

**(12) How many hours a week should swimmers train for optimum performance?**

A: Right now we have too many clubs in Great Britain offering too little training time and in most case too much competition leaving many athletes in a twilight zone of training less than 14 hours a week and hoping for international results and expecting overseas tours and camps and national level success. For an athlete training 8 hours a week the benefits are social, fun, participation, team building and health benefits. For those athletes wishing an international career and are serious about optimum performance at the national level then swimming in a programme with a high performance objective then 18-25 hours is approximately what it will take to achieve these objectives. However in most countries and in most clubs the vast majority of athletes train between 8 and 14 hours per week, this is the twilight zone, which contains too much volume to be fun and achieve the social and happy benefits of the participation level (8 hours and under) and will not achieve the competitive results or optimum performance that an athlete expects. In other words it is too much for participation and too little to be considered really serious in terms of the competitive nature of the sport. Changing this twilight zone should be the major focus of every club and national programme. It can be either up or down.

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It takes a minimum of 15 years to build a fully integrated multi-dimensional national swim team that can expect consistent success across many and varied events at world level.

I hope this has been informative for you and assists in answering some of your most frequent questions. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any concerns relating to the above, or other questions that you might have about the programme.

**Bill Sweetenham, National Performance Director - 24th October 2002**

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