

# Tips and Tricks of the Water Polo Trade

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## Pre-amble

Below are various tidbits, items, useful information, trick of the trade so to say, that my family has come across over ten years or so in the 'wonderful world of water polo'. Hopefully some of the tips below can help your kids and they won't have to experience the 'harder' lessons of 'life in the water'.

If you have some useful/helpful tips and tricks (in regards to water and water polo) that you would like to pass on please send them to the [rwpa@accesscomm.ca](mailto:rwpa@accesscomm.ca) account.

## Hair & Skin

Pool chemicals can really do a lot of damage to hair & skin. Always ensure that your child rinses off after a swim in chemically treated water. They don't even have to use soap if they don't want to just rinsing will get the majority of the chemicals.

If they don't think it's a problem have them do a little test. After they get out of the pool, dried off and have been out for about 1/2 hour, have them lick their arm and smell. They will be surprised. It works even if they had used soap.



Long hair is especially hard to manage without the proper equipment. Wet combs and leave in conditioner are two personal favorites.

My hair dresser recommended 'Wella', Color Preserve (even though I have never coloured my hair) - Detangler and Leave-in conditioner. Spray it only on the ends and comb through without hassle. Fantastic. Both my daughters had hair down to their waist during their water polo years.

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It is even good for those with short hair as the pool chemicals will have an effect on the ends of the hair.

### Bathing Suits

SportCO (located outside the pool area at the Lawson) gives all registered RWPA members a 15% discount. A good quality water polo bathing suit may seem more expensive but these suits can last 3-5 years (with swimming every day). When in the water a lot, be sure to get one with 90-95% nylon. I know we went through several cheap ones (which ended up being more expensive) before we asked someone. They are now making most bathing suits stronger that are chlorine resistant and UV resistant. Be sure to ask for a 'water polo' bathing suit.

Young boys, if you want to continue to play water polo you will eventually wear a speedo, even if you don't think you will now. However for now there are available the briefs or tight short suits for the more discreet or shy swimmer.

### Eyes

Two good products to help clear up the sore/red eyes caused from pool chemicals. Teargel and Celluvisc. Visine is not recommended as it only gets the red out and does not replace or help heal the damage done by pool chemicals and may even cause damage as it allows bacteria to leach in.

Teargel is about \$10 and you can get it in any drug store. It is a jelly like substance that you put in your eyes after swimming.



Celluvisc is a bit more expensive, but is ideal for those who also wear contacts. (I have heard there is also a chlorine version).

Please consult your optometrist if you have any questions or concerns with your child's eyes.

### Ears

Every parent of a child who is in the water (especially over winter months) knows 'Swimmers ears'. It is when the water stays in the ears and the pool chemicals cause irritation. It really hurts. Once again I experienced this with my daughters and this required a visit to an Ear, Nose & Throat specialist.

The specialist recommended (Buro-sol) once they had swimmers ears, but to prevent swimmers ears, the specialist recommended each time after swimming to rinse the ears with regular water and then put a small amount of rubbing alcohol in the ears (a few drops using a



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dropper). The rubbing alcohol dries up any left over water therefore preventing swimmers ears.

I was in a drug store when I came across a product specifically for swimmer's ear. It cost around \$5 and the ingredients WERE: Isopropyl Alcohol (95%), Anhydrous Glycerin (5%). I think a large bottle of rubbing alcohol may be \$2 and it goes a long way. This was conveniently packaged though.



However if the ears are already irritated, rubbing alcohol will not help and will **really, really hurt.**

Once again, if you have any questions or concerns with your child's ears, please consult an ear, nose and throat specialist.

This article on the web gives more information about swimmer's ears  
[http://www.kidshealth.org/kid/ill\\_injure/aches/swimmers\\_ear.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/kid/ill_injure/aches/swimmers_ear.html)

### **Nutrition**

The amount of physical activity that the kids do in one hour in the water uses a lot of fuel. You might not realize it but they are really hungry and if they have not kept their fluid levels up prior to and/or during the practice they are sorely depleted. Unfortunately there are usually only the sugar type drinks and snacks available at the pool. While sugar will give them some energy for awhile it typically runs out fast and leaves crankier kids. Sugar snacks and drinks also don't replace the vitamins and minerals that they lose in the physical activity and that kids need for healthy growth.

Being prepared ahead of time, by having snacks like fruit, cheese and water, right after an hour or so in the water is so good for the kids and they really appreciate it (although you won't hear them say it, you only see the food disappear, even for the picky eaters, yes I have one too).

When my kids were really young my older sister had shown me the example of having these nutritious snacks ready for them when they got out of the pool (she had two hungry boys). One or two slices of cheese and a small bag of grapes will do wonders.

Ensure the snack is ready to eat like

- grapes,
- cut up watermelon, apples or oranges,
- strawberries, raspberries
- cut up cheese, (no processed cheese please!).
- boiled eggs

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The snacks disappear so fast you will be amazed and you will have less cranky kids to contend with and they fall asleep content, wake up refreshed, and so on.

(Once they are used to having this food, then not letting them eat until they are fully dressed is a great incentive to get them moving out of the locker room faster).

### **Sport/Muscle Injury**

Repetitive motion injury, muscles developed more in the front than the back (or vice/versa). 'Swimmer's shoulders'. If your child swims more than 10 hours a week, do they do the stretches that compensate for the muscles they are developing? Do they do them religiously or just when they feel like it or think about it? Or somebody forces them through it?

Injury happens

- when muscles are not ready to work (improper stretching before) or
- when muscles have been overworked (not doing the compensating stretches after) and have not had time to heal.

Each time a muscle is used it is breaking down and needs time to repair itself, which makes it stronger.

'Anyone who does more than 10 hours of strenuous physical activity each week should be assessed.' -- quote by my personal massage therapist

If your child is having difficulties with some movement, please have them talk to their coach. Their coach can instruct them on what they can do or (should be doing regularly) to correct a problem.

Another quick test: Put your back against a wall and put your arms against the wall with the back of the hands on the wall. Now raise the arms up 'slowly' to above the head, keeping the backs of the hands on the wall. Most swimmers can only get to just above the shoulders. I can get all the way to the top (hence I am not a swimmer). If they are doing the proper stretching they will be able to do a 'V' above their head, not likely to reach all the way up because of the muscle structure.

Please consult your personal care physician if any symptoms are on-going.

Lots of information may be found on the net regarding this topic.

<http://www.spma.net/shoulder.htm>

### **Lost & Found**

The U of R and Lawson recover items into their lost and found daily.

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The Lawson's lost and found is located at the cashier's station.

The U of R keeps lost and found items by the day and is located at the lifeguard's station.

If you have lost an item call the U of R or Lawson right away and they may be able to locate it.

Lawson: 777-7323

U of R Equipment room: 585-4366

### **Private Swimming Lessons**

If you are wondering if your child could improve with some private lessons the Dolphins swim coach is Jason Calkwell.

Jason.calkwell@btopenworld.com

536-3121