

Manvers Penguins - Winter Lake Swimming

Cold Water Swimming

The warmer months may be starting to chill but that doesn't mean your open water swimming has to go into hibernation.

At Manvers swim **all year round in open water** as it's a great thrill which can help with circulation and wellbeing if carried out in a safe, fun and responsible way.

- Swim within your limits (if it doubt swim short),
- Book on the session,
- Arrive on time (attend safety briefing),
- Have appropriate kit,

By continuing your winter swimming journey at Manvers and you can be assured that you are outdoor swimming at a safe and responsible venue – with an element of fun and challenge involved too!

Our volunteers have experience of running cold water sessions. They can provide support and advice on how long you should swim for by monitoring your reaction to the water. As the water temperature drops you should decrease the length of time in the water and how far you swim in to avoid cold water shock/ hypothermia.

What water temperature is safe to swim?

Swimming in cold water is all down to personal preference and is at each individual's risk/limit. There are no scientific guidelines that state what water temperatures are safe to swim in, however we have created the following water temperature guide to help illustrate temperature bands and how you may wish to approach them

TEMPERATURE	CHARACTERISTICS	OUTCOMES
24+ degrees C	Feels very warm and comfortable when getting in.	Some events restrict the use of wetsuits as it can add an overheating and dehydration risks on hot days
18-23 degrees C	Those with experience of open water would likely think this is warm	Anyone not relying on the buoyancy or extra speed of a wetsuit would prefer not to wear one
14-17 degrees C	Average UK summer open water temperatures	Safe temperature to wear a wetsuit. Acclimatised swimmers are happy in these temperatures
10-13 degrees C	Generally found in early and late season open water	Our advice is to wear thicker neoprene wetsuits and accessories. Spend time acclimatising before swimming
Sub 10 degrees C	Cold water to most open water swimmers even in a wetsuit. Add caution and extra safety provisions	Acclimatisation is and should be a prerequisite to anyone attempting to swim in these temperatures. This means regular and often incremental swims. Higher risk of hypothermia, take time to warm up slowly and be monitored
Sub 5 degrees C	Known as ice swimming. Only for very experienced open water swimmers	Start very short time periods and build up gradually. Swim near to the side and ensure you can grip steps and rail to get yourself out. Get out before you think you need to and ensure there is someone to question you, help you exit the water and monitor you as you warm up. Swim times vary but should be counted in minutes rather than tens of minutes. Avoid anything hot.



What you need to wear?

A swim hat – You have to wear a bright swimming hat to be visible for water safety team...but it also helps preserve your body heat. Wear 2 silicone swim hats, or a neoprene swim hat, to help with this.

Your usual swim kit – swimmers, goggles and towel.

Good to have is anti-fog as a hot face in cold water will fog goggles quickly. **Mask goggles** definitely help reduce brain freeze and offer better vision.

Wetsuit – we recommend that you have a wetsuit specifically designed for open water swimming (rather than a surfing wetsuit) for your swims,.

Neoprene gloves and boots – these extra accessories can help keep the extremities warm while you swim.

A changing robe – Especially for open water swimmers. It's not just a changing cloak, its design helps retain body heat pre and post swim to help keep you warm. Woolly jumper, hat and gloves, and layers of warm clothes – make sure you pack lots of lovely warm clothing to get all cosy in after your swim.

Symptoms of Hypothermia in order of severity:

- Shivering, slurred speech, blurred vision
- Bluish lips and fingernails
- Loss of feeling in extremities
- Cold, bluish skin
- Confusion
- Dizziness
- Rigidity in extremities
- Unconsciousness
- Coma
- Death

