

Guidelines to help you enjoy your experience at the lap pool.

LAP SWIMMING ETIQUETTE

Circle Swimming: What is it?

Circle swimming is what it says: swimming in a circle. In the United States, circle swimming goes counterclockwise: swim on the right side of the black line that runs down the middle of the lane. You will be on one side of the lane going down the pool, and the other side of the lane coming back. Think of the black line as a double yellow line in the middle of a road

Pick an Appropriate Lane

Spend a minute surveying the pool before you jump in. Look for signs denoting “fast,” “medium” and “slow” lanes. Pick a lane where you will be about the same speed as those who are already in it. Circle swimming is a lot easier when you don’t have to worry about passing people (or being passed) every other lap.

Talk to Your Lane mates

If you are joining a lane that already has two people in it, communicate clearly to both of them that they’ll need to circle swim before you start swimming! Even if there’s only one person in the lane and she is already splitting the lane, politely making your presence known is the safe and friendly thing to do. This can be as simple as dangling your feet in the water for a minute before jumping in. Also, knowing your pool’s lane-sharing etiquette will make for a friendlier, stress-free swim

Stop at the Wall

When circle swimming, stopping in the middle of the pool is one of the best ways to end up in a collision. Even if you’re about to lose a contact, it is actually safer, not to mention easier, to keep your eyes closed and swim your way to the wall along the lane line. Stop mid-pool and you’ll be dodging task-oriented lane mates, and lifeguards hollering “Off the lane ropes!”

When you do stop at the wall, be aware of the swimmers coming behind you. Clear the middle of the lane for those who are going to continue swimming—tuck into one of the corners of the lane if you are going to rest at all.

Pass Safely & Always Communicate

When you are circle swimming, passing and being passed are inevitable. It’s best to go along with local lap swimming etiquette, if possible. Better yet, communicate with your lane mates about what you are doing, and be a little flexible. A simple, “So, I’m going to do some sprints on a long rest interval,” may keep them from pushing off right in front of you. And if they do anyway, ten seconds of extra rest won’t ruin your set or your entire season.

Appropriate Intervals

Use the pace clock to put some space between you and the other swimmers in your lane. If the person in front of you pushed off the wall on the “60,” wait until at least the “10” before you follow them down the pool. This is a “ten-second interval.”

Assuming everyone in your lane is approximately the same speed, those ten seconds will create some space between you, making it easier for all of you to conduct your turns without interference. If there are a lot of people in the lane (six in a short course pool can qualify as a lot), 5 second intervals might be more appropriate.

People Walking/Running or Swimming

Walkers and Runners should not share the same lane as swimmers. Walkers and Runners should share with other walkers/runners or may have to wait on a lane .