

What is Critical Swim Speed (CSS)?

CSS represents the pace you could maintain for a 1500-meter (or yard) time trial. It's a simple yet highly effective metric for improving your endurance and preparing for race distances of 400 meters and above.

Why CSS Training Works

1. Builds Aerobic Fitness Without Exhaustion:

CSS training is intense enough to improve your aerobic capacity but not so grueling that it requires extensive recovery. This allows you to maintain swim fitness while staying fresh for other activities like cycling or running.

2. Focuses on Race-Specific Performance:

While CSS training won't turn you into a sprinting specialist for 50 or 100-meter events, it's designed to help you sustain moderately high speeds over longer distances.

3. Develops Pace Awareness:

By practicing at your CSS pace, you'll learn to manage your effort effectively. Go out too hard, and you'll experience the consequences—teaching you valuable pacing skills for race day.

Determining Your CSS Pace

You don't need to complete a full 1500-meter time trial to calculate your CSS pace. Instead, you can perform a **400m and 200m time trial** within the same workout.

How to Calculate CSS:

- Swim a timed 400m and 200m within the same session.
- Record your times (or ask a friend or coach to time you, noting splits and strokes per minute).
- Input your 400m and 200m times into here [Swim Smooth CSS Calculator](#)

Time Trial Results

This is Your CSS pace based on your time trial in a 25m pool.

DISTANCE	TIME
400m	07:30.00
First 100m of 400m	01:45.00
200m	03:45.00

Metres

Seconds / 100m	01:52.50
Seconds / 50m	00:56.25
Seconds / 25m	00:28.13

Normalised ⓘ

Seconds / 100m	01:57.85
Seconds / 50m	00:58.93
Seconds / 25m	00:29.46

Enter the CSS result highlighted above in the rectangle into your Training Peaks account. As per below steps highlighted with a red box

