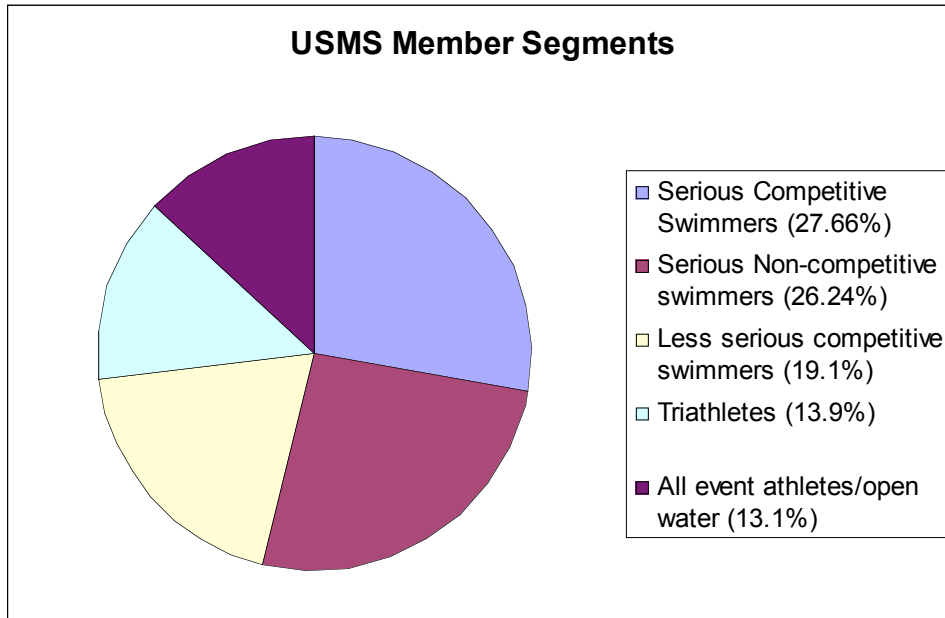


**Report on USMS Member Preferences and Attitudes
For Coaches and Clubs**

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This report is based on the segmentation of all USMS swimmers (see report on USMS Segments). There are five distinct segments within USMS and they have different preferences and concerns. For a more complete description of each of these groups the reader is referred to the report on USMS Segments.



USMS Segments

- Segment 1: Serious competitive swimmers
- Segment 2: Serious swimmers who are not competitive/less competitive
- Segment 3: Non-serious competitive swimmers
- Segment 4: All event participants/open water swimmers
- Segment 5: Triathletes

Note: Values reported in this section are based on a seven point scale where 1=unimportant, 4=neutral, and 7=very important.

What all groups want: This section describes the things that all segments place high importance on. If there is a group that is an exception they will be mentioned here. Following is a list of the things that all groups indicated were important to them (ratings higher than 5.0).

- Coached practices (except for less serious competitive swimmers who were 4.39)
- Stroke and technique work (except for less serious competitive swimmers who were 4.64)
- Getting in shape or maintaining fitness level
- Coaching (except less serious competitive swimmers who were 2.92)
- Improving technique (except less serious competitive swimmers who were 2.79)

Serious competitive swimmers: This group places very high importance on swimming in coached practices, stroke and technique work, and they joined masters swimming in order to compete in swimming meets (in pools). They place moderate importance on open water events (3.25) and on fitness events (3.17). They joined your club so that they can do sanctioned competitions and to maintain their fitness level or get in shape. They also place high importance on the social benefits of the team and on convenient practices. They place the highest importance on sprint work and stroke work in practice. On average they attend 3.2 practices per week. This group is about equal female/male.

Serious non-competitive swimmers: This group places very high importance on swimming in coached practices, stroke and technique work. They have low interest in swimming in swim meets but are serious about getting in shape and maintaining their fitness level. This group is very concerned about being too slow and about the competitiveness of others. On average they attend 2.9 practices per week. This group is 58.6% female.

Less serious competitive swimmers: This group places less importance on coaching, technique work, and attending coached practices. They like to swim in meets but they train less than other groups. They also place low importance on the social benefits of a team. On average they attend 1.9 practice per week. This group is 67.6% male.

All event and open water swimmers: This group places high importance on swimming in coached practices, stroke and technique work. They have higher interest in open water swimming (5.16) than in swim meets (4.37) and also have relatively high interest in fitness events (4.13) and triathlons (5.71). They also like running (5.01) and cycling (4.23) races. This group places high importance on the social aspects of the team (5.08) and cross training (4.76). On average they attend 2.9 practices per week. This group is 60.3% female.

Triathletes: This group places high importance coached practices, training, and fitness. They rate swimming meets (in pools) as low importance (2.4) and triathlons high (5.94). They join USMS because they have to when they join a club (5.0). They joined their club to improve their triathlon swimming (5.9). They enjoy distance sets (5.33). Initially, this group is concerned with being too slow (62%), not understanding instructions (40%), and the competitiveness of the group (32%).

What Concerns New Swimmers

We asked members about things that they were concerned about when they first started swimming. We then asked them what they were still concerned about after they had been swimming for a month. Their answers are reported below, broken down by segment and total. This information can be used to develop introductory materials, information on team web sites, and coach or welcome committee scripts to be used when dealing with new swimmers.

The numbers that appear in each box are the **percentage** of people who said that they had that concern at that time. The segments are abbreviated as follows:

Segment 1: Serious competitive swimmers

Segment 2: Serious swimmers who are not competitive/less competitive

Segment 3: Non-serious competitive swimmers

Segment 4: All event participants/open water swimmers

Segment 5: Triathletes

Concern of new swimmers at first practice	SEG1	SEG2	SEG3	SEG4	SEG5	ALL
I would be too slow	56	66	39	68	62	58
About reading the clock	10	13	6	21	14	12
About understanding instructions	28	33	18	46	40	31
Wearing a suit in front of others	10	12	4	12	7	10
I couldn't do it	23	26	17	29	21	23
I would embarrass myself	20	22	15	27	23	21
People would be too competitive	31	41	21	42	32	33
Circle swimming	7	9	7	16	12	9

Concern for new swimmers after 1 month	SEG1	SEG2	SEG3	SEG4	SEG5	ALL
I would be too slow	14	22	13	24	24	19
About reading the clock	6	7	4	11	9	7
About understanding instructions	9	11	6	14	15	10
Wearing a suit in front of others	2	4	1	3	1	2
I couldn't do it	4	5	3	4	5	4
I would embarrass myself	3	5	3	5	2	4
People would be too competitive	6	13	9	14	7	10
Circle swimming	2	4	4	5	3	4

These tables tell us several important things. First, teams and coaches are doing a good job of helping people to overcome their fears about swimming at a coached practice. Second, more than half of all new swimmers are concerned that they are too slow. About 1/3 of all new swimmers are concerned that people will be too competitive.

Questions for clubs to use in self assessment:

What segments do we currently attract and retain?

What segments would we like to attract and retain?

What do we do to orient new swimmers?

How does the way we orient new swimmers affect whether they return/stay?

Do we engage in too much competitive rhetoric?

What are we doing to help ease the concerns of new swimmers:

- **Before they come via literature and our web page?**
- **At their first practice?**
- **After their first practice?**

Segment 1: Serious competitive swimmers, approximately 28% of members. This group is 51% Female. They swim at an organized practice 3.2 times/week.

This segment places high importance on training and fitness. On a seven point scale where 1=very unimportant and 7=very important this group gave the following average ratings:

Coached practices	6.4
Stroke and technique work	6.1
Swimming in meets	5.3
Lifting	4.1
Stretching	5.2
I joined to do competitions	6.2
I joined to get in shape and maintain fitness	6.5
I joined to meet people	4.8
I joined for the social benefits of a group	5.0

This group also places high importance on convenient practices, coaching, and improving technique. Swimming on relays is not important to this group, or any other group.

Other information about this group:

They are the most likely to read USMS SWIMMER cover to cover (5.06) and they rate the magazine most highly on overall quality measures. This group is most similar to the all events segment in their attitudes about the magazine. This group tends to rate all content areas of the magazine as more important than other segments (except for the all-event swimmers who give similar ratings of most content areas). On content related to competitive achievements, competitions and results, this group tends to rate all of this content around 5.0 and is similar to the all-event swimmers and the less serious competitive swimmers. The only area of content rated lower by this group is open water training where they rated it 4.2. This group also tends to like personality profiles a bit more than other segments (4.9 versus 4.0) except for all-event swimmers who are also at 4.9.

In a separate question (one not used to define this group) 95.6% of this group reports competing in a swim meet. 50.1% report competing in an open water event, 36.8% postal events (highest of all groups) and 27.3% report competing in a triathlon.

This group also believes they have benefited the most from swimming.

On a battery of questions asking attitudes about the benefits of swimming the following means occurred for this group:

Note: Values reported in this section are based on a seven point scale where 1=strongly disagree, 4=neutral, and 7=strongly agree.

Swimming has made me happier	6.7
Swimming will cause me to live longer	6.4
Swimming has (not) caused a strain on my personal relationships	6.0

Swimming has improved my personal relationships	5.4
Swimming has made my sex life better	4.6
Swimming gives me more energy	6.2
When I am swimming I perform better at work	6.0
I get injured more easily when I am in training to swim	2.2
Swimming makes me calmer in my daily life	6.1
Swimming helps me channel my competitiveness constructively	5.7
Swimming makes me more competitive	4.9
Swimmers are healthier than other people	6.0
Swimmers are less social than other people	1.9
Swimming is a solitary sport	2.4
Fast swimmers and slow swimmers don't mix well socially	1.9
Fast swimmers act annoyed at slower swimmers	2.7
I am intimidated by swimmers who are faster than me	2.4
Swimming makes me a better spouse/partner	5.1
Swimming gives me more confidence socially	5.2
Swimming has helped me to overcome personal fears	4.6

Segment 2: Serious non-competitive swimmers. Approximately 26% of members. This group is 58.6% Female. They swim at an organized practice 3.0 times/week.

This segment places high importance on training and fitness. On a seven point scale where 1=very unimportant and 7=very important this group gave the following average ratings:

Coached practices	6.1
Stroke and technique work	5.5
Swimming in meets	2.4
Lifting	3.3
Stretching	4.6
I joined to do competitions	2.5
I joined to get in shape and maintain fitness	6.6
I joined to meet people	3.5
I joined for the social benefits of a group	3.7

This group also places high importance on convenient practices, coaching, and improving technique.

Other information about this group:

They are unlikely to read USMS SWIMMER cover to cover (4.14) and they are indifferent to the magazine, with average scores in the 3.5-4.5 range for most measures. Along with Triathletes, this group was the most likely to say they don't care about the magazine. This group does have high interest in some areas of the magazine and so an opportunity exists to further engage them by providing targeted content. The following areas of the magazine received high scores from this segment:

Training and technique dept.	5.8
Pool training articles	5.8
Workout information	5.3
Healthy Swimmer	5.6
News on health	5.5
News on nutrition	5.5
Pictorial training and technique features	5.8
Fitness swimming features	5.3

When first starting swimming on a team, this group was likely to worry about being too slow and about other people being too competitive.

This group is the least likely to have participated in any form of competition, with only 57% ever having done a swim meet, 33% having done open water events, 19% having done triathlons, and 21% having done postal events. Their total participation in the past year is 1.8 events of all kinds, the next lowest group is 3.8 events.

This group also believes they have benefited from swimming. On a battery of questions asking attitudes about the benefits of swimming the following means occurred for this group:

Note: Values reported in this section are based on a seven point scale where 1=strongly disagree, 4=neutral, and 7=strongly agree.

Swimming has made me happier	6.4
Swimming will cause me to live longer	6.1
Swimming has (not) caused a strain on my personal relationships	6.3
Swimming has improved my personal relationships	4.7
Swimming has made my sex life better	3.9
Swimming gives me more energy	5.9
When I am swimming I perform better at work	5.6
I get injured more easily when I am in training to swim	2.0
Swimming makes me calmer in my daily life	5.7
Swimming helps me channel my competitiveness constructively	4.3
Swimming makes me more competitive	3.5
Swimmers are healthier than other people	5.4
Swimmers are less social than other people	2.1
Swimming is a solitary sport	2.7
Fast swimmers and slow swimmers don't mix well socially	2.1
Fast swimmers act annoyed at slower swimmers	2.9
I am intimidated by swimmers who are faster than me	2.7
Swimming makes me a better spouse/partner	4.6
Swimming gives me more confidence socially	4.2
Swimming has helped me to overcome personal fears	3.6

Segment 3: Less serious (casual) competitive swimmers. Approximately 19% of members. This group is 67.6% Male. They swim at an organized practice 1.85 times/week.

This segment places significantly less importance on training and fitness. This group is highly interested in competition but, for whatever reasons, is less interested in training than other groups. They place higher importance on lap swimming without a coach than they do on coached practices (the only group to do so). On a seven point scale where 1=very unimportant and 7=very important this group gave the following average ratings:

Coached practices	4.4
Lap swimming without a coach	4.7
Stroke and technique work	4.7
Swimming in meets	4.8
Lifting	3.6
Stretching	4.4
I joined to do competitions	6.1
I joined to get in shape and maintain fitness	5.0
I joined to meet people	3.3
I joined for the social benefits of a group	3.2

This group also places low importance on convenient practices, coaching, and improving technique.

Other information about this group:

They are unlikely to read USMS SWIMMER cover to cover (4.4) and their general attitudes about the magazine are slightly positive, with average scores in the 4.0-5.0 range for most measures. This group was slightly below other groups on their ratings of the importance of training and technique features in the magazine. They were also the least interested in open water features (3.9). This group also gave low ratings for recipes (3.6), Safety tips (4.2), Youth and family features (3.3), and fitness swimming features (4.6). This group tended to be near the mean for all other content areas in the magazine. The following areas of the magazine received high scores from this segment (although they were often the lowest among all groups):

Training and technique dept.	5.7
Pool training articles	5.8
Workout information	5.2
Healthy Swimmer	5.2
News on health	5.2
News on nutrition	5.2
Pictorial training and technique features	5.6

When first starting swimming on a team, this group was the least likely to have any kind of concerns.

This group is less likely than serious competitive swimmers to have participated in swim meets, with 49% having done a swim meet, 46% having done open water events, 79% having done triathlons, and 17% having done postal events. Their total participation in the past year is 4.8 events of all kinds.

Although they are consistently the lowest of all groups in their ratings of the benefits of swimming, this group also believes they have benefited from swimming. On a battery of questions asking attitudes about the benefits of swimming the following means occurred for this group:

Note: Values reported in this section are based on a seven point scale where 1=strongly disagree, 4=neutral, and 7=strongly agree.

Swimming has made me happier	6.3
Swimming will cause me to live longer	6.1
Swimming has (not) caused a strain on my personal relationships	6.0
Swimming has improved my personal relationships	4.7
Swimming has made my sex life better	4.1
Swimming gives me more energy	5.8
When I am swimming I perform better at work	5.5
I get injured more easily when I am in training to swim	2.1
Swimming makes me calmer in my daily life	5.5
Swimming helps me channel my competitiveness constructively	5.2
Swimming makes me more competitive	4.6
Swimmers are healthier than other people	5.8
Swimmers are less social than other people	2.1
Swimming is a solitary sport	3.0
Fast swimmers and slow swimmers don't mix well socially	1.9
Fast swimmers act annoyed at slower swimmers	2.9
I am intimidated by swimmers who are faster than me	2.0
Swimming makes me a better spouse/partner	4.5
Swimming gives me more confidence socially	4.4
Swimming has helped me to overcome personal fears	3.6

Segment 4: Triathletes. Approximately 14% of members. This group is 58.3% Male. They swim at an organized practice 2.44 times/week.

This segment places high importance on training and fitness. As expected, this group places high importance on competing in triathlons (6.1), and running races (5.2). They place high importance on coached practices and are the least likely of all groups to compete at a swim meet (2.4). On a seven point scale where 1=very unimportant and 7=very important this group gave the following average ratings:

Coached practices	5.7
Lap swimming without a coach	3.9
Stroke and technique work	5.6
Swimming in meets	2.4
Lifting	4.1
Stretching	4.8
I joined to do competitions	3.0
I joined to get in shape and maintain fitness	5.8
I joined to meet people	3.6
I joined for the social benefits of a group	3.2

This group also places moderate to high importance on convenient practices (4.7), coaching (5.3), and improving technique (5.3).

Other information about this group:

They are unlikely to read USMS SWIMMER cover to cover (4.1) and their general attitudes about the magazine are slightly positive, with average scores in the 4.0-5.0 range for most measures. They are the only group to rate USMS SWIMMER below 4 compared to other sports magazines (3.6) reflecting their eclectic interests. They care the least about the magazine (I don't really care about... rated at 3.4). This group also cares the least of all groups about information from/about USMS or information about swimming competitions. They tend to be average on their ratings of the importance of training features, except that they rate open water training articles highly (5.9). This group also gave low ratings for recipes (4.0), Safety tips (4.5), Youth and family features (3.4). This group tended to be near the mean for all other content areas in the magazine.

This group highly likely to have participated in swim meets, with 95% having done a swim meet, 46% having done open water events, 34% having done triathlons, and 31% having done postal events. Their total participation in the past year is 3.9 events of all kinds. They are also the group most likely to go out to eat after an event.

This group also believes they have benefited from swimming. On a battery of questions asking attitudes about the benefits of swimming the following means occurred for this group:

Note: Values reported in this section are based on a seven point scale where 1=strongly disagree, 4=neutral, and 7=strongly agree.

Swimming has made me happier	6.0
Swimming will cause me to live longer	5.7
Swimming has (not) caused a strain on my personal relationships	6.0
Swimming has improved my personal relationships	4.3
Swimming has made my sex life better	3.6
Swimming gives me more energy	5.5
When I am swimming I perform better at work	5.3
I get injured more easily when I am in training to swim	1.8
Swimming makes me calmer in my daily life	5.2
Swimming helps me channel my competitiveness constructively	4.5
Swimming makes me more competitive	4.0
Swimmers are healthier than other people	5.2
Swimmers are less social than other people	2.3
Swimming is a solitary sport	2.8
Fast swimmers and slow swimmers don't mix well socially	2.2
Fast swimmers act annoyed at slower swimmers	3.0
I am intimidated by swimmers who are faster than me	2.6
Swimming makes me a better spouse/partner	4.0
Swimming gives me more confidence socially	3.9
Swimming has helped me to overcome personal fears	3.5

Segment 5: All-event and open water swimmers. Approximately 13% of members. This group is 60.3% Female. They swim at an organized practice 2.9 times/week.

This segment places high importance on training and fitness. As expected, this group places high importance on competing in all forms of competition. They place high importance on coached practices and are the most likely of all groups to compete at an open water event (5.2). On a seven point scale where 1=very unimportant and 7=very important this group gave the following average ratings:

Coached practices	6.2
Lap swimming without a coach	4.0
Stroke and technique work	6.1
Swimming in meets	4.7
Lifting	4.9
Stretching	5.6
I joined to do competitions	5.6
I joined to get in shape and maintain fitness	6.3
I joined to meet people	5.0
I joined for the social benefits of a group	4.9

This group also places high importance on convenient practices (4.9), coaching (5.8), and improving technique (5.7).

Other information about this group:

They are likely to read USMS SWIMMER cover to cover (4.9) and their general attitudes about the magazine are strongly positive, with average scores at 4.9 or above for most measures. This group also cares more than most groups about information from/about USMS or information about swimming competitions (ratings 4.7-5.2). They tend to be high on their ratings of the importance of training features, and they rate open water training articles highly (5.9). They also gave the highest importance ratings of any groups to competition training articles (6.2), dry land training articles (5.9), and cross-training articles (5.9). This group tends to be the most enthusiastic of all segments with high ratings for content on training, diet, health, nutrition, fitness swimming, personalities...virtually all content areas.

This group is highly likely to have participated in all forms of competition, with 76% having done a swim meet, 64% having done open water events, 81% having done triathlons, and 33% having done postal events. Their total participation in the past year is 5.9 events of all kinds.

This group also believes they have benefited from swimming. On a battery of questions asking attitudes about the benefits of swimming the following means occurred for this group:

Note: Values reported in this section are based on a seven point scale where 1=strongly disagree, 4=neutral, and 7=strongly agree.

Swimming has made me happier	6.5
Swimming will cause me to live longer	6.3
Swimming has (not) caused a strain on my personal relationships	5.0
Swimming has improved my personal relationships	5.3
Swimming has made my sex life better	4.5
Swimming gives me more energy	6.0
When I am swimming I perform better at work	5.9
I get injured more easily when I am in training to swim	1.9
Swimming makes me calmer in my daily life	5.9
Swimming helps me channel my competitiveness constructively	5.5
Swimming makes me more competitive	5.1
Swimmers are healthier than other people	5.8
Swimmers are less social than other people	2.1
Swimming is a solitary sport	2.6
Fast swimmers and slow swimmers don't mix well socially	2.1
Fast swimmers act annoyed at slower swimmers	2.9
I am intimidated by swimmers who are faster than me	2.6
Swimming makes me a better spouse/partner	4.9
Swimming gives me more confidence socially	5.0
Swimming has helped me to overcome personal fears	4.7