# Letterkenny 24/7 Open water swimming

Practicing swimming in open water is a useful addition to your training schedule. Many people find that only swimming in a pool leaves them unprepared for the rigours of swimming outdoors in a pack on race day. There are many skills, such as sighting, drafting and mass starts that can be massively improved with just a few open water sessions, but most importantly you will gain confidence in an unpredictable environment, which will ultimately lead to a better performance on race day.

Swimming open water makes for a great workout too, and with a little experience it will turn out to be the most enjoyable session in your schedule. Remember though, many triathlons, particularly early season races, are pool based, so there is no obligation to head outdoors.

The club training sessions are held from Easter until September at Gartan Lake, starting from the Boathouse. The water immediately around the Boathouse is reasonably shallow and tends to be very calm - newcomers are encouraged to swim in this area to start with. Further out the water can get choppier so is ideal for gaining experience in some of the conditions you may encounter in a race, with the reassurance of kayak cover if you find yourself in difficulty.

In order to ensure everybody's safety, the club have a number of rules that must be adhered to. None of these are onerous, but we ask that you study them thoroughly before partaking in the sessions.

# Open Water Code of Conduct

* Open water swimming is conducted at Gartan Lake, Churchill, Co Donegal
* Open water Training Sessions will take place on Monday evenings at 6:30pm normally between May 1st and September 30th each year.
* No entry to the water will be allowed until the nominated club Lake Safety Marshal has carried out the lake safety assessment; this is to ensure that the lake environment is safe and does not put swimmers or members of the general public at risk.
* Swimmers will wear wetsuits and a brightly coloured swim hat at all times whilst in the water. The lake may be cold and in line with Triathlon Ireland and ITU rules wetsuits will be compulsory if the temperature is below 15'C and forbidden above 23'C. Between these two temperatures wetsuits are at the discretion of club members
* Inexperienced swimmers must wear a visibility buoy. These are supplied by the club at reduced cost.
* All swimmers enter the water at their own risk. The lake can be a dangerous environment, weather and visibility can quickly change, ensure your own safety.
* Swimmers must be capable of completing 400 meters continuous swimming and be a current member of the club or "Triathlon Ireland ".
* Before each session, a pre-swim briefing will be given by the safety marshal to provide clear guidance on the session, the group structure, the course and information on what to do if experiencing difficulty. (Rolling onto back and raising 1 arm in the air.)
* All swimmers will register their name at the club registration point with the club safety marshal every time they enter or exit the water.
* Entry to and exit from the water will be at the boat house only unless instructed otherwise by the club safety marshals.
* Safety cover will be provided at all sessions and this will operate at the minimum recommended ratio of kayaker to swimmer as applied by Triathlon Ireland event rules.
* Participants should use a buddy system and swim in pairs based upon speed and ability.
* Swimmers will use one of the designated courses set by the club. The courses will be marked by buoys or landmarks and will be as parallel to the bank as possible.
* Do not swim or enter the water if feeling unwell.
* Warm up and warm down.
* Choose a distance suitable for you.
* If you feel the onset of cramp, swim to the shore.
* If you are in trouble, stay on your back and raise your arm, the safety kayaker will assist you
* All swimmers will exit the water at the end of the designated swim session or if instructed to do so and register their exit in the registration log.
* All swimmers please note: Inland waters are not completely safe for swimming. Although risks of disease are low and risks of serious infection are small, a swimmer may be susceptible to infection through immune suppression, particularly if they are not in good health at the time of swimming. Be careful entering any open water swim if you are unwell
* No responsibility will be accepted by the Letterkenny 24/7 Triathlon Club for any injury, death or any loss howsoever caused. This notice is applied to any person attending the Letterkenny 24/7 Triathlon Club open water training sessions, whether swimming or not.
* Monitor the Club website and Facebook page for changes to time and safety information. Letterkenny 24/7 Triathlon Club Triathlon Club reserves the right to cancel or cut short open water swimming sessions if it is considered un-safe to proceed.
* Please abide by the decisions of the club safety marshal.
* In the event of an emergency, immediately notify the club lake safety marshal or dial 999 and ask for the relevant assistance.