

## March Training Tip

Below is an excerpt from a great website called swim smooth ([www.swimsmooth.com](http://www.swimsmooth.com)). I know some of you have already read this as you sent it my way, But I thought it was worthwhile to share. If you have never visited the site I encourage you to! the below information can be applied to all your disciplines. Ok - enjoy!

### Getting In Some Weekly Discomfort -

You're swimming a set of 8x 200m and you are on number three. Your heart rate is high and your breathing deep, and you're feeling some heaviness and burn from your muscles as they resist the effort. There's still another five reps to go, perhaps 15 or 20 minutes of hard work ahead of you, which right now seems like an eternity. Sustained speed training is critical to reach your potential as a distance swimmer. What are your thought process in this situation? Are you longing to stop? Thinking of a good excuse to shorten the set? Or perhaps you avoid training sets completely knowing they are uncomfortable?

This 'discomfort time' is the critical period where your body's systems are challenged so that after the session they adapt and you gain fitness. Without reaching this point you won't gain the fitness improvements you are looking for. So this 'discomfort time' is not just unavoidable when fitness training, it should be something you are actively seeking out. The psychology here is very important, don't think: "God, this is really tough." Instead, replace that thought with: "OK, this is what it is all about. Swim it out, one stroke and one lap at a time." Embrace the discomfort as a place you want to be and you will have fundamentally changed your thinking. From there on training sets start to feel much easier.

Staying In The Moment it's a sporting cliché to tell someone to 'stay in the moment' but within a challenging fitness set it's absolutely critical that you do. Never think ahead but simply focus on your stroke movements and your breathing rhythm as the effort becomes challenging. It can be a good idea to monitor your technique but only ever think about one thing and keep it very simple, for instance you might choose to focus on:- Exhaling smoothly into the water- Lightly tapping your big toes together as they pass - 'tap tap tap'- Keeping one goggle in the water and one out when you breathe- Pressing the water backwards, not downwards. It's essential you keep these thoughts very simple as most of your focus will be required to maintain your effort and pace things out well.

Make Sure You Are Distance Training, Not Sprint Training. If you've been following Swim Smooth for a while you will know we are big fans of CSS / threshold training. This involves sustaining a strong pace for longer periods with short recoveries and is quite distinct from sprint training which is attacked at a faster pace but with longer recovery periods. Swimming at this pace does not feel

like sprint training and the effort progressively builds over the set while holding the same pace. Initially it may feel around 6 out of 10 for effort but progressively builds up to a 9 out of 10 by the end of the set. Pacing these sets well is essential (with the same pace for each repetition) even if you have to start a little slower, that way you will get the right fitness gains and can maintain your stroke technique throughout. CSS / threshold pace targets the energy systems critical to distance swimming performance so that they adapt and improve. Sports scientists call this training principle 'specificity' and it really works - experience some consistent weekly discomfort in your CSS sets and your swimming will come on leaps and bounds. It could be just what you are lacking with your swimming. Swim Smooth!

Want to read more:

[http://clicks.aweber.com/y/ct/?l=8KokR&m=JPoaDTiSC19\\_SC&b=l5QOJOc\\_2FESRIfN.n3fog](http://clicks.aweber.com/y/ct/?l=8KokR&m=JPoaDTiSC19_SC&b=l5QOJOc_2FESRIfN.n3fog)

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