

The Triathlon Summit - How to Dominate Open Water Swimming

KERRY: You are in the right place tonight for this TriathlonSummit.com call with Kevin Koskella who is a swim coach. He will be sharing all kinds of great information with us tonight on how to swim better in a triathlon.

KEVIN: All right, I'm ready to go anytime.

KERRY: All right, you're ready to roll? Let's do it. Tonight, like I said, we have Kevin Koskella, who is a former All-American Swimmer. Today he is a swim coach and has been featured in Triathlon, Inside Triathlon and Men's Health magazines. Kevin has many products and he caters towards triathletes and the swimming background. With that, I will open the call up to Kevin Koskella. Kevin, how are you doing?

KEVIN: Good Kerry. I'm doing great. Thanks for having me on.

KERRY: Well thanks for coming on. We'll start with the first question, we'll get right into it here. How does swimming in a triathlon differ from swimming in a pool?

KEVIN: I'm assuming you mean a triathlon in terms of an open-water race, the difference between that and pool racing?

KERRY: Yeah, and race conditions, yep.

KEVIN: Yeah. Most triathlons are done in open water. There's quite a few differences and quite a few challenges, you'll find, in open-water racing. The first thing is you don't have walls to rest on, in open water, which is really a big difference. Even if you're doing flip turns in the pool, you've got a little rest for every lap that you swim. Most of us in the US swim in 25-yard or 25-meter pools so we're getting a lot of little rests all the way through our workouts. Even though they're brief it makes up a big difference when you get in the open water.

When you get in the open water your endurance factor is going to kick in and also muscle fatigue. So just doing a straight mile in open water you're going to get the sore muscles, you're going to get tired out a lot faster than in the pool. So that's really the main difference.

The other differences would be water temperature - obviously pools are normally heated to 79, 80 degrees. You get out in the ocean or most of the lakes and you're going to find that they're a lot cooler so that's going to affect your swim quite a bit. Those are the two main differences. We could go on a talk about different race strategies and different things like that but I think that's what you were looking for.

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KERRY: Yeah, that's good. That works. What are the ways then that a triathlete can become stronger in the swim leg, given those different elements?

KEVIN: This is where actually balance comes in a lot. Most people think they want to train harder to go faster but in terms of swimming you're going to want to train your balance first. What I mean by that is we're not natural to water as humans so we need to practice quite a bit in the water.

The best thing that you can do for yourself, to build your balance so you're eventually using less energy in the water to do the same thing, to get through your swim, is to practice drills. I have two core drills that I give that you can do to increase your balance in the water. The two drills that I usually start with -- I have a twice-monthly newsletter and when you sign up you get four free workouts and practices. The first two drills are the kicking on your side and then shark fin.

The kicking on your side is just basically extending your arm out and rotating yourself to the side. So using your hips you rotate to the side, look down at the bottom of the pool and just kick. If you're a beginner this is best done with some fins on. I recommend using Zoomers, which are the shorter kind of fins, but any of the shorter kind of fins will work. It kind of helps you to forget about your kick and just work on the body position. So kicking on your side would be one.

The second one is the shark fin drill. Basically you start out kicking on your side and then with your trailing arm you lift the elbow up and bring your hand forward to make like a shark fin. So you're going to touch the faster head [?] and kind of make a shark fin. Then slide your hand back down and rotate back onto your back, get some air and repeat. It's easier if you see it than if I just explain it. It's kind of hard to just follow along. But that gives you the idea.

KERRY: That made sense to me. So what is the quickest way that people can get faster? A lot of people are pretty busy so they're looking to get the most bang for their buck in a lot of workouts. So what are some different ways athletes can do that?

KEVIN: Well, unfortunately for swimming there's not really a "get fast quickly" method. I wish there was but we don't really have that at this point. The best thing to do is to do what I call taking a step back to go two steps forward. I like to compare it to bowling, actually. Most people when they go out bowling they just throw the ball straight down the lane. You can get pretty good at doing that and you can increase your score, but there's going to be a limit. So what you have to do is develop a curve in your bowling game. When you start developing a curve you're going to throw a

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lot of gutter balls and your score is going to go down. But eventually, once you get the hang of it, your score will go way up.

How that translates to swimming is, with triathletes a lot of people try to swim harder to go faster. That doesn't really work. If you've got flaws in your stroke you're just going to emphasize the flaws and you're going to kind of limit yourself as far as how fast you can go.

So that's going to be your quickest way to get faster, to work on your stroke technique. But again, it's not a quick way. It's going to take a long time.

KERRY: Yeah, I'm afraid that's the case with the other two sports in triathlon too, for most people.

KEVIN: For the most part. There's just not as much technique with running and biking. But yeah, it is time consuming. Although, if you're doing the proper drills you'll make it a lot easier on yourself than if you're just getting in there trying to crank out workouts.

KERRY: Yeah. So let's talk about some drills. In terms of drills, how much should people or how often should people do drills and how much should they do when they do drills and all that?

KEVIN: That's a good question because it comes up quite a bit and everybody is wondering how much they should do. Really it depends on what level the swimmer is. For true beginners, when they're getting in and just trying to learn the basics, I recommend 100 percent of your workout to be drills. So even for several weeks, just doing the drills for your whole workout, before you start doing any full-stroke swimming. If you can kind of follow along with the progression that I offer it works out so that you're leading yourself into a nice, fluid stroke. So I would say start out with 100 percent if you're a beginner. If you've got some technique down you can start bringing it down. So once you start mastering your technique then you can bring down the amount of drills you do.

I still swim masters a few days a week and we do probably 15 percent of our workout is drills still. I suggest that you never cut out drills completely. I would definitely recommend doing a lot of drills and then once you get the drill technique down then you can start building up your yardage, building up your intervals and doing more of a workout. But don't hesitate on over-doing the drills.

KERRY: Okay, awesome. One of the things you see a lot with triathletes is they love to use the paddles. Some people say paddles are no good and some people swear by them. So what's your take on that?

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KEVIN: Yeah, the triathletes love the paddles and the buoys and the kickboards. But I say for the most part you can do without all three. I'll talk about the paddles. There's some paddles that are good. I haven't fully researched all the paddles that are out there. The one that I have used and have had some of my swimmers use that I do like is called The Freestyler, made by Finis. There's two reasons I like it. One is it can actually help your stroke. It allows you to glide more through the water and it gets you to feel efficient freestyle. So it's actually doing something good for you. And it also doesn't put as much pressure on your shoulders as some of the other paddles out there. I had a big shoulder problem when I was in college and a lot of it was due to just massive amounts of pulling with paddles. So I'm kind of weary of all paddles but The Freestyler works well if you really want to have the equipment.

In terms of all the equipment for swimming, I wouldn't worry too much about it. I say go with as little equipment as possible. If you're going to have one piece of equipment for swimming I say fins. Go with the Zoomers fins rather than the paddles. If you have to have paddles, again, the Finis are pretty good.

KERRY: All right, good deal. You're a swimming expert and I'm sure you a lot of common mistakes. Why don't you just go over the three top mistakes that you see triathletes make in swimming.

KEVIN: Okay. The biggest mistake that I see triathletes make, we touched on this a little bit earlier but to go into it further, is kind of a "no pain, no gain" philosophy. I swim in a few different masters groups and the triathletes don't want to spend a lot of time swimming in the slow lane. They want to move up fast and get into the fast lane. It's kind of like the mentality of running or biking where you can just go longer and go harder and you actually make some gains. But with swimming you need to take a step back. So that's probably the first thing that I see.

As far as actual stroke, the biggest mistake or stroke flaw is having the runner's kick. What that is is you have inflexible ankles because you run a lot and it prevents you from getting any propulsion out of your kick. For a lot of triathletes if I put them on their back in the water they'll go backwards, the opposite way, kicking. So their feet are acting like anchors when they swim. The solution to that is to first do a lot of ankle stretching because the inflexible ankles are going to really kill your swim if you keep them in that state. If you can stretch them out and get a little more flexibility out of them that helps.

The second thing is doing some vertical kicks. So just kicking in place, cross your arms so you're not keeping yourself up with your hands, but

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kick in place, keep your head above the water. It's actually a pretty difficult drill. But if you can do that every time you get in the water for a little bit, you'll see some improvement. You'll be using the right muscles to kick. Instead of trying to kick at the water you're actually kicking with your upper quads, your hips. The same thing with using the Zoomers. The Zoomers actually help you to kick the right way. They put your feet in the right position. The more you can use them the better. I don't recommend using Zoomers on the actual swimming, just more on the drills and the kicking. So those are the two biggest ones.

In terms of a third one I would say just not swimming enough, skipping the workouts. I recommend doing two or three pool workouts and one open-water.

KERRY: A week you're saying?

KEVIN: Yeah, a week.

KERRY: Okay. Just wanted to clarify that. Good deal. That was actually the next question I was going to ask you, how much should a triathlete swim? Why don't we break that down in terms of ability levels. Someone who is a really strong swimmer versus someone who is just beginning. Does that differ at all in terms of the frequency that you like to see people swim?

KEVIN: Yeah. You want to work your weakness in triathlon so if your weakness is swimming I would emphasize that and spend more of your time doing the swimming than anything else. So generally three to four days a week is going to be sufficient. Out of that you're going to do one open-water swim to get used to that.

If you're just starting out and you're doing the 100 percent drills then 4 days a week of drills is going to really help you out, for a few weeks. Then you can kind of back that off and do your open-water swim and everything like that. It's more of a general thing. You can kind of gage as to how advanced you are in triathlon. If you're a good swimmer, a couple days a week you can get away with that. But for most people it's going to be three or four.

KERRY: Okay, good deal. In terms of kicking, you hear different people say different things. Some people say, "Kick as hard as you can the whole time." Some say, "Don't kick at all." A lot of triathletes just don't like to work on their kick, period, in the pool anyway. What's your take on kicking?

KEVIN: Should a triathlete kick? Yeah, definitely. I actually just wrote an article on this. There's quite a few articles on kicking because it's such a popular

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topic and nobody really seems to have the answers. But yeah, you definitely need to kick and you definitely need to kick on your swim. With a wetsuit you can kind of get away with a lot because it keeps you up on top of the water so you don't have to kick as much. With triathlon swimming you don't need a powerful kick. If you watch the Olympics you'll see these guys like Phelps and all the sprints, they have a super kick. That's just not necessary for the distance stuff, especially for triathletes. Kicking is there for balance and hip rotation, for the most part. You get a little propulsion out of it but you're really not going to help yourself much if you had a Michael Phelps-kick in your mile-swim. It's really not a huge advantage. Unless you have his stroke, then you might be pretty far ahead of the game. But the kicking, yeah, it's mostly for balance and hip rotation. So it's not the biggest thing. If you don't have a kick it's going to kill you but you don't need to have a huge, powerful kick.

KERRY: All right, good deal. Let's talk about breathing on both sides. Is it useful and should someone develop it?

KEVIN: Oh yeah, it's very useful, especially with open-water swimming. But in general, it is. Bilateral breathing or breathing every three or five strokes, for most people it's going to be breathing every three strokes, it's going to balance your stroke. One of the problems that happens out there with a lot of people, not just triathletes, is that when you breathe through only one side a couple things happen. One is you're putting a lot of pressure on the shoulder, on the side that you breathe on, so you could develop shoulder problems. The second thing is you kind of become unbalanced. So this helps with your balance. And then also the navigation in open water. If you're breathing to only one side and you're in the ocean, it's going to put you at a disadvantage. If there's waves you want to be able to breathe on your opposite side. So that'll help with navigation.

The way to improve this is to practice balance drills on your weaker side. If you're doing the side-kicking or the shark fin drill we talked about earlier, just practice a little bit more on the side that you normally don't breathe on. Eventually that will become easier for you to take a breath to that side. I know from experience I breathe mostly to my right side. It's much more comfortable for me. But I've been able to become more comfortable with breathing on my left side and it's helped quite a bit. I really understand the reluctance to breathe, to have a weaker side, which most people do. When you breathe on that side it feels like you can't get a good breath. One more thing to add on this is don't worry about learning bilateral breathing at first. It's not essential right away. If you're just learning the stroke and you're doing the drills, just get air however you can. That's more important than trying to do bilateral breathing. I would focus on that a little down the road. Start with just doing breathing every three strokes on your warm-ups and your warm-downs and some of your

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longer swims. Then go from there. But don't stress too much about it.

KERRY: All right, good deal. Kevin, where can people get your stuff. You were talking a little bit about your newsletter before. Where's a good place that people can go and look at stuff. You have some products as well, right?

KEVIN: Yeah. I've got two websites actually. My sales website is triswimcoach.com. You can get the Essential Triathlon DVD, Triathlon Swimming DVD and The Complete Guide to Triathlon Swimming. Then I have a blog site which is triswimcoachonline.com. That has all my blogs, all my articles. And I also just started a podcast. You can subscribe to the podcast there and also check out some background information and products and everything.

KERRY: Awesome. Let's talk a little bit about tactics in terms of a race, when you're out there racing. What are some things that you tell people to do so they can get through the most pit, as some people like to call it, or the washing machine, and have a good swim in a race situation?

KEVIN: Yeah. Just swim your own race. Don't get caught up in all the madness. I always start to the outside. I tell everybody to do that. It's amazing because I still go to races and everybody is still trying to compete for that pole position, even though it's so much easier to start outside. You swim a little bit extra but you'll have your own water, you'll have clarity, you won't have to get hit in the face and get punched and kicked and all that. So yeah, just try to swim your own race and stay as relaxed as possible. Don't get caught up in it. The people that are going for it like that are just killing themselves for no reason. Even if you gain an extra 30 seconds on the swim, sometimes that'll come back to kill you later in your race. So it really isn't much of an advantage.

KERRY: Yeah, sure. Do you suggest that people go out and do sighting drills or anything like that? Do you have any drills to keep people on track on a course that way?

KEVIN: Yeah. Sighting is really important. The more you can practice that in the pool the better because it's really easy to do in the pool. Once you get out in the ocean if you haven't practiced it it's really difficult. But if you kind of know what you're doing, you just want to pop your goggles up right before you breathe to check out and see where you are, you can really do it quite often and not really hurt your stroke too much. Ideally you want to learn the course beforehand so you're not sighting every other stroke. That's definitely important.

The other thing is when you're finishing your race it's not a bad idea to kick a little bit more towards the end because you want to be able to have

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your legs warmed up for the bike. When we talked about kicking I said that a lot of triathletes don't like to kick and they wear a wetsuit and it feels like you don't really even have to kick because your wetsuit is doing all the work for you, but getting the legs warmed up to get on your bike is a good idea.

KERRY: Good deal. Do you have any other comments you want to add on to anything you just said?

KEVIN: No, I don't think so. I think we've covered quite a bit.

KERRY: We've actually got some people on the webcast here asking a few questions. Do you want to go in and take a crack at those?

KEVIN: Oh yeah, definitely.

KERRY: All right. We've got Steve and Steve is saying, "I'm new to swimming so this is my weakest event. I know my hips and legs sink. What is the best way to work on this one thing to improve my swimming?"

KEVIN: Yeah. That goes back to the first question actually, how do you improve as a triathlon swimmer? Really it goes back to the balance drills. Your hips are sinking because you're not balanced in the water. So you'll have to practice kicking on your side and then move into the shark fin drill. Within a few weeks of practicing that you'll feel a huge difference. Again, don't worry about your kick, just grab a pair of fins, grab a pair of Zoomers and do those drills as much as you can. That'll help with your balance. Slowly you'll get to the point where you're more on top of the water. It's not overnight but it definitely helps. The more you can get in the water the better.

KERRY: Yeah. Do people sink with their hips and their legs because they're not kicking or is it because they have a weak core or what's your take on that?

KEVIN: It doesn't have anything to do with kicking. What happens is when you're not balanced in the water you will kick a lot more and you use a ton of energy to get through the water. So that's one of the main problems that I see out there, people are just using all their energy through the swim and they're really not going fast. So it doesn't help them. It's really just a balance issue. It's not a muscle thing or a core thing. Once you work on that balance practice and get up there and start improving your balance you'll be more on top of the water as opposed to sinking.

KERRY: Okay. And definitely no buoy to help that out, right?

KEVIN: Great point. Everybody wants to use buoys. If you put a pull buoy on

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you'll actually go faster in the water because it's a lot easier to swim. It just puts you on top of the water. So it's cheating and it's a bad form of cheating because you're actually cheating yourself. You're getting that buoyancy without having to practice at it. Once you take the buoy off you're going to feel a lot worse.

KERRY: Yeah, I definitely agree with that. I've seen a lot of people use that as their crutch. When they take the buoy off, forget it, they've got nothing.

KEVIN: That's right.

KERRY: We've got Brian Zobel. He says, "In open-water swimming do you suggest breathing every stroke or every several strokes, putting aside the need to breathe on both sides or swimming in a straight line?" I'm not really sure what he means by that. More than anything he's asking how many strokes you should breathe, more or less.

KEVIN: Ideally you want to breathe every three strokes. But again, how much air can you get? We talked about bilateral breathing and part of that is with breathing every three part of it is you'll go more in a straight line than if you're breathing every two or every four. If you can get air, get it. Don't worry about the bilateral breathing. I wouldn't say that it's set in stone, that you have to breathe every three strokes, but it is a good idea to work towards that, where you can comfortably breathe on both sides.

KERRY: Good deal. That brings up another question I just thought of for you. In terms of stroke count, do you have any specific way of calculating that for people? How many strokes they should be taking per 25 meters or yards or anything like that?

KEVIN: Yeah, that's a good question. There isn't really a set-in-stone answer. Everybody is going to be different. It depends on where you're starting from, where your starting point is. For beginners it could be a totally different number than somebody that's been swimming for years. You kind of want to just determine where you're at right now. Start counting your strokes and keep an idea of where you are. Come up with a range that you're in and then bring down that range slowly. So just kind of notice what you're doing and notice if you can rotate a little more or extend your arm a little more on each stroke to bring down your stroke count. It's always a good idea to count your strokes and work towards bringing that stroke-count down, no matter what level you are.

KERRY: Okay. We've got another question here. They're asking, how long before a workout should you eat? Should you have something if you swim in the morning? I guess that would mean early in the morning, early masters practice.

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KEVIN: Yeah. I think they're probably referencing that old adage that you should never eat for an hour before you swim or something like that. "You'll explode in the water," or whatever. I don't know what it is.

KERRY: Puke or whatever.

KEVIN: That's really an individual thing. I know people that can get up and just head to the pool, head to a workout, without eating a thing and they're fine and they can have a great workout. I know other people that need to eat quite a bit. For me if I can get something half an hour in before my workout that's going to energize me, that's great. I can't workout on an empty stomach. But it's so individual. I studied a lot of nutrition but I'm also not an expert at the nutrition. That's kind of a general thing. I'd say the most important thing is when you're doing a morning workout just make sure you're hydrated. You're spending like eight hours in bed not getting any liquids and you wake up and pretty much everyone is going to be dehydrated. So that's really important.

KERRY: All right. Chris asks, "What are some swim tips for the indoor races?" So in a pool. What's your take on that?

KEVIN: Some swim tips for indoor pool races? Is he talking about triathlons?

KERRY: No. I think he's just talking about... well, maybe he's talking about it. He didn't really specify. Just pool swimming, racing, I guess.

KEVIN: Mostly all of the stuff we talked about applies but you're going to be doing flip-turns. If you're doing indoor races and you're doing open-turns you have to learn how to do a flip-turn. That's the most essential thing. Most triathletes that I've seen don't, they do the open-turn. But that takes a lot longer. So that's the number one thing. If you go to beginnertriathlete.com there's an awesome video on how to do a flip-turn. You can learn everything just from watching that video and a little bit of practice.

KERRY: Awesome. We've got Ted up in San Francisco. He asks, "Do you have any recommendations for hip rotation to get hips up? I understand yoga hip rotation is recommended but it is difficult." That's his first question. Why don't you take a crack at that first.

KEVIN: What was the part about yoga? I wasn't clear on that.

KERRY: He says he understands that yoga hip rotation is recommended to help with hip rotation but that it's difficult.

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KEVIN: I'm not really sure what he means by that. I think maybe for flexibility yeah, yoga's great. In terms of learning how to rotate your hips, again, it's just starting with the basic drills. So when you kick on your side you're going to get used to that body position and you're getting used to being on your side. The fastest you're going in your freestyle, when you're swimming freestyle, the fastest part is when you're on your side. That's just how you need to swim, from side to side. If you're swimming flat on your stomach you're creating a lot of drag and you're making it a lot harder on yourself. It's really just a process. You start out doing some kicking on your side, then you start doing the shark fin drills, taking it half stroke, then you slowly build into freestyle where you're rotating from side to side. To learn to do it you just start from the beginning.

I learn really well visually so for me it's a lot of watching videos. My Essential Triathlon Swimming DVD, I talked to somebody that said, "Oh, I watch that every night and I learned it from that. So it depends on how you learn. For me it's visual and practicing that.

I'm also coming out with some waterproof swim-drill cards that you can take into the pool. That's going to be within the next couple of weeks. That'll help with the visualization as well.

KERRY: That's huge, man. That's awesome. Ted's second question, he says, "Do you have any preferences for what to look for in a fast wetsuit for an intermediate swimmer? More five millimeter, thickness, flotation rather than rubber material or surface treatment, comfort." Did you get that?

KEVIN: Yeah. There are so many wetsuit companies out there. My opinion is they're all pretty good. There's probably going to be little differences here and there. But it's so competitive that they have to be beating each other out as far as the quality. I'm not a wetsuit expert. I actually try to swim open water, when the water warms up, to the point where I don't have to use a wetsuit. So I'm not an expert there. Kerry, maybe you know something about wetsuits.

KERRY: Yeah, basically it's the same thing. More than anything I would tell you, Ted, to look for something that fits well. That's the main thing. Different brands will fit you in different ways. They're all pretty good and maybe you'll try one suit on and it just doesn't feel right in the shoulder rotation or wherever. The main thing is just try them out and see what works.

KEVIN: Yeah. And just to add to that, it's really important that you swim in your wetsuit before you race. That's like one of the keys. If you just put on a wetsuit right before your race you might discover some things that are a bit of a shock and surprise. You don't want that.

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KERRY: Yeah, for sure. All right, we've got Cynthia in Honolulu. She says, "Should you consciously rotate your hips or is rotation just a result of your stroking?"

KEVIN: That's a really good question. Yeah, when you're learning it you should rotate your hips. Everything with freestyle is coming from your core. So think about your hips. When you're starting out and learning really think about your hips. That's what you should be concentrating on. Everything comes from your hips. You want to focus on hips first and then eventually it'll just become normal, you won't even think about it, it just happens.

To add to that, one of the big struggles with triathletes is breathing. That's one of the questions that comes up the most. Most people try to breathe with their head, they rotate and lift their head up to breathe. The problem is that it throws off your balance and your hand is sinking and then it really makes it hard to swim. What you want to do is think about rotating your hips to breathe. Think about taking a breath with your core, your belly button, instead of the traditional lifting your head to breathe. Your head kind of follows along with your hand. It kind of swivels with your head.

KERRY: Good deal. In terms of breathing, you've got open-water swimmers and pool swimmers who tend to breathe a little bit differently. Do you agree with that? In terms of where they breathe, breathing out to the side in terms of looking back a little bit more if you're an open-water swimmer versus some people who swim in a pool rotate their head kind of more up...It's hard to explain what I'm saying.

KEVIN: Yeah. I think it's pretty much the same. You want to rotate, like I just said, you do want to rotate to breathe instead of lifting your head. The difference is you're going to be doing some sighting so when you pop your head up you're looking straightforward, you're going to be out of balance for a second there. So it takes some getting used to to pop your goggles up in front and then rotate to breathe and then put your head back down. So that's a little bit different. Other than that it's the same.

KERRY: Good deal. Wendy wants to know the name of the website for the flip-turn instruction again.

KEVIN: It's beginnertriathlete.com. It's a great site. There's lots of resources on there. I've got some articles on there too.

KERRY: All right, good deal. That's all the questions we got from them. Do you want to add anything else to anything you've said this evening?

KEVIN: I think we've covered quite a bit. You asked me a question about how I

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differ from Total Immersion.

KERRY: Oh, yes. How do you differ from Total Immersion because we had Terry Laughlin on earlier and he's got his own views on things? So how do you differ?

KEVIN: That's a good question. I get that one every once in a while. I actually really like Total Immersion methodology. I took one of their clinics years back and I've actually read his books. I don't think I've read all his books but the ones having to do with freestyle. It's great stuff. The methodology is based on some of the principles that the coaches from the 70s, the great coaches - Bill Boomer and Doc Councilman [?]. They came up with a lot of this stuff in the 70s. The hip rotation was one of the things that they came out with, the side to side rotation that Mark Spitz was actually kind of famous for when he first kind of hit the swimming scene and people were wondering what that was. That was where all that came from. I actually used kind of the same concepts in my teaching but as far as my differences go I just try to boil it down a little bit more on the technical end. Like I said, a lot of the same concepts but it's more of layman's terms in explaining it.

So in terms of my DVD and my newsletter, I focus more on the workouts and the training plans for each of the distances, each distance race. So people will learn the technique and then they'll go, "What do I do now? I've got a race coming up in three months and I don't have any idea how to train for it." So that's kind of where I come in. I've got training plans for each of the races and how workouts should be. In my newsletters I send out a lot of workouts. Actually, for Beginner Triathlete right now I'm writing a series of workouts geared towards the intermediate-level swimmers. We also have a series for beginners but right now we're on the intermediate level. It's exactly what you need to be doing within your workouts. We started out with doing some 1500-yard workouts and now we're actually up to 3750-yard workouts. So that's kind of my focus, the 12-week plan for training. There's so much confusion out there on what exactly people should be doing for triathlon swim training.

KERRY: Yeah. Excellent. Do you want to talk about that a little bit because some people will just go and swim with masters versus doing any real specific training for their actual events. So they'll be training with a lot of sprinters and things like that. What are the main differences between those two types of training?

KEVIN: That's a good question too. Masters swimming is really general and it's geared towards the fitness swimmer. So 80 percent of masters, or more, are typically just swimming for fitness. It's really going to be kind of a general workout. Most masters coaches actually don't do any stroke

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technique work, mainly because it's really a tough environment to do that in. When you have 20 swimmers or so in the pool it's kind of hard to run around and give everybody stroke technique. So if you're a beginner-level swimmer triathlete you probably don't want to start out going to masters. Eventually I think it's a great thing. But I would start either with some individual-coached sessions or just on your own with some of the material that's out there and work on the drills. With the masters you don't get a lot of drills. You get a lot of yardage and intervals. So it can be kind of competitive. People want to compete with each other at masters workouts and that's not always the best thing, especially for people that are doing the three sports - the bike, the run and the swim is just another sport. You don't want to be spending your workouts trying to compete with people. You want to be working on your technique for the most part. On the other hand, I love masters swimming. I think it's great and I think if you've moved up to that intermediate level swimming you definitely should work in some masters swimming, at least once a week. It's a really good workout and it goes by a lot faster when you're with other people than when you're there by yourself.

KERRY: Yeah, for sure. And Kevin, what's the name of your site that people can get some of your stuff at? Or the sites I should say.

KEVIN: My websites are triswimcoach.com and triswimcoachonline.com.

KERRY: Awesome. Good deal. Well Kevin, thank you so much for coming on tonight.

KEVIN: Thanks for having me. I was looking over the list of people that you're interviewing. It looks like a really good product, really good series.

KERRY: Yeah, definitely. We've got a bunch of good people on there and I'm adding more. So stay tuned for that.

KEVIN: Sounds good.

KERRY: Definitely. So thanks again.