow" effect that increases frontal resistance on the head and shoulders.

In conjunction with head position is head movement and breathing efficiency. When the head moves around, the body needs to compensate with extra-neous movements to keep the body going straight ahead. It is so important to keep the head moving as little as possible. The head needs to move in concert with the body in 3 of 4 competitive strokes (not on the back) to minimize the resistance created by extra motion. This is usually seen by keeping the head low or turning it as little as possible to get the breath.

The last of the three major impacts on drag is body position. Ideally, the body will be relatively level in the water. The farther away from this you get, the greater resistance must be overcome. Besides head position, the amount of effort from the legs and kick efficiency can have a large impact. As well, a good body roll in free and back can minimize the side to side movement of the hips.

Mechanical efficiency is closely related to drag. The most important element in mechanical efficiency is ensuring the body rolls around the spine in free and back. In breast and fly, it is important to create a wave through the water rather than a jerky up and down motion. These motions engage the strong and tough core muscles in your trunk. By leveraging these muscles, you can increase the power supplied by the arms and legs. Using these muscles engages the strongest muscles and coordinates body movements.

The arms are clearly the most important propulsive force in swimming. It is important to have the arm stroke enter the water through one hole to reduce drag. It is then also important to have the arm take advantage of the core muscles for improved strength. Lastly, it is important to use the maximum surface area of the arm, especially from the elbow to the finger tips, to move yourself forward.

The legs also require mechanical efficiency. To minimize drag, they need to stay entirely inside the tube created by the body. Otherwise, they stick out like a parachute. Similarly, the ankle should be flexed and toe should be pointed in the direction opposite travel. If the ankle is at a 90 degree angle, this can be disastrous since it is possible to go backwards with the ankle in this position. If you don't have much ankle flexibility, it will be very important to keep in mind and not over kick since this can be very counter productive. The knees should bend a little and, optimally, the kick will initiate in the hip and whip the feet in propulsion.

Hand speed is an element of swimming many people do not adequately grasp. It is impossible to compress a liquid, so it is important to find non-moving water to move. It's sort of like running in loose sand—you have to keep pressing down to hit "bottom." With hand speed, it is important to continually accelerate the hand through the water. Not only does this help with propelling you through the water, but it also helps ease the over-water recovery portion of the stroke. By taking advantage of the mo-

mentum built by the hand speed acceleration, the recovery can carry that through to get the hand moving toward the next stroke.

Turnover rate is another important factor in swimming speed. This is closely related to hand speed and the amount of distance covered in each stroke. A swimmer with a high turnover typically has shorter strokes, meaning that their hands travel slightly less distance on each stroke than if they had a slightly slower turnover and held onto the water longer. It is important to moderate the number of arm cycles per length to achieve your aim. Typically, a longer distance swimmer benefits from a slower turnover than a sprinter, despite many exceptions.

The mastery of good technique helps to build the appropriate muscles and swimming strength. As well, having regular workouts help reinforce good technique while building conditioning. Knowing which is the most limiting factor for you can help prioritize where to improve next.



RRM SPLASH

Is an irregular publication from an irregular bunch.

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"Confidence is preparation. Everything else is beyond your control.
- Richard Kline