

United States Masters Swimming

Guidelines for Warm-Up/Warm-Down

To ensure the safety of all swimmers during the warm-up and warm-down period, we ask that you read and practice the following suggestions:

Competition Pool(s)

1. During the first 30 minutes of the warm-up period all lanes should be used for general swimming. After the first 30 minutes, one or more lanes may be designated as sprint lanes. In sprint lanes, swimmers swim in one direction only down the center of the lane. A dive off the blocks or a backstroke start is permitted only in the sprint lanes. Swimmers should leave the sprint lane when they reach the end of the pool.
2. All other lanes are for continuous swimming in a circle pattern, with swimmers staying as close to the right side of the lane as is practical. Swimmers should be considerate of others, by swimming in a speed-appropriate lane and allowing other swimmers space at the walls to turn. Lanes should be designated slow, medium, and fast. No dives, backstroke starts, or jumping entry is permitted in these lanes at any time during warm-ups. "No Diving" signs must be posted on the blocks for these lanes.
3. At no time during warm-up shall swimmers be permitted to enter any lane by jumping into the water from the sides or ends of the pool. Swimmers must enter the pool feet first in a cautious manner. Diving is permitted only from the blocks in the designated sprint lanes.
4. At the referee's discretion, swimmers may be disqualified from competition for diving into the pool during warm-up.
5. No hand paddles are allowed. Kickboards and pull buoys may be permitted.
6. Swimmers are requested to leave the pool when they have finished their warm-up to provide other swimmers an opportunity for adequate warm-up.
7. It is recommended that:
 - A. Marshals at each end of the pool monitor and enforce these safety guidelines.
 - B. An announcer facilitate the conduct of the warm-up.
 - C. A qualified lifeguard be on duty throughout the warm-up period.

Warm-Up/Warm-Down During Competition

1. The same safety regulations as stated above are enforced, except there need not be a sprint lane. However, if space permits, one sprint lane may be available and marked appropriately.
2. If there is no other warm-up/warm-down area available in pools of five lanes or more, one lane must be set aside for warm-up/warm-down during the conduct of the meet. If there is no other warm-up/warm-down area available in pools of four or fewer lanes, swimmers may swim to the other end of the pool at the end of each heat, and a warm-up/warm-down period must be offered at least once during each half-hour of competition (article 102.4.1).
3. Swimmers must enter the pool feet first in a cautious and controlled manner. Diving shall be permitted only in the designated lanes (article 102.4.2 of the USMS rule book).