

PACING RACES

From a physiological standpoint, the most effective method of pacing a race from 100 yards to 1650 yards is even pacing. Even splitting delays lactic acid accumulation (the substance that causes fatigue) until later in the race which allows the swimmer to hold a faster average pace through the middle of the race and to sprint at the end. Analysis of the top 16 times at NCAA Division I Championships, American and World records show that an even pace was used most often at all distances from 100 yards/meters up.

Following are suggestions for pacing races at each distance and ideal split charts based on the top 16 times at the NCAA Division I National Championships. You may find these tables helpful.

During even paced swims the first split will usually be 1.5 to 2 seconds faster than later splits due to the advantage gained on the dive.

1,650 yd. Freestyle

The first 100 should be 5 to 6 seconds slower than your best time for 100 yd. The remaining 100's are 1 to 2 seconds slower than the first 100. The pace for the last 150 is all out.

The first 500 should be 5 to 10 seconds slower than your best time for that distance. The next two 500's are within 2 to 3 seconds of the first 500. The pace for the final 150 is all out.

1,000 yd. Freestyle

Pacing for the 1,000 free is similar to pacing for the 1,650. The first 100 should be 5 to 6 seconds slower than your best 100 and then the next eight 100's about 1 to 2 seconds slower than the first 100. The last 100 to 150 is all out.

500 yd. Freestyle

The first 100 should be about 4 to 5 seconds slower than your best 100 time. The next three 100's are 1.5 to 2 seconds slower than the first. The final 100 is about .5 to 1 seconds faster than the previous three 100's.

200 yd. Races

- 200 yd. Freestyle: The first 100 should be 2 to 3 seconds slower than your best 100. The drop for the second 100 should be about 2 to 3 sec.
 - By 50's: The first 50 should be about 2 to 2.5 seconds slower than your best 50 time. The second and third 50 are about 1.5 to 2 seconds slower than the first 50. The last 50 is slightly faster than the middle two 50's.
- 200 yd. Butterfly: The first 100 should be about 3 seconds slower than your best 100. The drop off for the second 100 is about 3 to 4 seconds. The first 50 should be about 1.5 to 2 seconds slower than the time for the first 50 of the 100 race.
- 200 yd. Backstroke: The first 100 should be about 2 to 3 seconds slower than your best 100 time. The drop off for the second 100 is about 1 to 2 seconds. The first 50 should be about 1 to 1.5 seconds slower than the first 50 of a 100 race.
- 200 yd. Breaststroke: The first 100 should be about 2 to 3 seconds than your best 100 time. The drop for the second 100 should be about 3 to 4 seconds. The first 50 should be about 1 second slower than the first 50 of a 100 race.

100 yd. Races

Pacing for all of the 100 yd. races is similar. The first 50 should be approximately one second slower than your best 50 time. This is actually about .5 seconds, because the split is taken on the foot touch. Drop off is 1.5 to 2 seconds for the second 50 for the freestyle and 1.5 to 2.5 seconds for the fly, back and breaststroke.

200 yd. Individual Medley

Generally – the 50 fly should be approximately one second slower than an all out 50 fly. The backstroke split is approximately 3 seconds slower than your best 50. The breaststroke is approximately 5 to 6 seconds slower than your best 50 and the freestyle is about four seconds slower than your best 50.

The way various swimmers split the individual medley has greater variability than other races. You will have to decide what is the best method for you. It is generally recommended that the fly is hard but comfortable/relaxed (about two seconds slower than your best 50) and then push the backstroke and breaststroke and bring it home.

400 yd. Individual Medley

The butterfly should be 2 to 3 seconds slower than your best time for a 100 fly. The backstroke is usually 6 to 7 seconds slower than your best time for the 100 back. The breaststroke is 8 to 10 seconds slower. The freestyle is approximately 6 seconds slower than your best time for a 100 free. Swimming the fly in a hard but comfortable/relaxed is recommended. The final 3 100's should be approached as negative split 100's. The first 50 get you into your stroke while the second should be pushed.