

Lap Swimming Etiquette Guide

Choosing a Lane

- Watch the Pool - Take a minute to watch what is going on in the pool, read any pool or lap swim rules, get your swim gear (kick board, pull buoy, paddles, etc.), and start thinking about lanes you are going to swim in today.
- Number of Swimmers in a Lane - If one lane has a swimmer in it and one is empty, swim in the empty lane. Be ready to share it if needed, but don't force the swimmer that got to the pool before you did share a lane if it is not necessary.
- Speed and Skill Level - If the lanes are all occupied, watch how the swimmers in those lanes swim. Which swimmer or swimmers look like the best match for what you do when you swim? Which would interfere with you the least?

Getting in the Lane

- Starting - Sit down on the side of the pool and hang your legs in the water, off to one side of the lane, and let the swimmer(s) in the water complete a few more laps before you get in the pool. The idea is to let them know you are there - give them fair warning - and give them the chance to stop and confirm how the lane is going to work..
- Circle Swimming vs. Splitting the Lane - If the swimmer(s) stops, ask if they want to circle or split the lane (if there are already two or more swimmers in the lane, you must circle swim, and all of the swimmers need to know that circle swimming is starting). If they don't stop, then follow the same pattern they are using or ask the guards for help.
- Splitting the lane is dividing the lane in half, with the center line on the bottom of the pool marking no-man's land. You swim on your half of the lane no matter which direction you are swimming.
- Circle Swimming is usually in a counter-clockwise direction. You swim on the right side of the lane going down the pool, and when you reach the wall and do your swimming turn, you swim back on the other side of the lane (still the right side since you have turned around). The center line on the bottom of the pool is still no-man's land.

Swimming

- Pushing Off of the Wall - When you leave the wall to start swimming, give the swimmer ahead of you adequate space. Don't push off immediately after they do or you will be hitting the swimmer's feet.
- Choice of Swimming Stroke - If you are ahead of someone, and you switch strokes, and this results in you going slower and getting caught from behind, it may have been better etiquette for you to make that switch after the other swimmer passes you. When you change strokes, think about how that impacts the way the lane is working.
- Turning - If you are circle swimming, then you should aim for the left side of the lane as you turn and push off in a straight line. You are swimming toward the wall on the right side of the lane. When you are a few meters from the wall, shift your aim for the left side of the wall, turn on the left side of the wall "T" and push off in a straight line.
- Stopping - If you are going to stop while lap swimming, only stop on the wall; stopping mid-pool can cause problems. As you approach the wall, swim straight into the right corner of the wall, on the right side of the wall "T" and compress yourself into that corner, yielding as much wall space as possible for other swimmers to use for turns.
- Passing - One or two gentle taps on the foot ahead of you tells that swimmer in the lead that the swimmer behind them wants to pass (hitting that foot 20 times, grabbing it, etc. - bad, bad etiquette). Lap swim etiquette is for the swimmer being passed to stop at the next wall, allowing the other swimmer to do a turn and pass them, then the passed swimmer resumes swimming (this is not the case in competitive swim workouts). It is OK for a swimmer that wants to pass to cut across a lane and change direction, but the swimmer needs to be aware of what is happening around them.
- Not Lap Swimming - Someone doing water aerobics, water running, socializing - not lap swimming in lap lanes - is a breach of etiquette during lap swim hours, unless the non-lap-swimmer has permission from pool management.
- Get Your Own Gear - When you arrive at the pool, you should get your own swim gear (kick board, flippers, pull-buoy). Be sure to use only your own gear. Don't use other's swim gear.

Getting Out

- When you have completed your workout, look around the pool deck. Are other swimmers waiting for an open lane? If so, then don't dawdle, get out of the pool to open a spot for the next swimmer.
- Remember to put away any gear you used for your workout.

One more lap swimming rule, not on the list, is common sense. If you would not like it to happen in your lane when lap swimming, then don't do it!