

# Swimming Champions



11%  
of English  
population

5m individuals

1.8m latent demand



76% are interested  
in swimming in next  
4 weeks



86% of those  
interested are likely to  
swim in next 4 weeks



94% are satisfied  
with the overall  
swimming experience

## Their key characteristics

- Covers individuals of all ages, particularly those aged 26-55.
- Tend to be affluent individuals.
- Few with health conditions or impairments.

## Their lifestyle

Individuals in this segment lead active lives, balancing work, family and social commitments.

## Their physical activity and ability

These individuals have active lives; exercise is very important to them. They make time to exercise up to 5 times a week so this is in line with the health guidance.

17% have started swimming in the last year; prior to swimming they liked to be involved in all sports particularly football and fitness.

These individuals have strong swimming ability, with many able to swim over 400m.

This group is very likely to recommend swimming to friends and family.



"I'm not a particularly competitive person but I find that I'm pretty competitive against myself – I'm pretty good at pushing myself and I get a great deal of satisfaction from it."

## How to help them to maintain consistent swimming habit

### Frontier 1 – Visibility + Relevance

Swimming for these individuals is associated with health and fitness. They mainly swim for their own personal sense of achievement. Swimming is also a compliment to a larger profile of activity. They like to watch swimming live.

#### What to do:

- Improve visibility and relevance of timetables to enable Swimming Champions to be aware of other sessions that may appeal to them.
- Promote activities at swimming galas/on poolside and in partnership with swimming clubs.
- Emphasise health and fitness benefits of swimming on poolside for all age groups.

### Frontier 2 – Welcoming Environment

They find the knowledge/skills of the instructors or attendants on poolside to be lacking and this limits their ability to progress as swimmers. As well as being motivated to swim for their own gain, swimming can also be a social event for this segment.

#### What to do:

- Enhance the skills/knowledge of instructors with focussed staff training.
- Provide social areas in facilities to give them the opportunity to socialise after their swim with other like-minded individuals.

### Frontier 3 – Tailoring the swimming offer

Swimming needs to be based on competition (personal or against others) for this segment whilst retaining that social element that they enjoy. Swimming needs to be innovative to retain these individuals; technology could be used to achieve this i.e. offering the opportunity to track their swims and set themselves goals. Swimming Champions are put off swimming more by inconvenient session times and lack of diverse sessions.

#### What to do:

- Provide opportunities through clubs for these individuals to compete as well as the opportunity to socialise.
- Instal Aquatics leader boards and monthly swim challenges would help to keep this segment engaged, and will provide them with a motivational goal.
- Implement an Aquatic social club to appeal to those who want to swim weekly but don't want to compete.

 **Current sessions:** Casual and lane swim sessions

 **Other sessions of interest:**  
Adult swimming lessons and structured lane swimming sessions which focus on fitness

 **Times of interest:** Mornings (9am-12pm) (all week) and after work (6pm-9pm) (weekdays)

# How do you get women into open water swimming?

## Active Newcastle: This Girl Can project

### Background

Active Newcastle's This Girl Can project ('Newcastle Girls Can') has encouraged a large number of women to take part in activities across the city, including swimming. Following interest from the 'Newcastle Girls Can' community, Active Newcastle asked Swim England to help to develop an open water pilot.

### Challenges

A pre-activity consultation evening showed that the main challenge for participants was fear of swimming in open water and especially the fear of doing it alone.

### Approach

To overcome their fear, the open water pilot covered a 3 step approach:

- 1. Informal consultation.** Including a demonstration of putting on a wetsuit to help provide a confidence boost.
- 2. Pool training sessions.** To help build technique and confidence. These were delivered by a Swim England Level 2 swimming teacher with experience of working

with nervous women. Sessions were held on Thursday evenings, 7pm, in a city centre location.

- 3. Open Water sessions.** These were delivered by an experienced open water swimmer and triathlon coach in a range of open water locations.

It was important that session deliverers had knowledge of open water environments to provide both the basics and technical advice, whilst building a good rapport to support the participants.

- 4. Swim with seals.** The final part of the pilot was an open water opportunity to swim with seals. Following this the girls received a certificate and #NewcastleGirlsCan swimming hat as a reward.

### The Results

- Participants carried on swimming after the pilot.
- An engaging support group page on Facebook proved popular.



"I hadn't swam properly in 25/30 years and I learnt so much from these sessions. I'm now swimming twice a week in the local pool on top of our weekly session. My confidence is building week on week. I've grown very fond of my swim family."

Participant 

**Boost** in swimmers confidence levels

**Demand** for regular coached and structured lessons

 **Find out more:**

If you are interested in getting more involved with a similar project, please contact [strategicpartnerships@swimming.org](mailto:strategicpartnerships@swimming.org)