



ELEVEN GULF SWIMMERS ARE ALL SMILES AFTER COMPLETING THE USMS 1-HOUR VIRTUAL CHAMPIONSHIP SWIM AT KINGWOOD PARK H.S. (STORY ON PAGE 6)

The Chlorine Chronicles Gulf Masters Swimming

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The Gulf's 2024 Initiatives Benefit Members and Clubs

With 2024 drawn to a close, I'd like to review the initiatives and events that the Gulf LMSC provided for its members, coaches, and teams.

- The 1-hour virtual championship was offered at Dad's Club. In 2025, the event will be expanded to two locations providing both indoor and outdoor options.
- Gulf Swim University was held for the tenth year. Each entrant received a custom designed tenth anniversary tee shirt as well as an event swim cap with the cap color designating the degree level attained. The swimmers who had done the event for all ten years received a USMS backpack. A post-event social was held at Star Pizza.
- A second fitness event, the Swim to San Antonio, was conducted from October 1 to December 31. Entrants will receive two participation awards and an invitation to a lunch social at Saint Arnold's Brewery.
- The Gulf paid the sanctioning fees and the \$5/swimmer fees for three open water events at Lake Longhorn. Beginning in 2025, USMS will no longer charge the Gulf for sanctioning fees. The Gulf will continue to pay the swimmer fees.
- The Gulf also paid the sanctioning fee for eight pool events in 2024. Beginning in 2025, USMS will no longer charge the Gulf for sanctioning fees.
- The Gulf secured a pool and offered the 5K/10K virtual championships at no cost to Gulf members.
- The Gulf secured a pool and offered the 3,000/6,000 virtual championships at no cost to Gulf members.
- The Gulf provided a coached LCM session at Dad's Club, giving Gulf swimmers the opportunity to swim in a long-course practice. Practice was followed by a pizza social.
- The annual Thanksgiving swim was offered at Dad's Club to burn some pre-meal calories. A record number 40 swimmers enjoyed the event.
- The Gulf paid the registration fee for Gulf coaches attending the USMS National Coaches Clinic held in Houston.
- The LMSC's "First Meet Free" program paid the entry fee for five members to experience their first pool competition.
- The LMSC paid the 2025 USMS club registration fees for 28 Gulf teams.

All these initiatives and events will again be offered and paid for by the LMSC in 2025.



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Eating Healthy - Seven Simple Tips for Getting Started

Catherine Kruppa, MS, RD, CSSD, LD

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We all know that eating healthy is crucial for a long and vibrant life. It can shield us from chronic diseases like heart disease, diabetes, and obesity. But turning that knowledge into daily action can be a real challenge. The question is not why we should eat well, but how we can make it a consistent part of our lives. Fortunately, expert Advice for Eating (AFE) guidance is here to help.

A healthy diet is not about strict rules or deprivation. **It is a sustainable lifestyle that nourishes your body.** A healthy eating pattern focuses on balance, satisfaction, and consistency. This means fueling your body regularly with wholesome foods and avoiding food groups. It is crucial to prioritize plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats onto your plate, as these nutrient-rich foods form the foundation of a healthy diet. On the other hand, processed foods packed with added sugars, unhealthy fats, and excessive salt offer little nutritional value and can increase your risk of chronic diseases. Therefore, limiting these foods can help you stay on track of your health and wellness goals.

Consistency is often the biggest hurdle when adopting a healthy lifestyle. Life's demands can easily derail our best intentions, making it tempting to revert to old habits. Many people mistakenly believe that healthy eating means restrictive diets and forbidden foods. This all-or-nothing approach can be counterproductive. Remember, it is about balance, not perfection. While tracking your weight can be helpful, focus on how you feel and how your clothes may fit. It is important to remember that a number on the scale doesn't tell the whole story.

Many people turn to healthier eating as a way to manage their weight. While weight loss can be a positive outcome, it's essential to remember that overall health is more important than the number on the scale. **Sustaining muscle mass during weight loss** is crucial for long-term success. Rather than fixating on a specific weight, focus on setting realistic and achievable wellness goals. Improved mobility, fitting into your favorite clothes, or simply feeling better are all valuable benchmarks. Maybe it might be better to focus on strength rather than weight as a measure of success. Remember, your health is a journey, not a destination.

With countless diet trends promising quick fixes, it can be overwhelming to find a **healthy eating plan** that works for you. While restrictive diets might lead to short-term weight loss, they often neglect overall well-being and can be difficult to sustain. Instead of jumping on the latest fad, focus on incorporating more whole foods into your diet and gradually reducing processed options. If you are struggling to make lasting changes, consider coming in to see us at AFE. We can help provide personalized guidance to help you set achievable goals and create a meal plan tailored to your specific needs and preferences.

Another important topic to consider is eating healthy while still maintaining a social life. **Dining out** or ordering in can be challenging, but it's definitely doable. A little planning can go a long way. Review the menu beforehand to make informed choices and avoid impulsive decisions. Remember, you do not have to eliminate your favorite dishes entirely. Many restaurants offer healthier alternatives or can accommodate special requests. Ask for substitutions, like swapping a starchy side for a vegetable or requesting dressings on the side. Do not forget to prioritize your vegetables by eating them first to boost your meal's nutritional value.

Often overlooked is the **snacking** that goes on in between meals, as snack time can be a pitfall if you are not prepared. To make healthier choices, opt for snacks that combine different food groups for sustained energy and satisfaction. For example, try Greek yogurt with fruit, a protein shake with nuts, or vegetables with hummus.

Planning ahead is key. Pack nutritious snacks for busy days to avoid unhealthy temptations. If a doughnut or muffin is offered at work, do not feel like you have to get one every time, maybe just make it a once a week treat instead of a daily one. These small changes in our routine can make all the difference in the long run. Remember, mindful snacking can support your overall health goals and prevent overeating at mealtimes.

Adopting healthy eating habits is a journey, not a destination. It is normal to encounter challenges along the way, whether it's a busy holiday season or a stressful week. **Remember, progress, not perfection, is key.** Embrace a flexible approach to food, viewing it as a spectrum rather than a list of strict rules. Think of your food choices like a traffic light: green for nutrient-rich options, yellow for occasional indulgences, and red for limited consumption. This balanced perspective allows for enjoyment without compromising your health goals. If you find yourself struggling, do not hesitate to seek guidance from us at Advice for Eating.

By incorporating these practical tips into your daily life, you are taking significant steps towards a healthier, happier you. Remember, small, sustainable changes are more impactful than drastic overhauls. Enjoy the process of discovering new foods, flavors, and the positive effects on your overall well-being. Nourishing your body is an investment in your future health and happiness, and at Advice for Eating we are always here to help!!

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Gulf Swim University Enters Its Second Decade - It's Not Too Late to Enter

It's not too late to still enter the long running fitness event, Gulf Swim University, which celebrates its eleventh year in 2025. As is customary, the event will offer motivation to swim regularly as well as participation awards and a post-event social.

This event is completely free to you as a Gulf/USMS registered swimmer and is easy to enter, as follows:

- Let Gulf Fitness Chair, Karlene Denby, know you are participating by emailing her at txswimmers53@hotmail.com. Please also provide your tee-shirt size.
- Beginning on January 1st, either join or renew your entry into the FREE Go the Distance Event (<https://www.usms.org/events/fitness-events/go-the-distance>) and easily track your swimming distances (daily, weekly, or monthly).
- Get to the pool regularly, have fun, and get FIT. This fitness event may be just what you need to get to the pool consistently as we enter the new year. Make swimming regularly the one resolution that you keep in 2025.

There are five levels of challenge. The event runs from **January 1, 2025 to April 30, 2025:**

- * Swim 20-39 miles and earn an Associate's Degree
- * Swim 40-79 miles to earn a Bachelor's Degree
- * Swim 80-119 miles to qualify for a Double Major

- * Swim 120-159 miles for a Master's Degree
- * Swim 160 miles for a PhD

We encourage all our teams and members to join us for the fitness challenge.

Calendar of Local Pool Events Leading Up to USMS Spring Nationals

With USMS Spring Nationals in nearby San Antonio, it's time to think about racing season. There are plenty of local racing options in early 2025 to get you ready for the big meet. Registration is already open for all the Houston meets listed below.



- Sunday, February 16 – Sweetheart Swim, WW Emmons Natatorium, Houston, TX https://www.clubassistant.com/club/meet_information.cfm?c=2587&smid=19004
- Saturday, March 8 – March Madness Meet, Rice University Gibbs Recreation and Wellness Center, Houston, TX https://www.clubassistant.com/club/meet_information.cfm?c=2065&smid=19303
- Friday, April 4 – Sunday, April 6 – 2025 – South Central Zone Spring SCY Championships, WW Emmons Natatorium, Houston, TX https://www.clubassistant.com/club/meet_information.cfm?c=2587&smid=19217
- Thursday, April 24 – Sunday, April 27 – 2024 – USMS Spring Short Championships, Northside Swim Center, San Antonio, TX <https://www.usms.org/events/national-championships/pool-national-championships/2025-pool-national-championships/2025-spring-national-championship>

The South Central Zone Grand Prix Open Water Challenge Begins in April

The 2025 Grand Prix Open Water Challenge has expanded to seven swims beginning in mid-April and ending in October. All events will offer a short, middle, and long distance option. The series kicks off right here in the Houston area with the Lake Longhorn Open Water Roundup in League City.

- April 13 Longhorn Roundup/Lake Longhorn, League City, TX (1.25K, 2.5K, and 5K)
- May 4 Destination Boerne/Boerne Lake, Boerne, TX (0.6M, 1.2M, and 2.4M)
- May 18 Swim De Mayo/Joe Pool Lake, Grand Prairie, TX (1.25K, 2.5K, and 5K)
- June TBD Shark Attack/Lake Longhorn, League City, TX (0.6M, 1.2M, and 2.4M)
- July 13 OWS Challenge/Joe Pool Lake, Cedar Hill State Park, TX (750 meters, 1500 meters, and 2.4M)
- Sept 20-21 OZ Mile(s)/Beaver Lake/Eureka Springs, AR (1M, 2M, and 3M)
- Oct TBD Shark Attack 2/Lake Longhorn, League City, TX (0.6M, 1.2M, and 2.4M)



Looking for Perfection - A Goggle Review by Andreas Lorenz

Most folks are looking for perfection in many aspects of their lives, and the search usually continues forever. This can be the search for the perfect home, the perfect car, the perfect partner, or, if you are a swimmer, the perfect goggle. At least that is my quest, so I assume it is yours, too (stay with me on this).

What exactly would be the perfect goggle? At its most basic, it should: (1) be leak free, (2) not fog up ten yards into your 1,650-yard race, (3) be easy to adjust, (4) be comfortable if you are a long distance swimmer (sprinters might not care about that), (5) have good optics. You want to see the wall, and your competitors before it is too late, (6) be durable. Your per-yards-swum-cost needs to be reasonable, (7) stay in place for a start off the blocks without having to strap them so tight that your brain pops out of your skull, and (8) have whatever qualities are important to YOU. This is quite the list for a \$20 plastic device.

After trying out everything on the market, from \$10 Amazon Goggles to \$65 Magic5, I have, in the past, always come back to my trusty Aquasphere Kaimans.

Enter Snake and Pig, not a Texas Barbeque joint, but an Austin based company that makes swim goggles. They have three models on their roster, the Basilisk, Junior Basilisk, and the Top-Anchored goggle, with all models offered in various tints. The pricing ranges from \$24 (Junior) to \$45 (Top-Anchored). The question headlining their own website (<https://snakeandpig.com>) "Could these be the world's most comfortable goggles?" is what I really wanted answered. The technology that is the basis of their construction is "goggles with an 'air tube' that cushions your eyes, instead of a suction gasket." (website quote)

After several weeks of testing and about 120,000 yards of swimming indoors and outdoors, here is my verdict based on above mentioned criteria.



Basilisk - Clear metallized

1. **Leakfree:** I have a big nose and wide-set eyes. After inserting the largest nose bridge (there are four to choose). I swam a 75-minute practice without moving my goggles once, which is surprisingly hard to do. This was possible with a really low tension on the straps. There was ZERO leakage. **Grade: A.**
2. **Fogging:** The same test was only possible due to the great anti-fog coating. You activated it by rubbing the wetted lens. 75 min, ZERO fog. **Grade: A.**
3. **Adjustment:** The nose bridge is easy to replace, and the rubber strap can be adjusted with one hand. **Grade: A.**
4. **Comfort:** I feel confident that I could swim a 10K open-water race pain free in these. The air-tube and the low tension make it possible. **Grade: B+** (not an A only because the wider gasket on the Aquasphere Kaiman seemed a smidge better).
5. **Optics:** From the first flip-turn in the pool, I felt confident about the distance to the wall, which is not the case with most of the other goggles I have tried in the past. The tints they offer work well in a dark indoor pool, as well as the brightest sunlight. The field of vision is good, but the Magic5 are ahead in this department. **Grade: A-.**
6. **Durability:** Because they are made from hard plastic and the straps and bridge feel very sturdy, I am confident these babies can last for a long time. **Grade: A** (Keep in mind I only conducted a two-month test period.)
7. **Race Start:** This is critical for your confidence at the beginning of every pool race. For me, the only way this worked in the past was to wear a cap over the goggles. But I hate caps!! Therefore, the Top-Anchored goggles intrigued me. The theory behind the Y-shaped top-strap is to keep your goggles in place. In reality Well, I be danged! It worked. For several starts the goggles stayed in place and did not leak. This despite very low strap tension and NO CAP! The only issue I had with the top strap was that it flopped a little during swimming when I turned my head to breathe. That felt odd. Now I thought, what the heck, I'll try the regular Basilisk model for starts. They stayed in place TOO. Amazing! **Grade: A.**
8. **Your Needs:** Try them for yourself and let us know!



Top-Anchored Goggles

Four Snake and Pig goggles are now in my quiver, and I have not changed back. I just used them for the USMS 1-Hour Virtual Championship without any issues. When I ordered my first pair, they arrived in the wrong tint. A quick email resolved the issue. I was sent the proper pair and could keep the first pair. The company's service is top notch.

In conclusion, I am going to stick with these bad boys (or girls) and am excited to use them racing in 2025.

(The goggles were paid for by the author. Snake and Pig neither requested or edited this review. Thank you to Anna Bass for bringing Snake and Pig to my attention.)

The Virtual Swim to San Antonio



Photo credit: Bypassers

From October 1 to December 31, 30 swimmers attempted to complete a virtual 56-mile swim (after converting 224 walking miles to 56 swimming miles) from Houston City Hall to the Northside Swim Center in San Antonio, site of the 2025 USMS Spring National Championships.

Swimmers were provided with multiple email updates on goals to successfully complete the journey and history about the many small Texas town that we “swam” through.

Over 76% of the entrants successfully completed the swim. All entrants will be receiving participation awards and are invited to St. Arnold’s Beer Garden and Restaurant for the post-event social with lunch reimbursed by the Gulf LMSC.

This Quarter’s Workout

Thanks to Gulf LMSC Coaches Chair and MACA coach, Patrick Harrington, for this quarter's workout.

The popularity of high intensity interval training is on the rise. High intensity interval training sessions are commonly called HIIT workouts. This type of training involves repeated bouts of high intensity effort followed by varied recovery times.

Warmup:

200 east smooth free – 30 sec. recovery

4 x 100 free – 15 sec. recovery

#1: 25 slow arms with fast kick/75 catch-up drill

#2: 50 slow arms with fast kick/50 catch-up drill

#3: 75 slow arms with fast kick/25 catch-up drill

#4: 100 slow arms with fast kick

8 x 50 drill (done as 25 closed fist drill/25 fingertip drag drill) – 15 sec. recovery

4 x 25 variable sprint – 10 sec. recovery

#1: 12.5 fast/12.5 easy

#2: 12.5 easy/12.5 fast

#3: 25 easy

#4: 25 FAST!

Main Set:

Done four times through

4 x 25 SPRINT! – 5 to 10 sec. recovery

1 x 50 easy – 20 sec. recovery

Cooldown:

6 x 50 pull, breathe 3/5 by 25s – 20 sec. recovery

200 very easy

TOTAL: 2,200 YARDS/METERS

Berlin’s Unique and Beautiful Indoor Pools

The German word “Hallenbäder” translates to “indoor swimming pools”, and Berlin boasts over 60 public indoor pools that are used by over 6-million swimmers annually. The pools range from the Stadtbad Charlottenburg, Berlin’s oldest pool built in 1898, to the futuristic Liquidrom which has a spa-like atmosphere and features a floating saltwater pool and saunas. There are a large range of architectural designs with many of the older pools having an almost cathedral-like setting.

Unfortunately, I am unable to share any photos in the newsletter due to copyright infringement. But I encourage you to click on the provided link to learn the history of and to view these stunning pools.

<https://bbc.com/travel/article/20231116-the-hidden-beauty-of-berlins-indoor-pools>

2025 USMS 1-Hour Virtual Championship Swim - Kingwood Park Edition

Andreas Lorenz

Under ideal conditions, 11 intrepid souls met Saturday morning January 18, 2025 to test their mettle in the USMS 1-Hour Virtual Championship swim. The water was 79 degrees, the air temperature perfect, and the sun was shining. Okay, we were indoors. But it was still good to know that the sun was out.

There was nothing "virtual" though about swimming non-stop for one hour and pushing to the limit to see how far you could go. Since many thoughts can go through your head in sixty minutes following the black line, this swimmer, for one, thought "Virtual my a....! Who came up with that title? My pain is REAL!". But I digress.

The 11 swimmers banned these negative thoughts and swam between 2,500 and 4,875 yards, with five swimmers completing over 4,000 yards. These are great results especially considering it is so early in the swim season. John Dissinger swam the furthest and won the book "Why We Swim" by Bonnie Tsu for being the closest to his distance goal (within 25 yards).

The swimmers' thanks go to the children, spouses, and friends who counted for us, to John Dissinger for inviting us to the pool, and to Cristina Thibodeaux for organizing the food and coffee.

2025 USMS 1-Hour Virtual Championship Swim - Dad's Club Edition

Andreas Lorenz

The sun was out the morning of Saturday, January 25th and tricked a group of five 1-hour-swim gladiators into showing up at Dad's Club. By the time they hit the water, it was overcast and the north wind was pretty nippy. Alas, it was also too late to turn around and go home.

So, at 10:50 a.m., with the air temperature below 60, the wind picking up, but the Dad's Club water perfect, the fourth annual 1-hour swim (edition 2) got underway. Four of the five swimmers completed over 4000 yards, and there were smiles from all after 60 minutes. No doubt, they were glad it was over. The thought "I will never do this again" was, no doubt, replaced with "I think I can do better next year!" by Sunday morning.

Thanks go to Dad's Club and coach Rey, as well as to the counters who braved the damp, blustery weather and made the results official.



Five happy swimmers after completion of the USMS 1-Hour Virtual Championship swim at Dad's Club