Some suggestions for training age-group swimmers

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Ernest W. Maglischo, Ph.D.
emaglischo@cox.net
Training Age group swimmers

If you want age-group athletes to swim fast,

Teach them good techniques

Teach them to race their events.

Swim race distance and under-distance race pace repeats
Training age-group swimmers

If you want age-group athletes to swim fast when they are older.
Teach them good techniques
Train with a balanced program that includes all strokes and an emphasis on aerobic endurance.
In other words treat all age-group swimmers like they were training for the 400 I.M.
Training age-group swimmers

Aspects of training such as periodization, evaluation, training balance, overtraining and specificity should not be important ingredients in the training of age-group swimmers.
Stages of age group swimming development

- The basic swimming and instruction period. 6 to 10 yrs. of age
- The basic training period. 10 to 13 yrs. of age.
- The progressive training period. 13 to 15 yrs. of age.
- The elite training period. 15 to ? yrs. of age.
Recommendations for training 6-8 yr old swimmers.

Train 3 to 5 days per week for 45 mins to one hour per session. (3 to 5 K/wk)

Emphasize learning the skills of competitive swimming.

There should be little emphasis on improving aerobic or anaerobic capacity. Let that happen as an effect of stroke drills.

Practice should be enjoyable, fun, and encouraging.

Land drills should use body weight and partner resistance.

Competitions should be short and infrequent.

Children can train for 11-12 months per year or less at this age.

Children should not specialize at this age.
Recommendations for training 9-10 year old swimmers.

- Increase training to 5 days per week but increase the time to 1 to 1:30 hours. (6 to 8 K/wk)
- Maintain an emphasis on skills, but, include somewhat more emphasis on improving aerobic and anaerobic endurance.
- Introduce formal interval training.
- Keep practices varied, including all strokes, starts and turns.
- Basic weight training with light weights can be introduced.
- Children in this age group should not specialize.
Recommendations for training 11-12 yr. old swimmers.

- Continue training 5 days per week but increase the time to 1 1/2 to 2 hours per day (15 to 20 K/wk).
- Expect greater commitment. Set short and long-term goals.
- Continue to emphasize proper techniques.
- Train seriously for aerobic and anaerobic endurance.
- Challenge swimmers.
- A formal dryland weight training program can be introduced.
- Use 1 to 3 sets of 8 to 15 reps.
- Children of this age should still be training in all strokes.
Adapting adult training sets for age group swimmers
Young athletes are every bit as capable of performing endurance work as adults.

However, that training must be adjusted for their present speed.
Training age group swimmers:

The time spent training, not distance, determines the endurance training effect.
Comparison of an aerobic endurance training set for age group and senior swimmers.

Senior swimmer: 15 x 200/2:30 = 32/38 mins.

10 yr. Old swimmers: 15 x 100/2:15 = 28/35 mins. (assuming repeat times of 1:50-1:55)

Both sets should produce the same training effect for their respective age groups; an improvement of aerobic capacity.
Comparison of an aer/an endurance training set for age group and senior swimmers

Senior swimmer: 8 x 200/2:30 = 18/20 mins.

10 yr. Old swimmers: 10 x 100/2:15 = 18/24 mins.

Both sets should produce the same training effect, an increase in aerobic/anaerobic capacity.
Implications for anaerobic and sprint training

The speed (intensity) of swimming determines the anaerobic training effect.

The speed and anaerobic capacity of children can be improved with proper training.

The principles for improving speed and anaerobic capacity are the same as those for senior swimmers.
Comparison of a sp/end training set for age group and senior swimmers

Senior swimmer: 2 x 6 x 50/1 with easy 200 between sets = 12 mins.

10 yr. Old swimmers: 2 x 6/1:30 = 12 mins.

Both sets should produce the same training effect, an increase in aerobic/anaerobic capacity.
Comparison of an sprint set for senior and age group swimmers.

Senior swimmer: 8 x 50/3:00 with ez 100 between each 50/

10 yr. Old swimmers: 8 x 50/3 with 100 stroke drill between each 50.

Both sets should produce the same training effect, improvement of sprint speed.
A huge mistake in weekly planning
Categories of training needed by every swimmer

- **Aerobic Training** – H.R. Max – 40 to 70 bpm. Short rest.

- **Aer/An** – max effort over the length of the set. Short to medium rest.

- **Speed/End.** – max effort over the length of the set. Short to medium rest.

- **Sprints** – Long rest.

- **Technique** – stroke drills. Can fit any of the above categories depending on the effort required.
**Sample training schedule for one week - 1 hour daily**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tues.</th>
<th>Weds.</th>
<th>Thurs.</th>
<th>Fri.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis</td>
<td>Freestyle Aerobic capacity</td>
<td>Starts/turns Aer/An training</td>
<td>Backstroke Aerobic capacity</td>
<td>Butterfly Aer/An training</td>
<td>Breaststroke Aerobic capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of sets.</td>
<td>Stroke drills. 30 to 40 mins of aerobic swimming. Short sprint set</td>
<td>Pulling/kicking/swimming. 15 to 20 mins of aer/an swimming</td>
<td>Same as Monday</td>
<td>Same as Tuesday</td>
<td>Same as Monday</td>
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</tbody>
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The aerobic base vs. balanced training

Should all young swimmers train as though they were competing in the 1500.

No!

Young swimmers should become proficient in all competitive strokes.

They should be prepared to move in to any range of events as senior swimmers.
What is a “balanced” program?

- A balanced program contains endurance and sprint training in similar proportions as for senior swimmers.
- Utilizes all strokes on a regular basis.
- One important difference: The training of age group swimmers should include more teaching of stroke mechanics.
More about the aerobic base vs. a balanced program?

My advice is to train all young swimmers as though they were preparing to swim the 400 I.M.

Children should have a balanced program of aerobic and anaerobic training that is similar to the training of adult, middle distance individual medley swimmers.

One important difference: From ages 6 to 12, the number one objective should be to (1) teach the skills of competitive swimming and, (2) teach athletes how to race.
Comparison of weekly training balance for age group and senior swimmers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Senior swimmers</th>
<th>Age group swimmers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aerobic</td>
<td>60-70%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aer/An</td>
<td>10-15%</td>
<td>10-15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed End.</td>
<td>5-10%</td>
<td>5-10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sprint</td>
<td>5-7%</td>
<td>5-10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technique</td>
<td>5-10%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parting Thoughts
Training can’t be all fun and games for young swimmers

Challenge is motivating

They should be prepared mentally and physically for the dedication that will be required of them later.

At the same time they should not be driven on a daily basis.
Parting thoughts continued

- Keep the training environment positive.

- Praise effusively, criticize constructively.

- Find ways to apply training principles in unique and interesting ways.

- Make each swimmer feel special.
THAT'S ALL FOLKS