

## TAPER GUIDELINES

- 1) Simple definition: In laymen's terms, tapering is nothing more than allowing the body to actively recover from months of training while at the same time, beginning to "sharpen" same areas such as speed, technique, and anaerobic capacity. With a well-conditioned athlete, tapering should be kept simple. It is not a magic trick or a complicated experiment. Many coaches and physiologists firmly believe that an athlete who has put in months of extreme hard work will swim fast regardless. Tapering will simply determine "how fast" the athlete performs. Tapering can be done once a year and is the best way of doing it. Since we have two competition seasons in a year, one short course and one long course, it is necessary that athletes taper twice.
- 2) Rest, Rest, Rest – Please keep in mind that rest, in relationship to preparing for your premier event, must play a role in your everyday life. Keep in mind that your body cannot differentiate between swim work and other forms of work. If you leave the pool after a recovery session and then use your spare time to play 45 minutes of basketball and then go dancing, your body will not know that it is in a recovery phase. **YOU MUST TAPER OUT OF THE POOL AS WELL!!**
- 3) Adjusting to Rest- Please be patient!! Oftentimes, an athlete who is accustomed to heavy training will often feel sluggish or "lousy" in the water during the early stages of rest. This is normal. This is why the rest program is gradual and not just 3 days of rest.
- 4) Lifestyle Changes- This is somewhat of a continuation of the above. Certain adjustments outside of the pool must be made to coincide with in-water tapering.
  - Sleep Patterns- you must attempt to keep your patterns the same with the exception of some additional sleep. As we begin to gradually lessen the time of the morning workouts, the biggest mistake one can make is to say "Hey, I don't have to wake up early tomorrow", "I can stay up late and watch t.v." or "I can surf the net". You need to go to bed as though you have practice in the morning at the same time, however, instead of getting up early, use the additional time to "sleep in". Your body will thank you.
  - Social adjustments-For many athletes this can have a great psychological effect.
  - Making adjustments such as watching the type of foods you eat, refraining from any form of alcohol consumption, cutting back on late hour socializing, can often set a mental stage "zone" that so many athletes need to be in, prior to the meet.