USLA Ocean Recue Lifeguard Training Notes

Ocean Rescue Lifeguards are athletes who save lives. They keep a sharp eye for all who enter the water before them. When the time comes to save a life they rush into the water with confidence because they know they have trained hours for this moment, which has now become just an instinct.

In order to perform lifesaving skills in an ever changing, chaotic environment such as the ocean, lifeguards must keep their bodies in superb physical condition. This includes living a healthy lifestyle, stretching and warming up before physical training, and preventing injury by training with proper swimming and running techniques.

What follows is a guideline to becoming a stronger, more proficient lifeguard. These are just tips and workouts that can help improve swimming and running ability. It is up to each individual to seek the advice of an experienced coach so their swimming and running technique can be critiqued by a trained eye.

SPEED TRAINING FOR THE USLA OCEAN RESCUE LIFEGUARD
Run 7:45 Mile

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Run 1-2 Miles	Cross-Train	10 X 200 Meters or 1-2 Minutes	Cross-Train	10 Minute Hard Run	Run 1-2 Miles	Rest

Training Days Defined:

- **Cross-Train –** This could include swimming, biking, weight lifting or yoga.
- **10 X 200 Meters or 1-2 Minutes –** Run hard for 200 meters or up to 2 minutes, then walk or jog for the same distance/time. Repeat 10 times.
- **10 Minute Hard Run –** Run near maximum effort for 10 minutes.

NOTE: All of the above training days can be moved around to fit your schedule as long as there are rest days or cross train days in between run days. Jog easy before and after these workouts for proper warm-up and cool-down.

SWIM TRAINING FOR THE USLA OCEAN RESCUE LIFEGUARD
500 Meter Swim Test

Swimming is one of the key component in a lifeguard's arsenal for saving someone's life. Swimming in the ocean to a distressed swimmer takes speed, strength, and endurance. It takes many hours of practice for a lifeguard to get to a level of swimming that is required to pass a

500 meter swim in under 10 minutes, let alone fight waves and currents to get to a distressed swimmer and pull them to the safety of the shore.

The key to swimming, especially in a rescue, is efficiency. A rescuer who can save energy with proper swimming technique is going to be able to swim farther and faster, and have the energy to bring a victim safely back to shore.

Body and Head

The front crawl stroke, or freestyle stroke, is a face-down stroke, and it is the fastest stroke. Your body should be horizontal (flat) in the water, face down, and streamlined. The face should remain in the water at all times, except to breathe. Breathing may take place to one side every stroke or by alternating sides every other stroke. Breathing is done simply by turning the head to one side without rolling the body and taking a deep breath back close to your shoulder, then quickly returning your face to the water and exhaling slowly. Remember where the head goes the body goes so keeping the head down and relaxed between breaths will save energy.

Arms

Your arms will make an alternating stroke, with palms facing downwards, and fingers cupped. As you alternate strokes the body should roll slightly around the midline (imaginary line from head to feet that divides the body in equal halves). The first part of the stroke is called the Power Phase with the Catch, Mid-Pull, and Finish. In the Catch the hand will enter the water with the arm fully extended. Now is when you begin to roll the body. Next during the Mid-Pull, the hand will pull down with a slight outward curve as if you were hugging a barrel, and for the Finish the hand pushes the water down towards your feet and out as the hand exits the water by your hip. The Power Phase is what propels the body forward. The second part of the stroke is the Recovery. During the Recovery, the arm should be relaxed and bend at the elbow so the hand "zips up" the side and then extend the arm fully before reentering the water.

Legs

The legs will perform a flutter kick, which is a powerful kick where the feet are pointed and ankles are relaxed. The motion should come from the hip, so the legs stay virtually straight – but not stiff. During the downward kick the knee is slightly bent and finishes when the leg straightens and the foot snaps like kicking a ball. Then the upward kick begins and the leg is straight throughout until the heel breaks the surface of the water. The kick is a very important part of the front crawl, especially swimming in the ocean. The kick not only propels the swimmer through the water, it also keeps the body hydrodynamic and horizontal in the water.

Rescue Swimming

If swimming in the ocean isn't challenging enough, lifeguards have to modify their swimming technique when swimming to a victim and making a rescue. As a lifeguard you first have to

know which way the currents are moving so when you enter the water to rescue a swimmer in distress, you will be able to swim the fastest route to the victim. This may require running some distance down the beach before entering the water and using the current to help carry you right to the victim. Once in the water it is important to not lose sight of your victim. You must keep your eyes on the victim while high-stepping, dolphin diving, and even swimming to them. In order to swim and keep their eyes on the victim a lifeguard has to modify their swimming technique. This requires you to lift your head straight up and out of the water every few strokes while swimming freestyle and searching for the victim. Sometimes you might see them right away and sometimes it may take a few tries because waves get in the way. It is important to be fast and efficient but just as important to keep sight of the victim. During this "Tarzan" stroke it is also important to kick hard as not to lose too much momentum while lifting your head up out of the water. This is why lifeguards train and train to increase their endurance and strengthen their swimming skills.

Swim Practice

For those who want to pass the lifeguard swim test, here is a simple workout for an average swimmer with a good warm up, short sprint set, and then the main set tests your 500 freestyle skills. If you find the main set challenging, then swim one 500 free instead of two, or you can even break it up into 5 x 100s with no more than 20s rest between. If it is easy, then challenge yourself to add a third and fourth 500 free to the main set and see if you can get faster each one. Remember the lifeguard test is 500m (550yds) in 9:00 minutes or less in the pool, and 10:00 minutes or less in the ocean. Repeat this workout 3 times a week minimum and set a goal to finish all 500s under the 9:00 minute mark!

Swimming Workout:

- Dry land Stretch for 10 minutes
- Warm up
    - 200 Swim, 200 Kick, 200 Drill*, 200 Swim

      * Catch-Up Drill – swim freestyle and let one hand "catch-up" and slap the other hand before each pull.

      * Finger Tip Drag Drill – During the recovery phase of freestyle, drag your fingertips across the top of the water all the way until you start the Catch phase.
- Pre Set
    - 6 x 50 Freestyle, Build 1-3 and 4-6 on 1:00min

      You should get no more than 10s rest between 50s so adjust the interval accordingly, and keep that interval for all 6.

        1) 70% effort
        2) 80% effort
        3) 90% effort
        4) 75% effort
        5) 85% effort

6) 95% effort

- Main Set
  - 2 x 500 Freestyle for time with 1:00min rest between 500s.
    Build each 100 within the 500. Keep strokes long and strong and maintain a good kick throughout each 500. On #2 try to beat your time from #1!
- Warm Down
  - 200 Freestyle slow and easy
    If your heart rate is still elevated, then swim a 2nd 200 Easy Free.

Total = 2300

For additional workouts or if you have any questions, please email Kari at kari.lavoie@ccprc.com.