

My Favorite Practice – The 12 Days of Swimming

Claire Lavery of the El Cerrito Aquatic Masters submits this very special holiday workout. ECAM has swum (and sung) this workout for several years, on or about December 21. “Considering the flexible nature of the song, it can easily be called “The Twelve Days of Solstice,” and reappear on June 21,” Lavery says. “Singing the lines is an added inducement to get swimmers off the wall and into the set,” Lavery adds. She recommends that the coach wear waterproof clothes and earplugs. The total yardage, including the first five “day” repeats, is 3,525 yards. If your team chooses to swim the “seven minutes” uninterrupted, their total yardage may be higher. If your swimmers prefer “The Eight Days of Hanukkah,” they will have swum a total of 2,025 yards, before the 12-lap cool-down.

Pitch pipes ready?

12 Days of Winter

(Sung or shouted to the tune of “Twelve Days of Christmas”)

On the first day of winter, my swim coach asked of me...

A lap of butterfly swum happily.

On the second day of winter...

2 dolphin kick laps

And a lap of butterfly swum happily.

On the third day of winter...

3 breaststroke

2 dolphin kick laps

And a lap of butterfly swum happily.

On the fourth day of winter...

4 laps, IM

3 breaststroke

2 dolphin kick laps

And a lap of butterfly swum happily.

On the fifth day of winter...

5 laps swum fast!

4 laps, IM

3 breaststroke

2 dolphin kick laps

And a lap of butterfly swum happily.

At this point in the song/workout, repeats are dropped. Each subsequent “day” is an independent set and once complete, swimmers move on to the next “day.”

On the sixth day of winter, my swim coach asked of me... 6 IM relaying:

Group of 2 – 4 swimmers alternate stroke laps for 6 continuous 100-yard IMs (if in group of 2, swim 2 strokes/50 yards before touching partner). Swimmers should drop from first to last to rotate through all strokes.

On the seventh day ... 7 minute swimming:

Swim freestyle for 7 minutes straight; or, swim 7 x 50s on the minute

On the eighth day ... 8 hypoxic pulling:

Drop one breath per lap – start with breathing every 3d stroke, then 4th, 5th etc. up to lap 8 – every 10th stroke; or drop to maximum and then add one breath per lap to 8 laps

On the ninth day ... 9x75s dropping:

Swim laps, #1-3 on 1:30, 4-6 on 1:15, 7-9 on 1:10- adjust intervals to lanes

On the tenth day ... 10 laps of kicking

On the eleventh day ... 11 laps of chasing:

Laps are 25 yards – interval is 20 seconds. Swimmers leave at 3-second intervals. #2 swimmer tries to catch #1 before wall – if successful, #2 takes lead; if not, #1 stays #1. If #3 catches #2, moves to #2 and tries to catch #1, etc. Swimmers with similar paces work best; interval can be adjusted up or down to keep lane moving.

On the twelfth day of winter ... 12 laps most restful.

And go home and eat brunch happily!