

Vol. 04

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2024

# OCEANMAN MAGAZINE

## OCEANMAN Travels

Lago d'Orta and northern Italy  
endless charm

## Training Tips

Key training tips for cold water  
swimmers

## OCEANMAN Stories

"A diagnosis doesn't define you"  
Gabriel Aguirre story

## Beyond the finish line

My open water odyssey in Curaçao

Intro

# Unmissable stories, Pro Tips, and the next big OCEANMAN Destination



## *Welcome to the fourth edition of OCEANMAN Magazine*

This edition is packed with powerful stories, expert advice, and inspiring perspectives that capture the heart and spirit of the OCEANMAN community. As we embrace colder months, we kick off with essential tips for swimmers navigating icy waters in “Key Training Tips for Cold Water Swimmers,” guiding you on how to adapt, train, and conquer low temperatures.

From there, we head to the sun-soaked shores of Curaçao with “Beyond the Finish Line: My Open Water Odyssey in Curaçao,” a vivid recount of one swimmer’s unforgettable journey that goes far beyond just crossing the finish line.

For those captivated by the allure of Italian landscapes, “Lago d'Orta and Northern Italy's Endless Charm” is a must-read, highlighting

the region's beauty as seen through the eyes of OCEANMAN athletes. Our focus on preparation continues with "Warming Up Matters," where elite swimmer Daniel Ortega shares the secrets of a proper warm-up that can make all the difference on race day.

This issue also brings you an exclusive interview with professional swimmer Artur Arent, where he reveals insights into his training, ambitions, and his experience with OCEANMAN, offering guidance and inspiration to swimmers of all levels. Plus, don't miss "Swimming Together in Guatapé: The Benefits and Challenges of Competing as a Couple," an inspiring feature on the bond between two competitors who faced Colombia's breathtaking course side-by-side.

Adding to the excitement, we are thrilled to announce "Next Stop: United States of America"—our first-ever U.S. event coming in 2025.

This edition is filled with personal and powerful stories, like Gabriel Aguirre's moving testimony in "A Diagnosis Doesn't Define You." After competing in Manta post-surgery, he returned to race in Salinas this year, showing us the true meaning of resilience. And for those making the leap from pools to open water, "From Pool to Ocean: The Transition" is packed with advice on training, mindset, and the exhilarating thrill of swimming in the wild.

Finally, relive the magic of our recent "OCEANMAN Malaysia: A Race to Remember," an event that left a lasting impact on Sabah's shores and in the hearts of all participants.

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Dive into these stories and let's continue to celebrate the incredible world of open water swimming together.



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# NEXT RACES

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**29/01 DEC**  
**OCEANMAN PHUKET,  
THAILAND**



**06/08 DEC**  
**OCEANMAN LIMA,  
PERÚ**



**12/15 DEC**  
**OCEANMAN DUBAI,  
UAE (WFC)**



## 2025 RACE CALENDAR

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**DISCOVER ALL THE RACES AT  
[WWW.OCEANMANSWIM.COM](http://WWW.OCEANMANSWIM.COM)**

# *The Editorial*

## THE GREATNESS OF OPEN WATER SWIMMING

Dear OCEANMAN Friends,

I can't quite recall how many years it's been since my first experience in open water swimming. Well, actually, I can—looking back, it was in 2008, during a triathlon. My memory of it isn't very clear, as it was overshadowed by punches, foot grabs, and a buoy turn that felt more like the chaos of a Black Friday sale than the calm swim I had imagined in my mind.

And that was that. For someone who enjoys swimming freely, I wouldn't exactly call it a satisfying experience. The following year, I had the bright idea of signing up for my first pure open water swimming event. Back then, personal safety buoys weren't a thing, or at least not common, so I had a terrifying moment facing the



Fermin Egado, OCEANMAN CEO

open sea alone in a competition for the first time. But amidst that fear, something amazing happened just minutes after starting the swim: I discovered that the other swimmers weren't out there looking to throw punches or latch onto someone's foot like kite surfers trying to hitch a ride.

No! What happened was that people spread out. And you know what? That's when I truly experienced, for the first time, what it means to love open water swimming.

**"I believe it all comes down to one word: respect."**

When I swim in open water, I respect my environment. I love diving in, feeling the water on my face, my feet, my hands—sometimes colder, sometimes warmer—but always appreciating this element. I love it when the water is clean, when I can see life thriving in it. I value the ocean, the sea, and the lakes, because I want to return to them time and time again, finding them just as I left them. And I want my child to enjoy them the same way when I'm no longer here.

I respect the environment, and I respect those who share the water with me. When I swim, I enjoy the freedom, and I want to know that those beside me feel the same. That's why, if I find myself close to another swimmer in a competition, I move away as soon as I touch them. I let them swim freely. We can compete for a position, but always with respect.

I like to imagine that this is appreciated by the other swimmer. After all, we haven't yet figured out a way to communicate underwater, but I, for one, smile internally at these moments. I like to think that they smile too, appreciating the space, just as I do when I feel a touch and see the other swimmer move away, letting me swim comfortably.



This is part of the greatness of open water swimming: there is a unique respect that isn't found often in other sports. We respect our environment, and we respect each other.

I've spent some time thinking about how to begin the OCEANMAN Swimmer's Manifesto—something that can serve our community as a mantra and that we can pass from one to another. I believe this will be the first principle:

**“Respect those who swim with you as if they were your lifelong friend. Leave space for other swimmers to be free, and help anyone who needs it, both in and out of the water.”**

From this small platform offered by this editorial, I'd like to ask you to continue embracing this attitude. At OCEANMAN, we embody these values of respect for the environment and for people. Help us spread this message so that every time you swim with others, you can imagine them swimming freely and smiling.

With gratitude and affection,

**Fermin Egido**





OCEANMAN Community

# Beyond the finish line: My open water odyssey in Curaçao



Written by:  
**JUAN MARTIN VALENCIA**



OCEANMAN Community

## OCEANMAN Curaçao

### ***OCEANMAN Curaçao: Race Day, Island Adventures, and Training with a Champion***

Competing in OCEANMAN Curaçao was more than just a race. My three-day adventure offered an experience that extended far beyond the competition itself. After landing in Curaçao, I was greeted by the warm Caribbean breeze and the vivid colors of Willemstad, Curaçao's capital and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

With just hours to settle in, the first highlight of my trip was a group training session with Sharon Van Rouwendaal, an Olympic gold medalist and open-water icon. Having the chance to train with Sharon was a rare privilege, and I quickly realized why she's regarded as one of the best in the world.



***Train Like an Olympian:  
Group training with  
Sharon van Rouwendaal***

Sharon led our group through a series of drills designed to improve crucial skills for open water swimming. What stood out most was her approachability and the personalized advice she offered each swimmer. Training in the pristine waters of Curaçao with an Olympic champion coaching us was nothing short of surreal, and her enthusiasm added to the energy of the entire session.

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# Article



## *An Evening in Willemstad*

Following the training session, I explored the vibrant streets of Willemstad. The city's architecture is a stunning blend of Dutch colonial influence with a Caribbean twist—bright pastel buildings lining the water and the iconic Queen Emma Bridge that connects the two main districts of Punda and Otrobanda. Dinner was a treat of fresh seafood with local spices, setting the stage for the weekend of exploration and competition ahead.



## *Racing in paradise*

Race day arrived, and the energy was electric as over 600 swimmers from around the world gathered on the beach, ready to take on the Caribbean Sea. The event was impeccably organized, with volunteers and staff making sure everyone felt ready and informed. As I joined the crowd of participants, I couldn't help but feel the shared anticipation and excitement in the air. The race course was a spectacular loop, with the crystal-clear waters of Curaçao revealing vibrant marine life below. As I swam, I could spot schools of fish and colorful coral reefs—a surreal sight that kept me motivated throughout the race.

The water was warm, and the visibility was incredible, making it easy to see fellow swimmers as well as the underwater scenery.

But the course wasn't without its challenges. As the sun rose higher, the heat began to take its toll, making it essential to pace myself and stay hydrated. Spectators lined the beach and cheered us on, creating an atmosphere of camaraderie and support that fueled everyone's efforts. Crossing the finish line was a moment of triumph, not just for completing the race, but for the incredible experience.

## *Exploring Curaçao's Natural and Cultural Wonders*

A short drive from Willemstad, the Hato Caves offered a fascinating glimpse into the geological history of the island. The caves are filled with ancient stalactites and petroglyphs dating back to the island's earliest inhabitants, the Arawak people. Walking through these caverns felt like stepping back in time, and the knowledgeable guides provided insights into the island's indigenous history and its ecological significance. In the late afternoon, I joined a sunset boat tour along the coast, one of Curaçao's must-do experiences. The boat glided through the turquoise waters, offering stunning views of the island's cliffs and secluded bays. Onboard, I met other OCEANMAN participants, and we shared stories from the race and plans for future events, deepening the sense of community that makes OCEANMAN so special.



# Key training tips for cold water swimmers



Written by:  
ARMANDOS LINARDOS

Cold water swimming offers unique challenges that require physical, mental, and technical preparation. Whether you are training for an open water swimming, triathlon, planning to swim across an open water channel, or just diving into cold water for the thrill, understanding how to adapt to the cold is crucial for safety, performance, and enjoyment.

The importance of acclimatization is centered around three key factors:

**Physiological Adaptation:** Acclimatization refers to the body's ability to adjust to repeated exposure to cold water. This process can lead to two key adaptations: adaptation, which is a decreased sensitivity to cold, and insulative acclimatization, which improves insulation through increased body fat or the use of wetsuits. Regular exposure to cold water helps swimmers feel more comfortable and reduces the cold shock response, a potentially dangerous reaction that can occur during initial immersion.





**Cold Habituation:** This is the process of becoming accustomed to the sensations of cold. Over time, swimmers may find that entering cold water becomes less painful and more manageable as their bodies adapt.

**Insulative Acclimatization:** This refers to the body's ability to retain heat better over time, often influenced by body fat and the use of thermal gear like wetsuits

## **Understanding the body's response to cold water**

When you enter cold water, your body embarks on an incredible journey of unwilling reactions designed to protect you. The first response, known as the cold shock response, ignites a rapid increase in breathing rate, often called the "gasp reflex." While this can be alarming if your face is submerged, it is a powerful reminder of your body's resilience. This reaction typically lasts for just 1 to 2 minutes, but with training, you can learn to harness it.

Vasoconstriction (the narrowing of the blood vessels resulting from contraction of the muscular wall of the vessels, in particular, the large arteries and small arterioles) is another remarkable response, where blood vessels near the skin constrict to conserve precious heat. This prioritization of blood flow to essential organs highlights the body's unyielding commitment to survival, even as it leaves extremities more vulnerable to the cold. Over time, gradual exposure to cold can lower your core temperature, yet it is a testament to the body's strength, as it teaches you how to navigate challenges that may impair muscle function, judgment, and coordination.





## Mental and physical preparation

Preparation for cold water swimming involves both mental courage and physical conditioning. Regularly practicing in cold water is key to developing a tolerance for low temperatures.

- **Gradual Exposure:** Start with brief sessions in cooler water and gradually increase the duration as your tolerance builds. Try to reduce the frequency of exiting and re-entering the water, as this can make the body even more sensitive to the cold.
- **Mental Resilience:** Training your mind to tolerate discomfort is just as essential as training your body. Techniques such as **breath control** (Wim Hof technique\*) and **mindfulness** can help calm your mind, allowing you to focus on technique rather than the cold. Cold water swimming can be mentally daunting, but building resilience will help you remain calm and in control.
- **Cold Water Acclimatization:** Over time, exposure to cold water can enhance your body's natural cold tolerance. It is possible to acclimatize by taking cold showers or submerging in cold baths, though this is no substitute for real open-water practice.

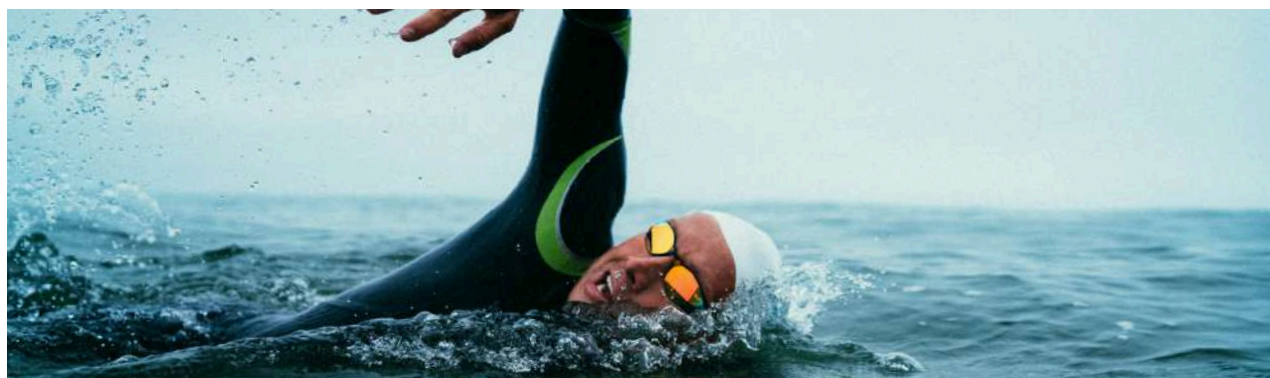
\*The useful Wim Hof breathing technique is as follows:

Find a comfortable position. Breathe deeply through the nose or mouth and through the belly to the chest. Then, let the breath go unforced. Exhale through the mouth, then immediately breathe in again. Take 30 to 40 such breaths in short bursts. Take one final, deep inhalation, then let the air out and stop inhaling. Hold your breath until you feel the urge to breathe again. Inhale very deeply to full capacity and hold for 15 seconds, then let it go. This completes the first round. Repeat the whole process, steps 2 to 6, three to four times. After completion, take time to meditate and enjoy a state of deep relaxation

## Essential Techniques to Stay Warm

Once in the water, there are several strategies to retain warmth and prolong your swimming time.

- **Proper Attire:** A high-quality wetsuit is indispensable for maintaining warmth while swimming in chilly waters. When selecting a wetsuit, prioritize one made from neoprene that is specifically designed for cold water environments. This material works by creating a snug fit that traps a thin layer of water against your skin, which your body subsequently warms up, effectively insulating you from the cold. Generally, thicker wetsuits—usually 5mm (about 0.2 in) or more—offer enhanced insulation properties. However, many swimmers find that certain extremities, such as their hands and feet, are particularly vulnerable to the biting cold. To reduce this heat loss, consider equipping yourself with neoprene gloves and booties, which provide additional warmth. A swim cap can also help retain heat through your head; for those particularly sensitive to cold, wearing a double cap can further shield against heat escape, ensuring a more enjoyable swim experience.
- **Swim Cap Choice:** Heat escapes quickly from the head, so a silicone or neoprene swim cap can significantly help. In colder conditions, some swimmers wear two caps for added insulation.
- **Avoiding Overheating Pre-Swim:** Contrary to what some believe, overheating before a swim can make you feel colder once you are in the water. Stay comfortably warm but avoid drastic temperature changes before entering the water to keep your body in balance.
- **Breathing Techniques:** Slow, controlled breathing is essential when swimming in cold water. Hyperventilation is a common reaction, but it can lead to a quicker loss of warmth and panic. Practice breathing exercises that encourage slower, more measured breaths. Focusing on your breathing can also serve as a mental anchor, helping you stay calm.
- **Increasing brown fat:** Controlled cold exposure can significantly aid in adapting to colder swimming conditions while also providing metabolic benefits that may contribute to overall health. Brown fat, or brown adipose tissue (BAT), plays a crucial role in cold adaptation by enhancing thermogenesis, the process of heat production in the body. This adaptation is particularly relevant for individuals exposed to cold environments, such as open-water swimmers.





## Key Training Tips for Cold Water Swimmers

Training for cold water swims involves both building endurance and learning cold-specific techniques.

- **Build a Base in Warm Water:** Cold water can drain your energy rapidly, underscoring the importance of efficient swimming technique and strong endurance. Begin your journey by building stamina in warmer waters, as mastering your form and overcoming fatigue will prepare you to conquer the challenges of colder conditions.
- **Pace Control:** Cold water often reduces perceived effort, so many swimmers start too fast, burning through their energy reserves quickly. Instead, find a steady pace and focus on long, efficient strokes.
- **Core and Leg Strengthening:** Cold water restricts blood flow to the limbs, so strengthening your core and legs is important. Incorporate core exercises like planks, Russian twists, and leg lifts into your routine, as a strong core will help with stability and form.

## Building Mental Resilience

Swimming in cold water challenges not only your body but also your mind. Staying calm is crucial, as the sensation of cold can induce a mental response that increases stress and can lead to faster fatigue. Here is how to mentally prepare:

- **Visualization:** Imagine yourself swimming calmly and confidently in cold water. Picture the environment, the feel of the water, and the sensation of steady, controlled breathing. This mental rehearsal can help you stay composed when you encounter real conditions.
- **Setting Small Goals:** Long swims in cold water can feel tremendous, so break down your swim into manageable parts. For example, focus on swimming to a particular landmark or completing a specific number of strokes before reassessing how you feel.

- **Stay in the Present:** If your mind is on the discomfort, time will seem to stretch. Instead, focus on your technique, the rhythm of your breathing, or even the beauty of the water around you. Engaging with the present moment can make the experience more enjoyable and take your mind off the cold.



## Safety Tips for Cold Water Swimming

Swimming in cold water comes with risks, and it is important to prioritize safety.

- **Swim with a Partner:** Having a swimming buddy is crucial, especially in cold conditions. Hypothermia can impair your judgment, and a partner can provide support if you get into trouble.
- **Know the Signs of Hypothermia:** Hypothermia can develop quickly in cold water, even for experienced swimmers. Early signs include shivering, numbness, and difficulty moving, but as it progresses, it can impair mental clarity and coordination. Learn to recognize these signs and exit the water immediately if you feel them.
- **Warm Up Slowly Afterward:** Following a cold-water swim, it is crucial to warm up gradually to prevent "after drop," a phenomenon where your body temperature continues to fall as cold blood from your extremities circulates back to your core. Change into dry clothing and wrap yourself in blankets; however, be sure to avoid hot showers or abrupt temperature changes, as these can be shocking to your system.
- **Stay Hydrated and Energized:** Cold water can control your thirst, leading many swimmers to forget the importance of staying hydrated. Dehydration can hinder your body's ability to generate heat, so it is essential to drink water both before and after your swim. Additionally, consuming a carbohydrate-rich snack beforehand can help fuel your muscles and maintain body warmth.





## The Rewards of Cold-Water Swimming

With the right preparation and mindset, cold water swimming can be an immensely rewarding experience. The endorphin rush, improved resilience, and connection to nature are benefits that many cold-water swimmers cherish. Once your body and mind are acclimated, you will find that cold water can enhance your sense of presence, build inner strength, and provide an invigorating escape from daily routines.

Adapting to cold-water swimming has garnered attention for its many health benefits, including physical and mental well-being. With gradual acclimatization, strong technique, and mental resilience, you will be ready to face the cold head-on.

### Top 10 Health Benefits of the swimming in Cold Water:

- Boosted Immune System
- Improved Circulation
- Increased Metabolism
- Reduction in Inflammation
- Enhanced Muscle Recovery
- Improved Respiratory Function
- Mood Enhancement
- Stress Relief
- Support for Mental Health Conditions
- Community Connection

Remember, always respect the water, stay within your limits, and prioritize safety. Cold water swimming can offer a unique sense of freedom and fulfillment—one chilly stroke at a time.

# Lago d'Orta and Northern Italy's Endless Charm



Recommendations by:  
**LEONARDO ZANARELLA**

## *Hidden Italian Paradise: Dive into Lago d'Orta and Explore Northern Italy's Best-Kept Secrets*

Northern Italy is a treasure trove of stunning landscapes, historic cities, and endless adventure opportunities. Lago d'Orta, one of Italy's best-kept secrets, is the perfect destination for open water swimmers, nature lovers, and travelers who want a taste of Italian authenticity. Home to OCEANMAN Lago d'Orta, this picturesque lake is celebrated for its clear, calm waters and breathtaking scenery.

This travel guide brings you the ultimate Italian experience, with insider tips from Leonardo Zanarella, part of our big OCEANMAN family.

Not only will he share his recommendations for enjoying Lago d'Orta, but he'll also guide you to nearby cities like Milan, Como, and Pavia—where a blend of Italian culture, history, and modern life awaits.

# Lago d'Orta: A Swimmer's Paradise

Nestled between lush hills and the majestic Alps, Lago d'Orta offers a unique charm that's hard to find elsewhere. Less crowded than the nearby Lake Como, it boasts tranquil waters, perfect for open water swimming and water sports.

## Leonardo's Recommendations for Lago d'Orta:

- Swim Around Isola di San Giulio: A must for any swimmer, the small island of San Giulio lies just off the shores of Orta San Giulio, the lake's main town. This enchanting island is home to a historic basilica and offers a magical atmosphere that makes your swim unforgettable.
- Visit Orta San Giulio: This charming town is perfect for a post-race stroll. Lose yourself in its cobblestone streets, dine at lakeside restaurants, and soak in the views of the surrounding mountains.

- Explore Sacro Monte di Orta: A UNESCO World Heritage site, this hilltop complex features chapels dedicated to Saint Francis of Assisi, each adorned with beautiful frescoes and statues. The hike offers stunning views of the lake and a touch of spiritual calm.

## Day Trip to Milan: Italy's Fashion and Cultural Capital

A trip to Lago d'Orta isn't complete without a visit to Milan, just an hour and a half away by car. Milan combines the energy of a cosmopolitan city with a deep cultural heritage, making it a must-see.

**Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II:** Right next to the Duomo, this stunning shopping gallery is one of the world's oldest and beautiful malls, with luxury shops, cafes, and art-filled interiors.





**Duomo di Milano:** No trip to Milan is complete without visiting this iconic Gothic cathedral. Climb to the rooftop for panoramic views of the city and see the famous Madonnina statue.

**Sforza Castle (Castello Sforzesco):** A historic fortress that now houses several museums, the castle is a testament to Milan's storied past. Stroll around its gardens and admire its ancient architecture.

**Navigli District:** After a day of sightseeing, unwind in this vibrant neighborhood along Milan's canals, packed with bars, cafes, and art galleries. A great spot for an evening aperitivo.



### Classic Italian dishes you can't miss

One of the joys of visiting Italy is the culinary journey that comes with it, and the Lake Orta area offers an exceptional taste of Italy's authentic flavors. Here are some must-try dishes and dining experiences to savor during your trip.

- **Risotto alla Milanese** – Known for its vibrant yellow color from saffron, this creamy risotto is a northern Italian staple. It's especially popular in Milan and pairs perfectly with grilled meats or seafood.
- **Polenta** – A traditional dish from the Italian Alps, polenta is made from cornmeal and can be served creamy or firm. It's often accompanied by local cheeses or hearty stews.
- **Osso Buco** – A delicious Milanese specialty, osso buco is a slow-cooked veal shank, braised in a white wine and vegetable sauce. It's often served with risotto alla Milanese and is rich in flavor.
- **Pizzoccheri** – A buckwheat pasta dish from the Valtellina region, served with potatoes, cabbage, and loads of melted cheese. If you're in the Como area, this dish is a must.
- **Gelato Artigianale** – No trip to Italy would be complete without gelato. Each town boasts its own gelaterias, and Lake Orta's shops offer a range of unique flavors inspired by local fruits, nuts, and herbs.

### Como: A World-Famous Lake City

Less than two hours from Lago d'Orta, the city of Como offers the charm of Italian lake life with a splash of luxury. Famous for its celebrity villas and stunning mountain views, Como is an ideal stop for those seeking both beauty and excitement.

Leonardo's Recommendations for Como:

- **Lake Como Boat Tour:** Explore Lake Como by boat to fully appreciate its beauty. Marvel at the luxurious villas, including Villa del Balbianello, famous for its Hollywood appearances.
- **Como-Brunate Funicular:** Take a funicular ride to the hilltop village of Brunate for some of the most impressive views of the lake and the city below. It's a wonderful spot to relax and take in the scenery.
- **Walk the City Center:** The old town of Como is full of charming streets, bustling squares, and impressive landmarks like the Como Cathedral and the Broletto (medieval town hall).
- **Villa Olmo:** Located right on the lakefront, this neoclassical villa is surrounded by beautiful gardens and offers tours of its elegant interiors.





## Pavia: History and Charm Along the River

For a different side of Northern Italy, head to Pavia, a small, historic city about an hour from Milan. Known for its medieval architecture, Pavia has a slower pace and a welcoming atmosphere, making it a great spot to relax and enjoy Italian culture.

Leonardo's Recommendations for Pavia:

- **Certosa di Pavia:** This beautiful monastery complex is one of Italy's most stunning Renaissance landmarks. Explore its intricate façade and serene cloisters.
- **Ponte Coperto** (Covered Bridge): This bridge spans the Ticino River and is an iconic symbol of Pavia. Cross over to the historic city center and take in the view.
- **University of Pavia:** One of the oldest universities in the world, the university's historic buildings and courtyards are worth a visit.

- **Pavia's Churches:** For history buffs, Pavia's churches, like San Michele Maggiore and San Pietro in Ciel d'Oro, showcase impressive architecture and rich history.

For anyone planning to compete in OCEANMAN Lago d'Orta, or simply looking for a beautiful escape in Northern Italy, Leonardo's journey highlights the unique magic of the region. From serene swims and incredible history to bustling city life and lakeside charm, this region has something for everyone. Whether you're diving into Lago d'Orta for a swim or exploring Milan, Como, or Pavia, Northern Italy is a destination that promises unforgettable memories.

So grab your swim cap, pack your travel bag, and set out to adventure.

# Why warming up *matters*



Written by:  
**DANIEL ORTEGA**

In open water swimming, a comprehensive warm-up routine is essential for performance and injury prevention. Cold muscles and joints can lead to strains and other injuries, especially given the demands of long-distance swimming.

A good warm-up raises your heart rate and circulates blood to the muscles, preparing them for the vigorous activity ahead. It also activates your nervous system, improving coordination and focus.

## Key Warm-Up Exercises

A good warm-up starts with activating the muscles you'll use in the water. This full-body phase focuses on engaging your core, shoulders, and legs.

- **High Knees:** Stand in place, lift one knee at a time toward your chest, alternating at a brisk pace for 30 seconds. This exercise activates your hip flexors and core while increasing your heart rate.
- **Arm Circles:** Extend your arms to the sides and perform small circles for 15 seconds in each direction, then increase to larger circles. Arm circles warm up your shoulders, helping you achieve a smooth, efficient stroke.



## Know my methodology

I'm Dano, a coach specializing in open water swimming. My main focus is on optimizing the efficiency of each stroke, helping swimmers better utilize their energy in challenging conditions such as open water. Through a refined technique, I seek to make each movement in the water more fluid and effective.

My methodology is based on the principle that a more efficient swimmer can not only conserve energy, but also maintain a more constant and longer pace. This is key to improving performance over long distances, where fatigue can become the biggest obstacle.

The ultimate goal of my training is for my students to not only swim faster, but to do so with less effort. Efficiency is the key to competing and enjoying open sea swimming, where natural conditions require precise and adaptable technique.



## Core-Specific Exercises for Stability

Core strength and stability are critical in open water swimming, as they help maintain alignment in the waves

- **Plank to Shoulder Tap:** Get into a high plank position. Lift one hand to tap the opposite shoulder, alternating sides. This activates your core and improves stability. Perform for 30 seconds.
- **Russian Twists:** Sit with your knees bent, lean back slightly, and twist your torso from side to side, touching the floor with each hand. Complete 20 twists. This builds rotational strength for better arm movement and power.
- **Superman Extensions:** Lie face down, lift your arms and legs off the ground, hold for 2-3 seconds, then release. Repeat for 15 reps. This strengthens your back muscles and improves posture in the water.

## Dynamic Stretching to Improve Range of Motion

- **Arm Crossovers:** Swing your arms across your chest, alternating top and bottom arms for 20 reps. This warms up the chest, shoulders, and upper back for more range of motion in your stroke.
- **Torso Twists:** Place your hands on your hips, rotate your torso from side to side for 15 twists each direction. This readies your core for the twisting motion involved in breathing and reaching.
- **Forward Lunges with Twist:** Step forward into a lunge, then twist your torso toward the leading leg. Perform 10 lunges on each side. This combination activates your legs, core, and improves hip mobility.



## Pro Tips for Warming Up Effectively

- **Listen to Your Body:** Modify the warm-up based on how you feel that day. If you're feeling stiff, add more stretching. If you're feeling sluggish, increase the cardio segment.
- **Keep Movements Fluid:** Dynamic stretching and activation exercises should be smooth and controlled. Avoid jerky movements, which could strain your muscles.
- **Stay Hydrated:** Warm-ups increase your heart rate, so drink water to stay hydrated, especially in hot conditions or before long swims.



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## Champion Chronicles

# Diving into the depths: A conversation with professional Open Water swimmer Artur Arent

We had the privilege to sit down with Artur Arent, a professional open water swimmer with an impressive track record in OCEANMAN competitions. Join us as we dive into his journey, challenges, and aspirations in the world of open water swimming.

**Q: Artur, thank you for joining us. Can you tell us a bit about yourself and how you first got involved with open water swimming?**

A: Thank you for your invitation! OK, so my name is, as you probably know, Artur and

I'm a professional open water swimmer. I have been swimming for about 13 years now so I know a thing or two about it. I have got involved into open water swimming by my best friend. His name is Filip and he is an ex-Olympian. He also taught me my current swimming technique. Basically, I was swimming my exercises and he asked me if I would like to try something else than pool swimming. And that's it. In the next week we went on an open water swimming competition and BAM! I really enjoyed it and I also classified as 4th. After that, I started swimming more and more open water and here we are today.

“I train about 13/14 times a week including 2h morning swim, 2h afternoon swim, gym and running”

**Q: You've participated in several OCEANMAN competitions. What draws you to these events, and do you have a favorite memory from any of them?**

A: I have had a very good time in OCEANMAN World Finals on Crete. I was swimming 10k there I classified 3rd in Open Category and 2nd in Junior. I remember that the race should have been on the open sea but due to weather conditions it was moved mostly into the shipping port. I remember to this day how difficult that race was. The waves were so huge that we were literally climbing them. But after all, it was such an unforgettable and marvelous experience.





## OCEANMAN Stories

**Q: How do you prepare yourself physically and mentally for open water swimming competitions like OCEANMAN?**

A: I train about 13/14 times a week including 2h morning swim, 2h afternoon swim, gym and running. During my training I swim from 6k to 12k per exercise. I don't need any mental support, because I have a strong mindset and I talk a lot with my grandfather about my problems.

**Q: OCEANMAN takes swimmers to stunning locations around the world. Which destination has been your favorite so far, and why?**

A: My favorite location is Lago de Orta in Italy. It is so unique and beautiful, because it is a crystal-clear water lake and it is HUGE.

Also, it is surrounded by mountains. As you swim there you will be able to see: beautiful clear sky, marvelous mountain view and the water is so clear that you can drink it during race.

**Q: What motivates you to continue pushing your limits as a swimmer, both in training and in competitions?**

A: My own will, to become faster, stronger and better. That's basically it.

“Never give up on your dreams. If you are struggling with swimming than don't worry. It happens, but no matter what never stop training and never give up”





**Q: How do you think events like OCEANMAN contribute to the global swimming community and inspire others to take up the sport?**

A: In my opinion, OCEANMAN is the best open water swimming event. The atmosphere is always very nice, it unites swimmers of all ages and it helps people to achieve their goals. Other competitions don't provide that.

**Q: OCEANMAN fosters a sense of camaraderie among participants. Can you share a memorable interaction you've had with fellow swimmers during an event?**

A: During my journey with OCEANMAN I have met a lot of great people. I remember when I was getting ready for my start in OCEANTEAMS in Thailand World Finals, I made a bet with the speaker that if my team, which was named "Baby Shark" by the way, is on the podium, then he has to sing the baby shark song. During the race we were far behind, but with my team's hard work we have come to the finish line as the 3rd mix team and he actually sung that song and it was pretty funny.

**Q: What are your swimming goals for the future, and do you have any upcoming challenges or competitions you're preparing for?**

A: Now I'm trying to come back to shape after a break. I believe I will get stronger. I'm planning to participate in OCEANMAN CATTOLICA this year and I also want to compete in this year world finals. In the upcoming year I want to swim the English Canal and maybe some other crazy stuff like that but we shall see.

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**OCEANMAN Community**

# SWIMMING TOGETHER IN GUATAPÉ: THE BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF COMPETING AS A COUPLE



WRITTEN BY:  
NELSON BALLEEN & PAULA CAMILLA

For many couples, open water swimming is more than just a sport—it's a shared journey that strengthens bonds and builds memories. We had the chance to speak with [insert names], a dynamic duo who recently tackled the waters of OCEANMAN Guatapé. Here's their story of what it means to take on this challenge side-by-side.

"This was actually our first time competing together in a race like this. We've always loved swimming, but the idea of diving into open water as a team added a whole new dimension. Guatapé's beautiful

scenery and the excitement surrounding the OCEANMAN event felt like the perfect place to take on this challenge together. Competing side-by-side really made us appreciate the sport—and each other—on a different level.

"Nurturing our bond through sport is something that we truly value. Swimming together added that layer of motivation and encouragement that we might not feel if we were competing solo. When you're out in the water, knowing someone is right there with you—going through the same waves, facing the same challenges

# The Meaning of Swimming as a Team

—creates a sense of shared purpose and support. There's something powerful about experiencing every moment, both exhilarating and tough, with someone who gets it."

## Highlights and Teamwork

"We were genuinely impressed with the organization and spirit of OCEANMAN. Everything, from registration to the race's logistics, was smooth and welcoming. Guatapé was just the right spot—breathtaking views, the serene lake, and an energy that was contagious among all the participants. What surprised us the most was the warmth of the community, not only among swimmers but also the locals cheering us on.

The entire race felt surreal, but the final stretch was the most exciting part. We both felt exhausted, but just looking over and seeing each other pushing through was all the encouragement we needed. We kept pace together, and there were moments when a smile, a word, or a simple gesture helped us re-energize. Swimming together allowed us to share the highs and lows, and every glance gave us that extra boost to keep going.

We love training together, but we also have our own individual routines to focus on different techniques or strengths. Preparing as a team for OCEANMAN Guatapé was about balancing each other's styles, that meant matching our paces.



## Motivation and Goals

"For both of us, swimming is a way to connect, push our limits, and create lasting memories. Our shared goal has always been to explore our love for the sport while traveling and experiencing new places. Every race or event we complete as a team brings us closer, and knowing that we're both passionate about open water swimming means there are endless adventures ahead. Our ultimate dream is to tackle even more OCEANMAN events around the world."

"There's definitely an emotional boost when you compete as a team. You have someone who knows what you're feeling every step of the way. The biggest challenge, though, is balancing different strengths or paces. Sometimes one of us needs to slow down, while the other has to push a bit harder. We've learned that teamwork means compromise and communication—especially in a sport as individualistic as swimming. It's taught us patience, understanding, and how to better support each other in and out of the water."



# Advice for Other Swimming Couples

"Do it! Don't worry about matching each other's pace perfectly or being at the same level. The beauty of open water swimming as a couple is the shared experience and the memories you create. Keep communicating, support each other, and enjoy the journey. It's not just about finishing the race but about making the most of every moment together."

## **OCEANMAN Community**

"OCEANMAN community feels like a family. We've met people from all over the world, all united by a love for swimming. Everyone is encouraging, and the atmosphere is incredibly positive. The friendships we've formed and the support we feel at each event make the experience that much more meaningful. It feels like we're part of something bigger than just a race."

## **Looking Ahead**

"Our journey with OCEANMAN is only beginning! We're looking forward to more races, new locations, and continuing to push our limits together. Next year, we're hoping to train for a longer distance and explore even more of the OCEANMAN circuit. Every race is a new chapter, and as long as we're swimming together, there will always be new goals on the horizon."

## **A Journey of Connection**

For Nelson and Paula, OCEANMAN Guatapé was more than just a race; it was a testament to their partnership, love of swimming, and shared adventure. Competing as a team allowed them to challenge themselves, experience the thrill of open water, and strengthen their bond.





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## NEXT STOP: UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

### **OCEANMAN Comes to the U.S. for the First Time!**

Exciting news for the global open-water swimming community! In 2025, OCEANMAN will make its long-awaited debut in the United States, marking a new chapter in our journey across the world's most stunning bodies of water. This historic event will bring the world's most dedicated open-water swimmers to U.S. shores for the first time, as we add a thrilling new destination to our roster.

The exact location? Well, that's still a mystery. The U.S. has no shortage of spectacular coastlines, lakes, and rivers, and the question of where the inaugural OCEANMAN USA will take place has everyone buzzing with excitement. Could it be a race along a famous Pacific beach? Or maybe the scenic lakes of the Midwest? Or perhaps the iconic coastline of the Atlantic?

# Why the USA?

Bringing OCEANMAN to the United States has been a long-held goal for us, and it reflects the growth of the open-water swimming community in North America. The U.S. boasts a rich swimming culture and a passion for endurance sports, making it the perfect location for our next international event. American swimmers have consistently demonstrated a strong presence in OCEANMAN events worldwide, so it's time to bring the event to their backyard and give them the chance to race on home turf.

Beyond the athletes themselves, the U.S. also offers world-class support for international sporting events, a passionate spectator culture, and infrastructure that guarantees an unforgettable experience for both participants and fans.

As we finalize our plans for this new chapter, we're carefully selecting a location that embodies everything OCEANMAN stands for: breathtaking natural beauty, challenging conditions, and a strong local culture.

The exact location will be revealed soon, but until then, we want you to join us in the anticipation.

Will it be somewhere near a bustling city that offers a taste of urban life alongside the challenge of open water? Or a hidden gem tucked away in nature, providing a peaceful escape for athletes and their families?

Stay tuned for the big reveal, and in the meantime, start dreaming of your ultimate race destination!





## What to Expect for OCEANMAN USA 2025

Our inaugural event in the United States will feature all the signature elements that make OCEANMAN races special: world-class organization, a community-driven atmosphere, and a challenging course that lets you push your limits.

For newcomers to OCEANMAN, the U.S. race will be a gateway to our global community, bringing together swimmers of all backgrounds and skill levels.

OCEANMAN USA promises to be more than a race; it's set to be a gathering of global swimming enthusiasts in one of the world's most iconic and diverse countries.

So get ready for an unforgettable adventure in 2025, as we make history and take OCEANMAN to American waters!



# A DIAGNOSIS DOESN'T DEFINE YOU

Written by:  
GABRIEL AGUIRRE



**In 2022, I stood on the shores of Manta, Ecuador, preparing to race in my first open-water competition. Just a year before, I was wheeled into the operating room for my twelfth surgery, an emergency procedure linked to my condition, Spina Bifida (Arnold Chiari type 1). It was a harrowing experience, one that brought my life to a standstill. Yet, I couldn't let my diagnosis define me. I couldn't let the surgeries, the setbacks, or the challenges dictate what I was capable of achieving. So, I decided to challenge myself in ways I never thought possible.**

That day in Manta was a gift—a privilege to stand alongside incredible athletes, push my boundaries, and finish my first open-water race. I'll never forget the pride and emotion I felt crossing that finish line. It was more than a victory; it was proof that my determination could take me where my body sometimes hesitated.

Last week, I returned to compete again, this time at OCEANMAN Salinas. Standing on that starting line felt like reclaiming a part of myself once more. Swimming against the current, moving forward stroke by stroke, I felt every lesson I'd learned over the past year—the strength, the resilience, the refusal to back down. Each race is a reminder that my journey isn't defined by my limitations, but by my will to surpass them.

## “What’s your excuse?”

I want others to understand that no matter the obstacles life presents, there's always a way forward. It may not be easy, but it's worth it. If you're reading this and wondering if you can overcome what you're facing, I challenge you to believe in yourself and push beyond what you think is possible.

What's your excuse?

Gabriel Aguirre



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# From pool to ocean: the transition



WRITTEN BY:  
FELIPE BENITEZ

Moving from the pool to open water is a thrilling but challenging transition for many swimmers. Pool swimming offers controlled environments with clear walls, familiar lanes, and stable temperatures, whereas the ocean is dynamic and often unpredictable. Making the shift requires adapting not only your technique but also your mindset and training regimen.

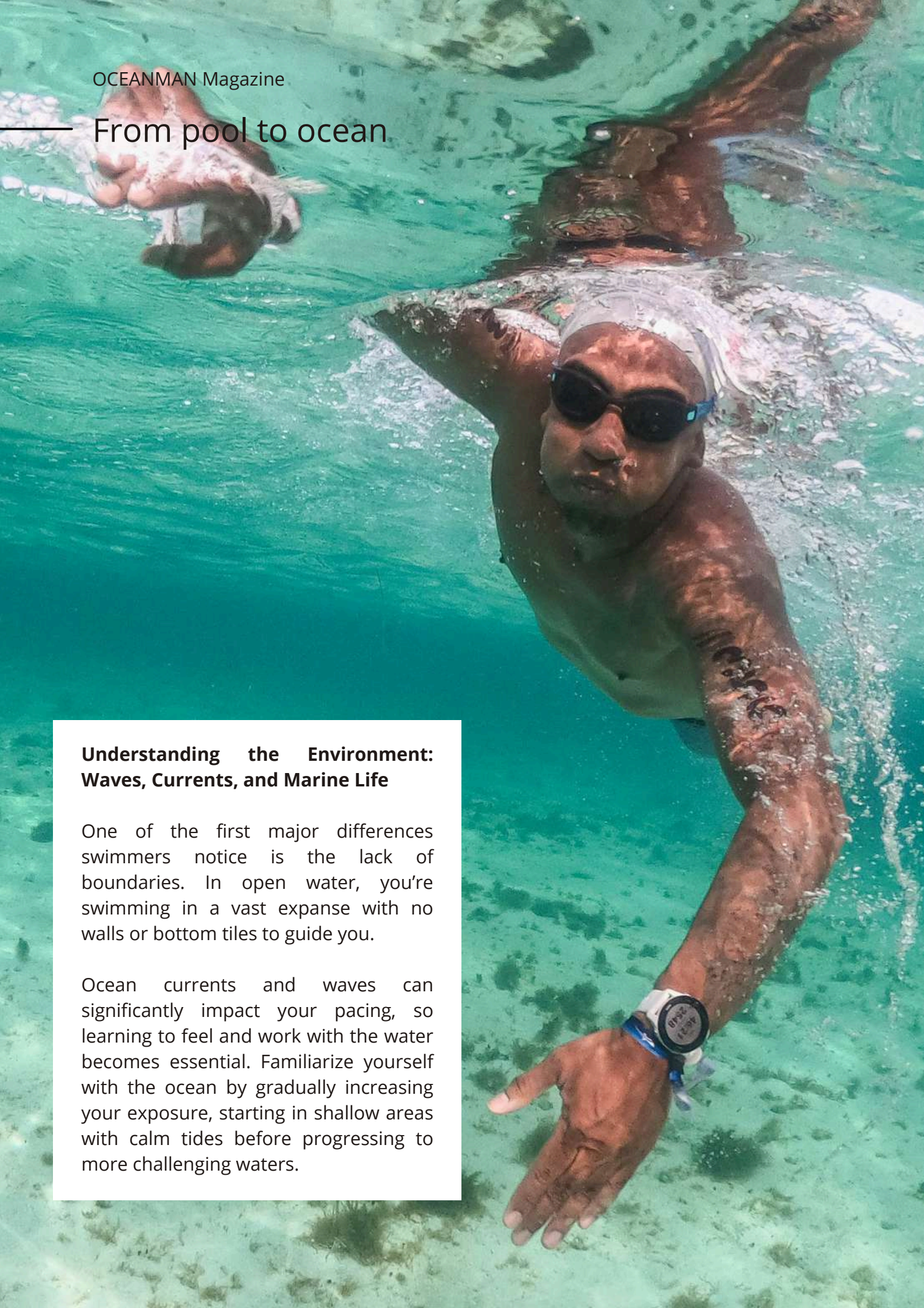


## From pool to ocean

### **Understanding the Environment: Waves, Currents, and Marine Life**

One of the first major differences swimmers notice is the lack of boundaries. In open water, you're swimming in a vast expanse with no walls or bottom tiles to guide you.

Ocean currents and waves can significantly impact your pacing, so learning to feel and work with the water becomes essential. Familiarize yourself with the ocean by gradually increasing your exposure, starting in shallow areas with calm tides before progressing to more challenging waters.





## From Pool to ocean



### Practice Sighting Techniques

In a pool, you can easily track your direction, but in the ocean, swimmers must master the art of sighting. Practice lifting your head slightly every few strokes to spot a landmark or buoy without disrupting your rhythm. This technique requires practice, as sighting too frequently can cause strain and disrupt your body position. Including sighting drills in your pool training can ease the transition.

#### **Prepare for Open Water Conditions in the Pool**

While the pool lacks waves and currents, there are ways to simulate open water conditions. Try doing sets without pushing off the wall to build endurance and practice continuous swimming.

You can also train in crowded lanes to get accustomed to physical contact, which is common in races. Training with your goggles slightly loose can simulate the unpredictability of ocean swimming, helping you adapt to water splashes and potential discomfort.

#### **Adapt Your Breathing Patterns**

Breathing techniques in open water often differ from those in the pool. Swimmers need to practice bilateral breathing to accommodate waves and potential side changes due to wind direction or currents.

Train yourself to breathe on both sides to avoid getting water in your mouth and to maintain an even stroke pattern.

No blocks, no lanes.  
Just the open water.  
Florian Wellbrock

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# OCEANMAN MALAYSIA

## A race to remember

### *OCEANMAN Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia*

The inaugural OCEANMAN Kota Kinabalu event has left a lasting mark, not just on the participants who came from around the globe, but on the entire region of Sabah. Set against the pristine coastline and emerald waters of Tunku Abdul Rahman Marine Park, the event showcased both the beauty of Malaysia's natural wonders and the growing enthusiasm for open-water swimming in Asia.

With hundreds of swimmers in attendance, Kota Kinabalu's first OCEANMAN event was a weekend of thrilling competition, will be remembered by participants and locals alike. The race took swimmers through an inspiring route in the crystal-clear waters of the marine park, famous for its biodiversity and stunning coral reefs. Participants navigated the course with views of Mt. Kinabalu,

# OCEANMAN MALAYSIA: A Scenic and Challenging Course

The natural surroundings also came with their own challenges, as swimmers dealt with unique currents and tropical water temperatures that required both mental and physical endurance. For many, it was an opportunity to compete in an open-water race unlike any other, surrounded by the incredible biodiversity of Sabah's coastline.

One of the standout stories from the race was from a participant, Sarah Thompson from Australia, who shared, "Swimming with views of Mt. Kinabalu was something I'll never forget. The water was warm, and the visibility was unlike anything I've ever experienced. It felt like swimming in paradise, but it was also demanding. The currents in certain areas tested my endurance, but that's what makes open-water swimming so unique."

## Economic and Cultural Impact for Sabah

The economic impact of OCEANMAN Kota Kinabalu was felt across the region, with local hotels, restaurants, and small businesses all benefiting from the influx of athletes and supporters. The event drew hundreds of swimmers, many of whom traveled with their families or teams, taking time to explore the cultural richness of Kota Kinabalu and the surrounding areas.

Apart from the economic impact, the event helped promote Sabah's unique cultural heritage. Participants were greeted with traditional Sabahan music and dance performances during the race ceremonies, introducing them to the vibrant customs of Malaysia's northern Borneo.






## A Sense of Community and Memorable Moments

OCEANMAN Kota Kinabalu wasn't just about the competition; it was about the connections and friendships that were formed. Swimmers from different countries shared stories, training tips, and words of encouragement, creating a supportive atmosphere that many will carry with them beyond the event.

One memorable anecdote involved a young swimmer from Kota Kinabalu named Amir, competing in his first open-water event. He expressed nervousness before the race, but after crossing the finish line, he was met with cheers and high-fives from fellow competitors. "I was overwhelmed by the support," he said. "Meeting athletes from so many different countries who encouraged me every step of the way—it felt like I was part of a big family." Amir's story resonated with many participants, embodying the spirit of resilience that defines OCEANMAN.

The success of OCEANMAN Kota Kinabalu has sparked discussions about Sabah becoming a premier destination for open-water swimming in Southeast Asia. With its rich marine life, scenic backdrops, and a growing community of open-water enthusiasts, the region has all the ingredients for future events. Local officials and organizers hope that the event's popularity will inspire more initiatives that bring together sport, tourism, and environmental conservation.

As the sun set over the waters of Tunku Abdul Rahman Marine Park on race day, it marked the end of a successful and inspiring weekend in Kota Kinabalu. Participants left not only with medals and memories but with a deep appreciation for the natural beauty and warm hospitality of Sabah. This event highlighted not only the athletic



achievements of the swimmers but also the potential for sport to bridge cultures, inspire environmental stewardship, and boost local economies.

For OCEANMAN participants, Kota Kinabalu will forever hold a special place in their journey. As one swimmer summed it up, **“Competing here was an honor. It wasn’t just about the race—it was about discovering this beautiful place, connecting with people, and realizing that we’re all part of something bigger.”**

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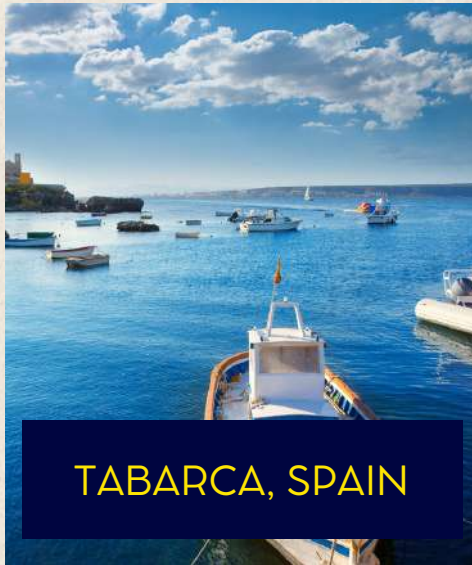
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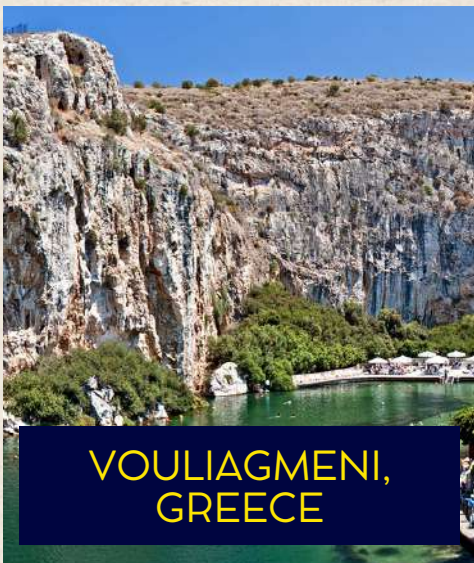
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