

Swim Metrics That We Should All Be Aware Of In Our Swimming - Pt1.

At South West Swim, we're all about helping you reach your swim goals and using a host of metrics and techniques in our squad sessions to get you there.

This week, we're shining a spotlight on four key metrics that we believe every swimmer should know in order to monitor and elevate their performance in the water. Some of these will be longer posts due to their technical nature.

First up: CSS (Critical Swim Speed), also known as CS (Critical Speed). This common metric has been around for decades and is a very popular swim metric used by coaches around the world. Essentially, your CSS time (in the way we are using it) reflects your threshold pace over 1500m – making it a fantastic working metric for any distance swimmer or triathlete.

By establishing your baseline CSS, you can tailor your sessions to optimise your performance, whether it's dialling up the intensity and swimming at or above race pace or fine-tuning your pacing strategy for longer distance swims and swimming at a slower pace for longer.

For example if you performed a CSS test and the result indicated a CSS of 2:00min/100m we could state that you should be able to swim 30seconds per 25m length over 1500m, it will be hard but that is what threshold is, hard work. By comparison if your event was 5km we could say that you should be able to hold a threshold pace of around 2:10per 100m over 5000m, and so on.

But CSS isn't just a speed or a matter of fact time – it's also a window into other areas of your stroke and a metric that can be used to personalise your training strategy. Using CSS you will be honing your ability to pace your swims evenly and strategically, setting you up to be a better swimmer over distance and reducing the risk of burn out at the start of your training session, or (worse still) your race.

The CSS test itself has a few variations on how it is performed. At South West Swim we use the 400m and 200m swim test as made common in more recent times by Swim Smooth. We find this reasonably accurate for the majority of swimmers and more relevant to distance swimmers and triathletes. Also remember the CSS test is a 'snapshot' on the day. So if a test time doesn't match past results don't worry, constantly check in on how your pace feels and tweak where needed between tests. It's one metric to keep on top of by constantly tweaking or regular testing every 4-6 weeks.

Want to know your metrics? Head to <https://southwestswim.co.uk/online-session-css-test> to print off a copy of our CSS test to swim in your next session and get you started.

Also, this valuable video from Swim Smooth explaining how CSS training works is also a great watch to gain an understanding of the concept.

<https://youtu.be/U51oZf13i2E?si=2vpdivxjRRMDMr-t> . Even more information and an amazing CSS calculator can be found by signing up for the SwimSmooth Guru website, see the sign up link on our website (details below).

Want to join us for a squad with your new data? Swim with us from as little as £9.58 per session in one (or more) of our 6 sessions per week.

Contact us for more information and your FREE SQUAD TRIAL SESSION and INTRODUCTION OFFER by emailing Coach Jason at swim@southwestswim.co.uk. For the complete swim solution we also offer Swim Smooth Certified 1-to1's, Video Analysis and Open Water sessions, we'd love to be able to help your swimming.

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