



Participant Event Guide

Saturday 20 September 2025

swimserpentine.co.uk



Welcome

We can't wait to see you at 2025 Swim Serpentine on Saturday 20 September – we hope you're as excited as we are!

Please read this guide very carefully – it contains all the information you need for an amazing day.

We know there's a lot to take in, so we've broken it down into six essential things you need to know...

- 1. Preparing for Swim Day**
- 2. Before leaving home**
- 3. How to get to the Event**
- 4. When you arrive at the Event**
- 5. After crossing the Start Line**
- 6. After crossing the Finish Line**

Be safe and secure

The safety and security of all our participants and spectators at Swim Serpentine is of paramount importance to us.

We will deliver a safe, secure and enjoyable event and you can help us to do this by following the instructions of our team of friendly stewards at all times. If you see something suspicious, please report it to a steward, a police officer, or ring 999.

We work closely with the police and other organisations and have a range of measures in place, including bag searches, to help keep you safe and secure. We hope you have a fun and enjoyable day with us.

Six simple steps to enjoy Swim Day

1. Plan your journey to the event with our green travel tool

2. Arrive at your allocated arrival time and get swim ready

3. Put any items you don't want to swim with into your official kitbag and hand it in to our team at the Baggage Drop Area

4. Go to the Start Area 20 to 30 minutes before your wave start time and attend the safety briefing

5. Line up before the Start Pontoon in your preferred pace group - fast, medium, steady or leisurely

6. Enjoy your swim and collect your medal afterwards (if you chose to receive one)

Everyone is welcome!

We want everyone to feel welcome at Swim Serpentine and we aim to make the event accessible to all. We have a variety of inclusion initiatives to help make sure you have a great day.

Period products will be available at the Information Point near the Start Area. Please just ask our team if you need any.

If you need to take a moment in the Festival Area, there will be a Sensory Calm Tent, Parent and Child Tent (for breastfeeding and entertaining young children), and a Multi-Faith Prayer Tent. You're welcome to use these facilities whenever you need to.

1. Preparing for Swim Day

UK PARTICIPANTS

If you live in the UK, you should receive your Swim Pack in the post by Monday 15 September. If you have not received your pack by 17:00 on this date, please complete the **replacement pack form**.

Replacement packs

If you need a replacement Swim Pack, you must fill in the form and collect your pack from Marathon House, 190 Great Dover Street, London, SE1 4YB, on Friday 19 September during the following times:

- 12:00 to 14:00
- 15:00 to 17:00
- 18:00 to 20:00

QR code

If you need to collect a pack, please show your unique QR Code, which we emailed to you with your important start information, to our team at Marathon House. Please take a screenshot of the email now, so that you can find it easily.

If you're unable to collect your pack on the Friday, you can arrange for someone else to collect it. Please ensure they have a copy of your ID and your confirmation email.

Please note: we're unable to send any replacement packs in the post and Swim Packs are not available to collect on Swim Day.

INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPANTS

If you live outside the UK, you'll need to collect your Swim Pack from Marathon House, 190 Great Dover Street, London, SE1 4YB, on Friday 19 September during the following times:

- 12:00 to 14:00
- 15:00 to 17:00
- 18:00 to 20:00

There's no need to complete the replacement pack form, just pop along to see our team, who will give you your pack.

Please have your unique QR code ready to show them, which we emailed to you with your important start information.

YOUR PACK CONTAINS:

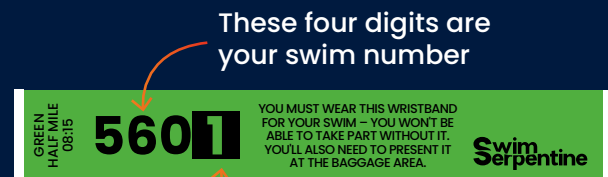
- Swim hat matching your wave colour
- Ankle strap with timing chip
- Kitbag with sticker matching your swim number
- Wristband displaying your swim number and wave details (see image below)
- Super Six swimmers will receive a sticker to label a bag for food and/or drinks they wish to leave on the Pontoon

YOUR WRISTBAND

Your wristband will match the colour of your wave. See the wave timetable on page 8.

The last digit of your swim number will be highlighted. This number indicates which baggage drop zone to drop off and collect your kitbag at/from. See the image below.

If you opted to receive a medal, your wristband will feature a medal icon.



YOUNG PEOPLE UNDER 18

If you're participating with someone under the age of 18, you will receive a parent/guardian wristband displaying their swim number in your Swim Pack.

You must wear this wristband at all times. If you become separated from each other, you'll need to show the wristband to our Safeguarding Team in the Finish Area gazebo to be reunited.

Participants under the age of 18 will receive an additional white wristband. Please ensure your contact details are completed on the wristband, and they wear it for the duration of the event.

Participants under the age of 18 will also be provided with a white swim cap, which must be worn in the water so that our Safety Team can keep a close eye on them.

YOUR DISTANCE

Before Swim Day, you must be able to comfortably swim the same distance you'll be tackling at Swim Serpentine in a pool without stopping.

Here's a rough guide to help you:

Half a mile is 805 metres, which is 32 lengths of a 25m pool and 16 lengths of a 50m pool.

One mile is 1,609 metres, which is 64 lengths of a 25m pool and 32 lengths of a 50m pool.

Two miles is 3,219 metres, which is 129 lengths of a 25m pool and 64 lengths of a 50m pool.

We also recommend that you have practised in open water ahead of Swim Day to acclimatise to water temperatures and, where possible, have attended a coached introduction to Open Water Swimming session, led by a suitably qualified coach.

WHAT TO WEAR

You must wear your swim hat, wristband, ankle strap with timing chip (which must be worn over your wetsuit, if using one) and appropriate attire.

Wetsuits are optional at Swim Serpentine when the water temperature is between 16°C and 24.5°C. They are strongly recommended when the water temperature is below 15.9°C and mandatory when below 14.9°C. They are forbidden when the water temperature is 24.6°C or above. Please see our Wetsuit Policy below.

We perform regular checks on the temperature of the water in the Serpentine in the lead-up to the event. Please check our weekly newsletters, the [Swim Serpentine website](#) and our social channels ([Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#)) for updates.

WETSUIT POLICY

A wetsuit must be made of material providing thermal insulation and completely cover the torso, back, shoulders and knees. They should not extend past your neck, wrists and ankles, and should be between 3mm and 5mm thickness.

If you choose not to wear a wetsuit, you must use a tow-float for safety reasons. If you prefer, you can use both. Wetsuit gloves and socks are allowed, but swimming aids such as snorkels and fins/flippers are prohibited.

Our partner Zone3 will have a tent in the Festival Area where swimmers can collect pre-booked rental wetsuits and tow-floats, but we recommend



sourcing a wetsuit before the event if you want to wear one, so you can get used to it during training.

Visit the [Zone3 website](#) to hire a wetsuit or tow-float for Swim Day. Please note: you must confirm your hire by **16:00** on **Saturday 13 September**.

FANCY DRESS

Fancy dress while swimming is not encouraged, as it must not hinder you or another swimmer. For example: you won't be allowed to tow rafts or wear a gorilla suit and mask. All fancy dress outfits must be approved by our Safety Team on the day.

FOOD AND DRINK

Water will be provided after your swim and concession stands will be available if you'd like to buy any other drinks or food.

You can bring your own refreshments and put them in your kitbag before the event. There will also be a Water Refill Point so please bring a refillable bottle.

ORDER YOUR SWIM DAY PHOTOS

Remember your Swim Serpentine experience forever by purchasing all your Swim Day photos for just £15! [Sign up now](#) to be notified when your photos are online to view and download.

SUPER SIX SWIMMERS

You can bring your own drinks and snacks to leave with the Super Six Team. Please attach the label provided in your Swim Pack to your food and/or drinks bag.

Your drink and snacks will be available for you to take from the end of the Pontoon between your six laps. You can also voluntarily check in with the Super Six Team, who'll be on hand to record your lap splits.

2. Before leaving home

Please bring all the items in your Swim pack (see page 4) with you on Swim Day, along with these instructions.

CHECKLIST

Make sure you have the following before leaving home:

- Access to these instructions
- Wetsuit – if you're planning to wear one
- Tow-float – if you're planning to use one (compulsory for non-wetsuit swimmers), or hire details if you're collecting your wetsuit/tow-float from Zone3 at the event
- Your official swim hat – you must wear this on Swim Day. If you require a bigger swim hat, please head to the Information Point on Swim Day and we will provide one for you
- Goggles – if you're planning to wear a pair
- Your ankle strap with timing chip
- Your official kitbag and sticker
- Your unique wristband – you must wear this at all times at the event
- Change of clothes for after your swim
- Soft drink in a refillable bottle or container, if required
- Post-swim recovery food items in your kitbag, if required

WATER QUALITY

We conduct weekly water quality testing in the Serpentine from six weeks before the event.

However, it's always advisable when swimming in open water to cover any cuts and scratches you have and try not to drink the water – this applies to when you're training for the event too!

If you fall ill following a swim, advise your doctor when and where you have been swimming.

DECIDING NOT TO SWIM

Please do not swim if you have an injury or have had any sort of virus or fever in the four weeks prior to Swim Day. It is not a risk worth taking. If you decide not to swim for any reason, you don't need to let us know.

3. Getting to the Event

Your Participant Event Guide email contains your allocated arrival time – you must stick to this time to help us deliver a safe event with minimal congestion and queuing.

Plan your journey to and from the event by using our green travel tool to find your best low-carbon travel routes. You can also donate to offset your carbon emissions! [Plan your journey now.](#)

PLAN YOUR JOURNEY

The Serpentine Lake is located in Hyde Park in the heart of central London and is easily accessible via public transport.

The what3words location for the Start Area is: [///kinds.raft.wash.](#)

Once inside Hyde Park, you'll be able to follow a signposted route to the event, which is on the north bank of the Serpentine Lake, between the Serpentine Gallery and the boathouses.

We do not recommend driving to the event as finding parking in the Hyde Park area may prove difficult and cause delays to your journey.

SPECTATORS

Your family and friends are welcome to attend and watch the action from around the Serpentine. Many spectators watch near the Start Pontoon and there will be charity cheer points on the south side of the Serpentine.



IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO FUNDRAISE!

Have you thought about using your place in Swim Serpentine to raise funds for charity?

Support a charity of your choice by setting up your unique **fundraising page** on our official platform now.

Up to half of all donations are made in the month before an event, so now is the perfect time to ask your family, friends and colleagues to support you!



4. When you arrive at the Event

When you arrive at the event, please get ready to swim and drop off your kitbag.

There's no need to check in as soon as you arrive. The check-in process for your wave will begin 20 to 30 minutes before your wave start time, at the check-in desks near the Start Pontoon.

WAVE TIMETABLE

Wave	Wave colour	Distance	Start time
1	Green	Half Mile	08:15
2	Pink	One Mile	08:45
3	Gold	Super Six	09:00
4	Light Blue	Two Miles	09:20
5	Red	Two Miles	10:20
6	Purple	One Mile	11:20
7	Yellow	Two Miles	11:50
8	Royal Blue	Two Miles	12:50
9	Orange	Two Miles	13:50
10	Pink	Two Miles	14:50
11	Green	Two Miles	15:50
12	Purple	Two Miles Fast*	16:50

*For swimmers completing the distance in 90 minutes or less

CHANGING FACILITIES

There will be separate male, female, non-binary and accessible changing facilities before the Start Area (dry change) and after the Finish (wet change).

YOUR SWIM HAT

You must wear the swim hat provided. If you have a favourite swim hat you usually swim in, you can wear this underneath your Swim Serpentine swim hat – but please take care not to overheat if it's warm on Swim Day.

If you asked for a bigger swim hat, this will have been supplied in your Swim Pack.

YOUR WRISTBAND

You must wear your wristband around one of your wrists at all times while you are at the event.

See page 4 for a diagram of an example wristband.

YOUR TIMING CHIP

You must wear your ankle strap, which contains your timing chip. If you're wearing a wetsuit, please ensure the chip is not covered by the wetsuit as it will not work.

Do not wear somebody else's timing chip – for safety reasons it is essential we know exactly who is in the water.

Our team will carry out checks before the start to ensure your timing chip details correspond with your swimmer number and wristband. If they do not, you'll be asked to step aside while the team investigates.

KITBAG DROP

Once you've changed into your swimming kit, you can drop off your kitbag. Please follow the instructions below:

- stick your baggage number label to your official event kitbag where indicated
- place any items you do not intend to swim with in your kitbag
- draw and tie the drawstring cord to avoid items falling out
- hand in your kitbag at our Baggage Drop Area at your allocated drop-off zone – this is the last digit of your swim number, which is displayed on your wristband

Please note: our Baggage Team will only accept official event kitbags. No oversize bags or suitcases are permitted, and no other bags or belongings should be attached to your kitbag.

SAFETY BRIEFING

After check-in you will be given a safety briefing. The briefing will include information on the buoys that mark the course, what to do if you need assistance and what to do at the Finish.

KNOW YOUR PACE

Pace signs for the one and two-mile waves will be displayed before the Start Pontoon.

If you're swimming in the one or two-mile waves, please consider how long it will take you to swim your distance, so that you can line up in your preferred pace category.

If you want to swim fast, make your way to the front of the wave. If you want to swim at a more leisurely pace, please go to the back of the wave.

This will help make the event more enjoyable for everyone with less overtaking required in the water.

The faster swimmers will be able to go off together at the start of each wave, and slower swimmers will be able to enjoy a more relaxed swim surrounded by people swimming at a similar pace.

Pace	One Mile	Two Miles
Fast	Under 35 minutes	Under 66 minutes
Medium	35-43 minutes	66-78 minutes
Steady	43-55 minutes	78-115 minutes
Leisurely	Above 55 minutes	Above 115 minutes



5. After crossing the Start Line

The Swim Serpentine course is one mile in distance – see the map on the next page. Make sure you know how many laps are required to complete your distance – see the table below.

Distance	Laps
Half Mile	Half
One Mile	One
Two Miles	Two
Super Six	Six

All participants swim in a clockwise direction around large inflatable buoys that mark the course from the Start to the Finish.

At each end of the course, there are four large pink buoys to indicate you must turn 180 degrees. Faster swimmers can overtake slower swimmers here by swimming close to the turning buoys.

There will be several smaller red buoys indicating the way for more leisurely swimmers to enjoy a wider turn around and a more scenic route.

SWIM CUT-OFF TIMES

The course and maximum time limits for each distance may be changed on the day depending on weather conditions and water temperature.

All swimmers must be out of the water by 18:20 at the latest. Swimmers in the final two-mile wave of the day at 16:50 must complete it in 90 minutes or less.

ATTRACTING ATTENTION

If you require assistance during your swim, do not panic. If you're wearing a wetsuit, roll onto your back and raise one arm in the air.

If you're using a tow-float, hold on to it, then raise one arm in the air. One of our safety kayakers will attend to you as quickly as possible.

Please do not swim off the course or exit the water anywhere other than the Start or Finish. If you need to exit the water anywhere else, do so with the help of our Water Safety Team.

FIRST AID

There will be medical support at the event for all swimmers. Our Safety Team works closely with our medical provider to ensure a safe swimming environment for all.

Rescue boats will be on hand in case of an emergency, and lifeguards will supervise participants at the entry and exit ramps.



6. After crossing the Finish Line

Once you've completed your distance, swim under the Finish gantry (you do not need to hit the gantry) and leave the water via the exit ramp at the Finish Pontoon, making sure you walk over the timing mat to record your finish time.

CHECK-OUT AREA

When you have made your way up the exit ramp, you'll pass through the swimmer check-out area, where your timing tag will be collected by an event official.

It's essential that you check out so that we know you're safely out of the water. There will be a rinse zone with sprinkle showers and a handwash station after the check-out area.

DRINKS

Water and hot blackcurrant will be available in the Finish Area after your swim. If you'd like any other food or drink, we recommend packing something in your kitbag or visiting one of the nearby concession stands. There will also be a Water Refill Point, so please bring a refillable bottle.

YOUR MEDAL(S)

After the check-out area, you'll be given your commemorative medal (if you chose to receive one when you signed up for the event).

If you're completing the London Classics, please head to the London Classics stand in the Festival Area once you have changed and collected your kitbag. Our team will confirm your eligibility and present you with your medal.

EVENT PHOTOS

Once you have your medal, you'll be able to have a souvenir photo taken by our official photographers from Sportograf.

If you've completed the London Classics challenge, you'll also have the opportunity to have your photo taken with your medal in front of a London Classics backdrop.

Your official photographs will be available to purchase within 48 hours from **Sportograf**.

KITBAG COLLECTION

Next, you'll collect your kitbag from the Baggage Drop Area. Please go to your allocated collection zone, which matches the last digit of your swim number on your wristband. Show our staff your wristband so they can identify your kitbag.

YOUR RESULT

Official times will be based on the elapsed time between you crossing the mats at the Start and Finish ramps. You must wear your timing chip in order to receive an official swim time.

Results will appear on the **Swim Serpentine website** by the end of Swim Day. If your result is incorrect or isn't showing, please fill in the online timing query form on the results webpage and our timing company will be in touch.

THE FESTIVAL AREA

The Festival Area is free to attend for swimmers and supporters. It's the ideal opportunity to meet fellow open water swimming enthusiasts, buy food and drink, and shop for kit from one of our stands.

Kit will be available to buy from KitBrix and Zone3, and Zone3 will also have a range of official Swim Serpentine merchandise.

CHARITY VILLAGE

Several charities will be present to tell you more about the amazing work that they do:

- Cleft
- Migrants' Rights Network
- MS-UK
- Panathlon Foundation
- Rainbow Trust Children's Charity
- Refugee Action
- RHN Royal Hospital Neuro-Disability
- Royal Osteoporosis Society
- SkyWay Charity
- Walking With The Wounded
- Whisper
- Young Epilepsy

Please pop by to say hello and find out more!

Thank you!

Thank you for taking part in 2025 Swim Serpentine. It's going to be an amazing day and we look forward to welcoming you on Saturday 20 September.

For more information, visit swimserpentine.co.uk



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Swimmer



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ZONE3

Swim Serpentine is proudly organised by London Marathon Events

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EVENTS **INSPIRING ACTIVITY**