

Woburn Lido Cold-Water Swimming Guidance

Introduction

Last year we took on board your feedback and opened for cold-water swimming for the first time in the history of the Lido. The season was stop-start due to Covid restrictions, but very popular. The Lido will open for a further (hopefully uninterrupted) season of cold-water swimming on 27 September. There will be provision for individual sessions and group sessions. We hope that you will enjoy these and support the Lido.

Many of you will be very experienced in cold water swimming and you will not need the guidance that follows. On the other hand for many it will be a new experience and careful consideration is needed before committing to even one session, as there are risks quite different to other swimming. It will be for users to decide whether or not to take risks and we cannot be responsible for those decisions and any consequences arising from users' decisions.

These are basic notes and prospective users are advised to view websites of specialist groups for further information.

What are the benefits

Ignoring the obvious benefit of exercise, it appears that there are many benefits including improving circulation and the immune system, and the possibility it can delay dementia.

What are the first experiences of cold water swimming like?

A graphic description of a first experience from the I newspaper on 20 October:

“My eye sockets were ablaze with cold. I could feel the bones in my ankles scratching around in shock. My nipples were so numb I wondered if they'd dropped off. I came up screeching for air like an extra from Titanic. My breathing was uncomfortably rapid, and my chest pumped in and out.”

The Outdoor Swimming Society:

“Cold water will punch the air out of your lungs, it will bite your hands and feet off. After a minute or two I generally have the sensation of a giant lobster clamped to my buttocks.”

Swimming session lengths

Individual sessions will last 45 minutes. For new cold water swimmers a few minutes for first sessions may be sufficient building up to longer activity. Users should swim to their limits.

End of session

The immediate reaction will be that you are much colder after leaving the pool and it will take time to recover. The recommendations are to dry yourself thoroughly and as quickly as possible and then get dressed immediately adding extra layers of warm clothing – gloves and a warm hat. It would be wise for clothing to be easy to put on. You should have a warm drink and something to eat – we will be offering these. It will help to walk around. You will not be ready to drive until you have fully recovered. A tot of brandy is a no. Hot showers are also a no. If you feel ill and need extra time to recover, we will offer a warm area for recovery.

What should I wear swimming?

Neoprene thermal wetsuits will be suitable for most to aid buoyancy and retain body heat. Neoprene caps and socks are also useful. These must be sanitised before use at the Lido if previously used in lake or river swimming. We have no objection to normal swimming wear to be used if that is the user's preference.

Warming up exercise before swimming is helpful.

What are the risks?

There are risks including:

- Panic attacks
- Cold water shock
- Hypothermia
- Asthma attacks
- Heart attacks

It is certainly important to be aware of these risks and seek guidance if you may be vulnerable. You should certainly not enter the pool if you are feeling unwell.

Covid 19

To ensure everyone's safety we will continue to have health and safety procedures in place. We do ask that social distancing take place. The changing rooms will be available, but we ask that these be used with regard to your own well-being, and that of others. In addition, please note the following:

- Users will be required to make advance paid bookings and we will not allow anyone to attend who has not pre-booked
- We cannot allow spectators or family members (save in a support capacity) within the premises
- Those with symptoms of Covid 19 or anyone living in the same household must of course not enter the Lido
- We ask that users do not arrive more than 10 minutes before their booked session
- Users enter the Lido until Lido staff approve this
- Users should take care to remove all personal items at the end of their session as we may have to dispose of left items
- At the end of their session users must leave promptly
- Lifeguards and staff can only provide basic assistance

Further Guidance

We recommend reading the articles and guidance at www.outdoorswimmingsociety.com.

Please Note

We cannot accept liability for any harm or injury suffered by users directly resulting from cold water swimming.