

Writing An Annual Training Plan

(based on Masters Swimming Australia Club Coach Course Resources.)

An Annual Plan provides a framework for the year that directs swimmer training and gives club coaches a guide to follow to provide continuity and consistency.



It is based on the concept of Periodisation and the principles of training.

The goal of periodisation is to reach peak performance at a particular time such as for a national pool competition or major open water swim event.

Even if your swimmers do not participate in competition, they will benefit from the interval based training that periodisation delivers and the variety that the plan provides.

Simply, the ANNUAL PLAN can be divided into:

- TRAINING PHASES (based around one or two main competition dates in the year). This is then divided into
- TRAINING CYCLES, (effective training periods allowing adaptation to training). This is further divided into
- TRAINING SESSIONS (week-long training blocks with a particular focus).

The goal is to vary TRAINING VOLUME, TRAINING INTENSITY and TRAINING LOAD in order to achieve physiological adaptation within the body and mind so that the swimmer reaches potential at competition.

Training Phases: PREPARATION, COMPETITION, and TRANSITION.

- PREPARATION phase is most of the year. It is the time for skill development, technique and establishing a fitness base. It can also be broken into GENERAL (e.g., building fitness base, technique) and SPECIFIC (e.g., dive starts)
- COMPETITION is a short phase for a specific event. Training volume may drop but intensity increases. Phase may include time trials, starts, turns focus. High priority competitions have a definite taper stage while lower priority events may be integrated with training and the use of the recovery cycle.
- TRANSITION is the period immediately after Competition phase and allows for recovery and adaptation.

Training Cycles are blocks of training typically lasting between 4–6 weeks.

Cycles progressively increase training load by adjusting volume or intensity or both, followed by a recovery to allow for adaptation. This ensures that the body has time to work in intervals, respond to the training, improve as the body adapts and recover effectively. The swimmer then increases strength and fitness in a sequential manner, minimising overload injury and fatigue.

- Low Intensity (AEROBIC) focuses on moderate to high volume in distance but low intensity.
- Moderate Intensity (ENDURANCE) focuses on moderate volume and moderate intensity.
- High Intensity (AEROBIC ENDURANCE) is the peak week of effort in the cycle and focuses on pushing towards the anaerobic or lactate threshold.
- RECOVERY is reducing the volume and intensity to allow the body to recover and adapt to the training.

Here is a link to Tuggeranong's Annual Training Plan. <http://www.tuggmastersswim.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Training-Plan-Annual-2022-Tuggeranong-Masters-Swimming-ACT.pdf>

It has an overall view and a long version and summary of plan which you are welcome to adapt for your club's use. It is also designed to be flexible to adapt to any variations during the year.