

I might have missed the boat...

If you are a **novice and beginner** in open water swimming there is no need to get nervous. By following the easy 8 week program below you will be able to complete the Sun City Fun swim (600m) without breathing hard.

Instructions and Questions:

What should I do if I cannot swim freestyle?

Do the set in any stroke that you feel comfortable with. You can even swim one length Freestyle and one length Breast/Backstroke.

I have a chronic, metabolic or endocrine illness, heart condition or disability. Can I do this program?

Please see your doctor first to get the go ahead to exercise. You might have to start your exercise regime under supervision of a registered Biokineticist.

Please feel free to contact me directly at dressler@vodamail.co.za or via Facebook for specific questions or more specialized training advice.

What should I do if I cannot complete the sets?

Do what you can. Any swimming you do before the event will help you on race day. If you skip a day's training just continue with the next day's set.

Good luck and see you on the day. Please look for me Annemarie Dressler (Official Sun City Open Water Swimming Coach) at one of the officials tents. I will have tips and advice for your **1500m** Sun City swim next year. You can do it!

Week 1: How to eat an elephant

Make a commitment to swim at least 3 times a week until the event. Remember you have to build confidence in your ability to complete the swim as well as conditioning your body to complete the swim. Open water swimming involves mind and body!

Day 1:

If you have flippers now is the time to put them on.

Try to swim 10 lengths of the 25m pool today. Take as much rest as you need to recover between the lengths but DO NOT stop in the middle.

If you only achieve 6 lengths that is also fine – you started.

Day 2:

Now that you have managed your first swim it is time to enjoy the achievement. As a bonus you only have to swim 8 lengths today! See that was easy....

Day 3:

Remember after today's session you have the whole weekend to recover. So let's start.

Warmup:

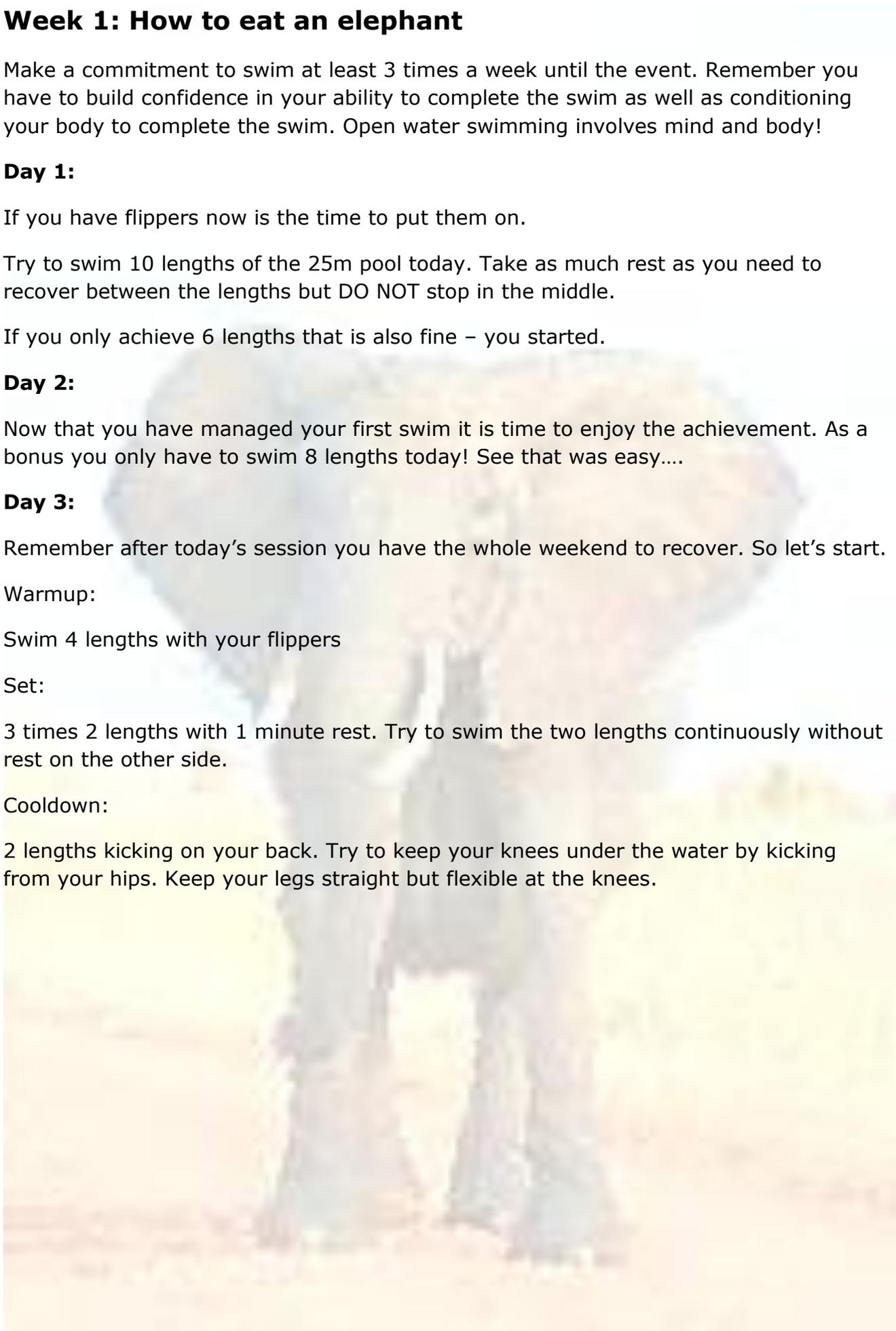
Swim 4 lengths with your flippers

Set:

3 times 2 lengths with 1 minute rest. Try to swim the two lengths continuously without rest on the other side.

Cooldown:

2 lengths kicking on your back. Try to keep your knees under the water by kicking from your hips. Keep your legs straight but flexible at the knees.



Week 2: String it together

This week you will start to build stamina for the swim. Last week you swam almost half the race distance on three occasions! So let's see how far you can go...

Day 1:

Warmup:

Swim 2 lengths and kick 2 lengths with a kick board.

Set:

Try to swim 4 lengths without flippers and without rest. If you get too tired rest 5 seconds on each side.

Cooldown:

2 lengths kicking on your back (you can use breaststroke kick) while doing double arm Backstroke underwater.

Day 2:

Warmup:

Kick 4 lengths butterfly (kick up and down with both feet together) with your flippers on your back

Set:

Swim 5 lengths without flippers and without rest.

Cooldown:

3 lengths kicking on your back. Try to keep your knees under the water by kicking from your hips.

Day 3:

Warmup:

Swim 6 lengths with your flippers. Rest 15 seconds on each side.

Set:

Swim 6 lengths without flippers and without rest. CHAMP!

Cooldown:

2 lengths easy swim. Rest on each side.

If you could complete the sets this week you are well on the way. Remember the more you train the better you will get at it!

Week 3: Swim more, rest less

Day 1:

Warmup:

Swim 6 lengths. 1 length Freestyle and 1 length Breaststroke.

Set:

4 times 2 lengths with 45 seconds rest. Try to swim the two lengths continuously without rest on the other side.

Cooldown:

2 lengths kicking on your back. Try to keep your knees under the water by kicking from your hips.



Day 2:

Warmup:

Swim 6 lengths with your flippers.

Set:

10 times 1 length with 20 seconds rest. Swim at a steady pace – do not go too fast. Rather keep to the rest intervals.

Cooldown:

2 lengths easy Breaststroke.



Day 3:

Warmup:

Kick 6 lengths Backstroke with your flippers. From the hip remember.

Set:

3 times 3 lengths with 1min rest. Try to swim the three lengths continuously without rest.

Cooldown:

3 lengths easy Freestyle.



Almost halfway! We are almost on race distance per day....

Week 4: Climb the ladder

Day 1:

Warmup:

Swim 6 lengths with your flippers.

Set:

4 lengths non-stop, rest 1min

3 lengths non-stop, rest 45 seconds

2 lengths non-stop, rest 30 seconds

1 length

Cooldown:

2 lengths kicking on your back.

Day 2:

Warmup:

Swim 2 lengths Free and 2 lengths Breaststroke two times.

Set:

1 length

2 lengths non-stop, rest 30 seconds

3 lengths non-stop, rest 45 seconds

4 lengths non-stop, rest 1min

5 lengths

Cooldown:

Swim 3 lengths easy.

Day 3:

Warmup:

Kick 4 lengths with you flippers on you back like a dolphin (keeping both feet together). Drive the kick from your tummy and hips – keep movement in the knees to a minimum. Try to kick on you front, side, side and back.

Set:

Swim 10 lengths without stopping. Touch the side and turn with your face in the water to kick off. Do not hang on the wall to rest.

Cooldown:

4 lengths Breaststroke kick on back with double arm Backstroke.

Be really proud. You have progressed in only four weeks from swimming one length at a time to doing 10 lengths non-stop. Your goal is within reach now...

Week 5: Work those lungs

These next sessions will help you not to panic if you can't breathe on every stroke. Windy conditions on the day may result in swells. It can come in handy if you can breathe to both sides. These sets are quite tough. Try to limit breathing as indicated but don't worry if you can't keep to the instructions. Just do your best...

Day 1:

Warmup:

Swim 6 lengths with your flippers. Try to breathe bilaterally.

Set:

Push off from the wall and swim without breath for as far as you can. Swim to the end breathing normally.

1 length breathe 3 times.

1 length breathe 2 times.

1 length breathe once.

Repeat from the top.

Cooldown:

4 lengths easy Breaststroke.

Day 2:

Warmup:

Swim 4 lengths; kick 2 lengths with a kick board.

Set:

Swim 14 lengths non-stop with your flippers.

Cooldown:

1 length Breaststroke, 1 length Freestyle. Repeat.

Day 3:

Warmup:

Kick 4 lengths with your flippers without a board. Use a breaststroke pull to breathe.

Set:

Swim 2 lengths breathing every 2 strokes.

Swim 2 lengths breathing every 3 strokes.

Swim 2 lengths breathing every 4 strokes.

Swim 2 lengths breathing every 5 strokes.

Cooldown:

4 lengths kicking on your back. Try to keep your knees under the water by kicking from your hips.

Week 6: Take a peak

There are no lines on the bottom of the dam. This week we need to practice sighting in order to strengthen your neck muscles. Practicing how to clear your goggles for better sight will help you to orientate yourself better. You will be able to see fellow swimmers and the buoys more clearly.

Day 1:

Warmup:

Tread water for 2 minutes, try to take your goggles off and put them back on while treading water. Move your legs like an egg beater and scull your hands just under the water surface.

Swim 4 lengths with your flippers.

Set:

Swim 4 times 4 lengths with 1 minute rest.

Cooldown:

4 lengths kicking on your back with flippers.

Day 2:

Warmup:

Swim 14 lengths non-stop with your flippers.

Set:

Swim 4 times one length keeping your head up, above the surface of the water. Like water-polo players do.

Use shorter more powerful strokes and kick hard.

Cooldown:

1 length double arm Backstroke, 1 length Breaststroke. Repeat 3 times.

Day 3: Warmup:

Tread water for 2 minutes.

Try to float on your back or front for 1 minute without using energy. You might want to rest in the dam. Remember to relax totally. Tight muscles will make you sink...

Set:

Swim 2 lengths Freestyle. Rest 30 seconds. Repeat 10 times. On the return length sight two times by lifting your head up without breathing. You can place your gym bag somewhere prominent and try to spot it.

Cooldown:

4 lengths easy.



Week 7: Go the distance

The countdown has started. This is the last week of effort and preparation! Keep going.

Day 1:

Warmup:

Swim 4 lengths easy with your flippers.

Set:

Swim 20 lengths non-stop without flippers. Keep your head down on the turns and only touch the wall, then push off. If you get too tired rest by doing some Breaststroke or just float for a while.

Cooldown:

4 lengths easy.

Day 2:

Warmup:

Swim 4 lengths easy, use one of the gym pull-buoys to keep your legs up and pull 4 lengths using your arms only, kick 4 lengths with your flippers.

Set:

Sprint 10 times one length. Go as fast as you can. Rest for 45 seconds before sprinting again.

Cooldown:

4 lengths easy.

Day 3:

Warmup:

Swim 8 lengths easy with your flippers.

Set:

Swim 24 lengths non-stop without flippers. Keep your head down on the turns and only touch the wall, then push off. If you get too tired rest by doing some Breaststroke or just float for a while.

Cooldown:

2 lengths easy kicking on your back.

Congratulations! You have just completed the race distance.

Week 8: Final countdown

WOW! If you persisted with your training you will now be in peak condition to complete your first Sun City Fun swim. You did something really special for your health and general well-being. Pat yourself on the back.

Day 1:

Warmup:

Swim 6 lengths with your flippers.

Set:

Swim 5 times 4 lengths with 15 seconds rest.

Cooldown:

4 lengths kicking on your back.

Day 2:

Take the day off to do some shopping. Spoil yourself to a pair of new goggles. Remember that you will feel more comfortable if your equipment work well on the day. Older goggles tend to fog more readily. Also remember that the conditions on race day may vary. Reflective goggles work better on sunny days. Non-reflective goggles with a lighter color work better on cloudy days.

Day 3:

Go to the pool and swim a few lengths just to loosen. Play around a bit. Do some water treading and floating. Kick underwater with your flippers. Have fun...

Remember to bring your new goggles. Fit them properly and get them water tight.

Race day tips:

1. Do not panic – you did the hard work. Even if the conditions are not ideal your preparation was. Trust in your training. There will be trained lifeguards all around you. If you really cannot continue, just raise your hand and they will assist you.
2. Keep warm before the race. Take your sweater off just before entering the water. Specifically on a cold day. When you start to get cold during the swim - just keep moving. Movement will keep your core temperature up.
3. Swimming with so many other competitors can be challenging. Try to keep your distance from the other swimmers. You might get kicked in the stomach or face in your first race, lose your goggles or swallow water. Keep calm and remember your training.
4. Re-adjust your goggles if they get foggy or leak. You trained for this.
5. Swim steadily at the pace that you trained at. Do not sprint out too fast. You can rather expend that energy if you feel strong at the end of the swim.
6. Put on your sunscreen...