



# SLAM DUNK

St Louis Area Masters Newsletter Nov/Dec 2004 Vol. 1/ is. 6

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## Warm-Up:

I am going to keep this a short and as sweet as possible. Is that a collective sigh of relief that I hear? This issue wraps up the first year of the SLAM Dunk. It has been, from my perspective, an interesting year. Those of you who gave comments and criticism I thank you. As Ken Blanchard said "feedback is the breakfast of champions." Any ideas that you can give to make the SLAM Dunk better in 2005 and beyond will be greatly appreciated.

Even though the one hour postal swim and our annual mile meet are just around the corner that's no reason to cut back on the turkey and pie. Just think of it a fuel to get you through your practices and the challenges of the one hour swim. In all seriousness I hope that every one of you and your families has a very enjoyable holiday season. Think of how fortunate we are to be here and enjoy what we have. So remember to look out for the young and take care of the old. I wish you all happy holidays and happy swimming into 2005.

See you at the pool,

Erik



# Swimming When My Shoulder Is Not So Healthy

Commandment #3 of Shoulder Care

By  
Fred Shinn

I received several inquiries about lactate testing from the last issue. If you did not receive information on the 7x200 Lactate Step Test or the accompanying Test Record (in Excel format) you will want to go to [www.iswim2win.com](http://www.iswim2win.com). Once there, go to the page marked "helpful hints" and you will find this information. If you need assistance administering the test or interpreting the results, I'd be happy to help.

Now we'll move on to other issues. Last year I started this series entitled "The 10 Commandments for Shoulder Care". The initial piece focused on little bits of advice to help survive the rigors of a long training season. The second in the series focused on warm-up with particular emphasis placed on the "don'ts" of shoulder stretching and the need to consider stretching a key element of a training regime as opposed to something done on deck to pass time until you are gonna jump in the water.

In this segment I want to discuss shoulder care in the presence of injury. First and foremost, when your shoulder is sore in the pool, take care of it! If the discomfort you experience in the water begins to creep into your daily life while doing routine chores and activities, get help. There are several physicians in our swim community that will understand your plight and have the experience to identify the basis of your discomfort...let them help...sooner rather than later!

In my job I see sore shoulders all the time. I had my own rotator cuff repaired. I have had to adjust my activities on my own road to recovery. So, part of what I will share comes from my personal experience with shoulder pain, some comes from many years in the collegiate setting working with swimmers, some comes from my clinical background and some from listening and

reading the words of those more experienced than myself.

For those attending the Sunday morning workout with Hap Gentry you can appreciate this. I go to three practices a week, each lasting about an hour to an hour and a half. I usually get in from 2800 to 4000 yards. By applying my stroke count that means I might get in 8,000 to 10,000 strokes during the course of a week. That's only a few more strokes than if I'd played golf three times that week (joke!). Seriously, compare the demand compared to that if you had played tennis, golf or played in a softball tourney. The demand placed on shoulders in swimming is enormous!

The typical action taken by the unknowing is a prescription of ice, anti-inflammatory medication, and rest. In other words, stay away from the pool. That might work for a flare up encountered by Joe-citizen but that just won't do in my book when it comes to athletes. Swimmers want to swim. Swimmers need to swim. Hence, I think it is appropriate to develop a prescription of relative rest and recovery that, when monitored correctly, will allow the athlete to continue to train. I believe a multi-faceted approach will ensure a swimmer to pursue pain free training.

## **It's Time to ICE!**

Ice, ice, ice and then some more ice. I am not a big fan of ice bags. I think shoulders respond best to ice massage. Ice bags take 20 minutes. I don't have that much time in my life. I do have the time and energy to ice massage my shoulder 2-4 times per day for three to five minutes when I am ailing. That's all it takes with ice massage. It's quick and effective. You can get right to the area of your shoulder that is sore.

## **It's Time to Work on Technique!!**

If you have chronic shoulder problems, chances are you have a defect in your stroke which causes undue pressure on your shoulder. By making a few simple stroke adjustments one can often eliminate shoulder pain. Some say poor mechanics

account for 90% of the problems encountered by swimmers. When I hear Jim Halliburton with Rockwood Swim Club talk about technique when I'm at practice I pay attention. At the Maplewood pool Hap has videoed many swimmers. I hear nothing but oohs and ahhs when swimmers look at their video. I know I was amazed when I saw mine this past summer. There is something to learn every time one sees their stroke on video accompanied by the advice of somebody like Hap or Jim. I keep telling myself I'm gonna schedule a personal session with him for video...since I've written this I'm gonna have to e-mail him today to set it up.

I am a relatively young swimmer even though I will soon be 45 years old. I didn't go through the age group ranks or swim in college. I started doing triathlons after college as a means to keep the challenges of athletic competition alive in my life. Mick and I started our family and building our business and training became a distant memory for both of us.

Because I did not have the muscle memory of an experienced competitive swimmer and did not pursue the insight of a coach when I began to train again I developed (or really always had) significant areas of inefficiency in my stroke. People like me, and I believe most of those that get into swimming via triathlon, **NEED** good, sound advice and coaching with respect to stroke technique to avoid injury. I believe even the most accomplished among us **NEED** good, sound advice with respect to stroke technique in the presence of shoulder discomfort. Schedule with Hap, [rhgentry@earthlink.net](mailto:rhgentry@earthlink.net), or talk to Jim about improving your stroke (and there are more accomplished coaches in our community...these are just the two I come into contact with regularly). Relax in the water by improving your technique and let the great coaches in our area help!

### **It's Time to Get Stronger!!!**

This will be a topic for a later newsletter. At that time I will expand in detail. But for now, let me say that it is more about what you don't do than what you do. If you have even the remotest history of shoulder pain and

discomfort while swimming and perform a dry land program I want you to consider, at the very least, limiting, but preferably, eliminating five activities: bench press, incline bench press, lat pull, military (overhead) press and dips. There will be more about dry land activity later in the series.

### **It's Time to Train with Your Brain!!!!**

Throw away the notion of "no pain, no gain" (that is unless you swim at Marquette at 9:30am, Tuesday thru Friday [I hope Lori Payne sees the humor here! If not, I'm dead!! ] ). In the presence of shoulder pain and dysfunction, you gotta be smart. I have found some simple things will help in this area:

1. **Turbulence** – swim in calm water whenever possible; if there are more than just you in the lane, lead the set provided the intensity is appropriate (we'll talk about that, too); that way at least one length is in calm water; if you can't lead the set, stay away (way far away) from the feet of the swimmer in front of you; also, I don't like swimmers with sore shoulders swimming on the wall...it's too much work; when I worked in a collegiate setting I had swimmers with sore shoulders come into practice before or after the rest of the team to take advantage of still water or I had them swim in a lane separated from the rest of the pool by a bulkhead...it helped a lot!
2. **Functional Progression** – butterfly is the most demanding stroke; eliminate, or preferably, control this stroke first; the idea of rest is relative; complete rest is evil in my eyes and in the eyes of athletes; selective or controlled rest eliminates or inhibits the pain provocative elements of swimming; freestyle is next on the list followed by back and, lastly, breast; in my experience, I have been able to keep a significant majority of athletes in the water by controlling strokes in this order; as one

improves the condition of the shoulder, strokes are added in reverse order.

3. **Hand Paddles** – these are a no, no for those of us with a history of shoulder dysfunction for many reasons; I believe paddles make one over reliant on the hand (I am excited to “play” with the fist gloves we used at practice a few weeks ago to emphasize pulling with the entire surface of the arm) to accomplish the propulsive portion of the pull; this often forces the shoulder into more internal rotation and, by and large, this is pain provocative; in the case of poor technique and an injured shoulder the paddle can be driven by water turbulence in an uncontrolled fashion...excessive turbulence of any nature is unwanted; most will experience pain at or near the “catch” position; just before that moment the paddle can be relatively unstable due to turbulence
4. **Theraband** – never use theraband to strengthen the shoulder of a swimmer that has a pain history; I was told a long time ago to rarely use the words “always” and “never”...try this though... “It is always correct to never use theraband to strengthen the shoulder of a swimmer that is experiencing pain!” I’ll offer alternatives in a later edition of this series. Enough said about that topic.
5. **Intensity** – while intensity is the key to successful training (as opposed to yardage) it must be controlled during a flare up of the shoulder; it is wise to avoid maximal efforts during this time; it is wise to avoid sprint sets at this time; it is wise to avoid starts from the blocks and rely on push starts at this time; it is wise to focus on controlling your stroke and breath control; one can replace

sprint sets with controlled breathing sets at 75-80% of maximal intensity.

6. **Fin Functional Regression** – many think kick sets require a kick board; that just is not the case; as a matter of fact, throw the old board away with the hand paddles if you have shoulder pain; the board puts your shoulder in that uncomfortable position of internal rotation; some advocate hugging the board to the chest during kick sets in the presence of shoulder pain to avoid this position; that doesn’t work for me; I’d rather see a swimmer kick with fins with the sore arm at the side if need be and the other arm outstretched; actually, while using fins one can often keep the sore shoulder outstretched and avoid internal rotation or any other uncomfortable position; use fins in order to achieve a more streamlined body position in the water during the main set; when I say functional regression I am referring to the size of the fin; in the most painful swimmer I use a regular, full size fin initially; as the shoulder improves I decrease the size of the fin; Neofin has various size fins and I like to advocate their use; in the final stakes of recovery I just like to see one using a Zoomer type fin; the opposite rationale can be applied to use the smaller style fin at the hint of discomfort as opposed to the idea of starting the large fin when the condition is full blown; however, that is the stage when many get to me today.

## Summary

By staying in the water and modifying the workout one can improve their technique while maintaining some sort of an aerobic base. By breaking one’s training pattern with periods of absolute rest one only perpetuates the underlying causes of shoulder pain and dysfunction. I’m not a coach but a modified workout might look something like the one below. The distances can be modified to meet your

training demands. Remember, work with the doctor's in our swim community, work with our coaches. Don't rely on cooking up your own recipe for treating shoulder pain...all too often such a plan leads to failure.

### **Modified Workout for the Ailing Shoulder**

Warm-up #1: Easy 500 - Bilateral breathe to even out stroke. Relax.

Warm-up #2: 4 X 100 freestyle - Increasing effort each 100 but only to 80% effort on 4th 100.

Warm-up # 3: 3(4 X 50) - on a short rest interval providing 5-10 sec. rest, the 4th 50 is easy. Repeat set 3 times with 30 seconds rest in between each set for a total of 12 X 50. Stay between 75-80% effort. These are not sprints! Try to keep at least 30% of your total yardage in the warm-up phase of the work-out.

[Total 1500]

Main Set: 2(3 X 200). If you are having a "bad shoulder day", use a short fin on this set to achieve good body position and decrease shoulder demand. Add at least 20% to your training base. As an example, if you regularly swim 100's on 1:20, add 20% to it. In other words add 16 seconds and come in on a 1:36. In this case, one might swim these 200's on a 3:30 interval.

#1: Do the first 150 yards using a "catch-up" or "touch-stroke" to stretch out and relax the arm cycle. Put your kick into "overdrive", which will increase your cardiovascular output. The last 50 is in your regular stroke cycle.

#2: The first 100 is "catch-up" stroke, the second 100 regular cycle.

#3: The first 50 is "catch-up," the remaining 150 regular cycle.

[1200 Total]

Kick Set: 2 (25 - 50 - 75 - 100 - 75 - 50 - 25). 5-10 second rest interval. Do not use a kickboard as this will cause extra stress on your shoulders. Use your fins. Try to kick on your side, alternating between right and left. Or kick on your back or do fly kick, emphasizing hip flexion

[Total 800]

Sprint Set:  
4 X 25 @ 30 sec. 2 breaths maximum each 25  
4 X 25 @ 35 sec. 1 breath maximum each 25  
4 X 25 @ 40 sec. no breath  
When you hear the word sprint, think breath control. Until you are asymptomatic for 3 months, it is recommended that you substitute breath control for "sprints." Fins are optional on this set. Work on a nice long, controlled stroke; relax; be comfortable in the water.

[Total 300]

Warm-down: 200 easy swim; bilateral breathe, stretch out and relax.

[Total for entire work-out 4,000 yards]

### **Quotes, Thoughts and Musings collected by special correspondent Otis B. Driftwood:**

Patience is also a form of action.  
---Auguste Rodin, sculptor (1840-1917)

I am seeking, I am striving, I am in it with all my heart.  
---Vincent van Gogh, painter (1853-1890)

The great thing in this world is not so much where we are, but in what direction we are moving.  
---Oliver Wendell Holmes, writer and physician (1809-1894)

The person on the top of the mountain did not fall there.  
---Anonymous

## Competition Calendar

- 1/1/2005- 2005 USMS 1 Hour Postal Championship- PST-LD; Mel Goldstein, 5735 Carrollton  
1/31/2005 Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46220, 317-253-8289, [goldstein@mindspring.com](mailto:goldstein@mindspring.com);  
Sponsored by Indy Swim Fit, Sanctioned by IN LMSC
- 02/06/2005 B SLAM/Parkway Masters Annual Winter 1650/1000 Meet, Parkway South High School, Sanction to be issued by Ozark LMSC
- 04/02/2005- USMS Breadbasket Zone Meet/Ozark Spring Short Course Championships,  
04/03/2005 TBD, Sanction to be issued by Ozark LMSC,
- 05/15/2004- 2005 USMS 5K/10K Postal Championship- PST-LD; PST-LD; Christine Swanson,  
09/30/2005 2536 Maryland Ave, Tampa, FL 33629, 813-254-4514 (phone or fax),  
[ctswanson@yahoo.com](mailto:ctswanson@yahoo.com); Livia Zien, 727-821-8113, [livia.zien@att.net](mailto:livia.zien@att.net)
- 05/19/2005- 2005 USMS Short Course Nationals - Ft. Lauderdale, FL SCY; Stu Marvin, 501  
05/22/2005 Seabreeze Blvd., Ft Lauderdale, FL 33316, 954-828-4580,  
[smarvin@fortlauderdale.gov](mailto:smarvin@fortlauderdale.gov)
- 06/12/2005 SLAM 4<sup>th</sup> Annual 1-Mile and 2-Mile Open Water Swim B Sunnen Lake, YMCA of the Ozarks (Potosi), MO Sanction to be issued Ozark LMSC
- 08/10/2005- USMS 2005 USMS Long Course National Championships - Mission Viejo, CA;  
08/14/2004 LCM; Mark Moore, 25108-B Marguerite Pkwy #391, Mission Viejo, CA 92692,  
949-233-6521 [m.w.moore@cox.net](mailto:m.w.moore@cox.net); [www.mastersmvnswim.org](http://www.mastersmvnswim.org); Sanctioned by SP LMSC
- 09/01/2005- 2005 USMS 3000/6000 Yard Postal Championship PST-LD; Riley Stevens, 200  
10/31/2005 Indian Trail, Anderson, SC 29625, 864-287-0956, [catpostalmeet@aol.com](mailto:catpostalmeet@aol.com);  
Clemson Aquatic Team, 864-287-0956, [jelg@innova.net](mailto:jelg@innova.net); Sanctioned by SC LMSC

**THE ABOVE LOCAL MEETS ARE TENTATIVE AND ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE IN BOTH LOCATION AND DATE.**



**SLAM Dunk Trivia:**

Our first SLAM Trivia question was:

Don Schollander won the gold medal in the 400 free at the 1964 Olympic Games. Who won the silver and bronze medals to Schollander?

The correct answer to the question is:

The silver went to Frank Wiegand and the bronze went to Allan Wood.

The big winners of our first trivia contest are; Mary Blandford and Diane Kelley. Mary and Diane will both receive a \$25.00 gift certificate from B & B Aquatics. Congratulations Mary and Diane.

Now for our newest trivia challenge:

At the 1984 Olympics what two women tied for the gold in the 100 meter free?

Winners will receive a \$25.00 gift certificate from B&B Aquatics. All answers must be sent to [estrom@pkwy.k12.mo.us](mailto:estrom@pkwy.k12.mo.us) by Friday, December 17, 2004. We will draw two winners from the answers received. Please include with your answer your home address so we can mail you your gift certificate. Answers that do not include home addresses will not be included in the drawing. Winners will receive free entry fee to the SLAM Mile meet and to the Breadbasket Zone meet. Your chances of winning are pretty good as only three people entered the last trivia contest.

Send all answers to [estrom@pkwy.k12.mo.us](mailto:estrom@pkwy.k12.mo.us) by Friday December 17, 2004.

### **St. Louis Swimmer Sets American Record** Dynamic Duo Shines in Indianapolis

Ardeth Mueller, a recent inductee into the Swimming Hall of Fame, has added more trophies for her mantle. Mueller, 63, from suburban West St. Louis County, returned from a four year hiatus from competitive swimming to set the American Record in the 200 meter butterfly at the GRIN Fall Classic held at the world famous Indianapolis Natatorium. Her time of 3:13 slashed the old record by some 17 seconds. She went on to post victories the 800 meter freestyle and the 50 meter butterfly. She also lowered the national standard in the 800 meter freestyle by six seconds. She narrowly missed setting a new American best in the 50 fly by just under ½ second. "The 200 sure didn't feel that well. I'm going to have to work harder or swim another event", Mueller commented after the race, well unaware of her accomplishment.

Mueller's training partner, Michele Shinn, had a successful meet as well. Shinn posted three victories during the meet, winning the 50 meter freestyle, 200 meter freestyle, and the 800 meter freestyle in the women's 35 to 39 year old division. Shinn, a former National Champion in 1000 yard freestyle, set the pace in the 800 by posting one of the ten fastest times this year in the event with a 10minutes, 9seconds swim. "This was a hard meet. I had no idea how well I could swim this year until today. I still have a lot of training to do before I really feel strong in competition", commented the mother of two children. Shinn attributed her strong showing to long course meters training at the Maplewood Richmond Heights Pool, "Hap Gentry has really done a nice job with our practice group. Swimming long course meters through the whole summer has really been a bonus. SLAM (St Louis Area Masters) is fortunate to have the backing of the Maplewood pool which has allowed us to train all the way through October in their heated, outdoor pool. Every Masters swimmer in St Louis would benefit from the workouts there!"

During the winter both Shinn and Mueller train under the watchful eye of Lori Payne and Jim Haliburton of the Rockwood Swim Club in Chesterfield. Haliburton also doubles as the Head Coach for the St. Louis University Billikens Swim Team.