

# Warm-Up As Close as Possible to Your Event

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## Introduction

When it comes to the theory of warm-up, it makes sense to warm-up as close as possible to your event and in the same stroke and intensity as your event. The heart rates up, the blood is flowing to the exact muscles, those muscles are warmer so energy production is quicker, and the nerves are tuned ready to explode!

When it comes to the reality of swim meets, the marshals want us in the marshalling area well before the race starts. So how close to an event should I warm-up? Do I warm-up as soon as I arrive at the meet or in a warm-up pool closer to the event start? Here's some recent British research that highlights that the closer to the event start the better.

## The Research

The study measured differences in 200m freestyle performance after a 20 and 45min post-warm-up recovery period. Eight open level international swimmers completed a standardised warm-up then rested for either 20min or 45min prior to completing a 200m freestyle time-trial (TT). Core body temperature, blood lactate, heart rate and rate of perceived exertion (RPE) were recorded at baseline, post-warm-up, pre-TT, immediately post-TT and at 3min post-TT.

## The Results

Body temperature was similar after the warm-up under both conditions. However, just before the 200m swim time trial, body temperature was greater before after waiting 20 minutes. Blood lactate was similar between conditions at all-time points before the 200m swim. Heart rate and RPE were similar between conditions at all-time points. Critically, swimmers demonstrated a  $1.5 \pm 1.1\%$  improvement in 200m swim performance in the 20min wait condition (20min  $125.74 \pm 3.64$  vs. 45min  $127.60 \pm 3.55$ s).

## So What?

The results speak loud. For any athlete of any age in any event! 200m freestyle performance is faster 20min post-warm-up when compared to 45min. Probably due to better body temperature maintenance which is crucial for faster energy production and better blood flow through muscles. This has implications for swim race preparation of any distance. As my [book](#) highlights, we need to ensure warm-up is completed as close as possible to entering the pre-race call room or marshalling area in order to maintain elevated core temperature. If you can't swim, use cords, wear warm clothing over arms and legs, or get out of that warm-up pool as late as possible. Whatever you do, stay warm.