

THE PACE CLOCK

by Meegan Wilson

Do you have a “swimming buddy”, “swimming partner”, “workout friend”, or do you swim alone? In either case, you should get to know the 300 Club pace clock. Use the pace clock to track your rest intervals, your swimming speed or pace, and your effort. Use it for measuring your progress and setting your goals. The clock is a motivational tool that keeps you going and makes your workout more enjoyable, particularly if you swim alone.

What Does the Pace Clock Tell You?

The club's clock is an analog clock. It's normally set to the hour to help you know what time it is. The black hand shows minutes; the red hand keeps seconds. One revolution of the red hand is 60 seconds. Thus the clock is just like a wall clock with the hour hand removed.



Rest Interval Sets

The rest interval is the time between swims. Suppose you wanted to swim a 5 x 50 set (50 yards is two lengths of the pool – repeated 5 times). You should insert a rest interval between the 50s. This scheme is called *interval training*, and it is widely believed to be more effective than swimming the same distance continuously at a slower pace.

You will swim each fifty faster because you get a certain amount of rest. The amount of rest is determined by you: too long and you won't be able to keep your heart rate up during the set; too short and you get so tired that your stroke falls apart. For a low heart rate workout, swim a set of 5 x 50 with a rest interval of 10 seconds. This should keep your heart rate elevated for the length of the set. Your pace on the last fifties will decrease, but your rest interval should remain the same. This type of set increases your intensity causing you to burn more calories. As you become better conditioned, your swim times will decrease and you will be able to swim more yards in less time.

Send-Off Interval Sets

The send-off interval is the length of time that it takes you to swim the designated distance plus a target rest period. For example, if you swim 50 yards in 55 seconds and you'd like a 10 second rest interval, the send off interval will be 65 seconds. If you are doing a 5 x 50 set, start your first fifty when the red hand is on the 60 (top of the clock), you'll start your next ones at 5, 10, 15 and 20. As you get tired your swim time may increase causing your rest interval to decrease, and you will be getting less rest.

One goal you may have is to swim each distance at the same pace so that your rest interval stays the same. This will require more effort as the set continues and you become tired. Another way to swim the set is to *descend* it. The first 50 will take more time to swim than the next 50 and so on. You reward yourself by increasing your rest as you increase your effort and decrease your swim times.

Varying the Send-Off Interval

You can also vary the interval, such as doing a 3 x 50 set: the first one at 1 minute, the second one at 55 seconds. and the third one at 50 seconds. This type of set forces you to increase your pace because the interval is decreasing, and you not only want to make the interval, but also have a few seconds to rest.

Keep Track of Your Workouts and Swim Times

Keep a log of your workouts and swim times. You'll learn how fast you can swim and how much rest you need depending on the distance of the swim. Your goal should be to increase your fitness level. You will be able to increase your speed as well as decrease your rest interval. You will be in better shape and will be able to swim faster and farther in less time.

Good luck 300 Club swimmers! There are workouts in the swim office that you can take to your lane. I am working on new workouts for 2011. Please let me know your needs.