



ANNA BASS (FACING CAMERA), USMS CERTIFIED ALTS INSTRUCTOR AND LEVEL 3 COACH, TEACHES THE FIRST ADULT LEARN TO SWIM COURSE SPONSORED BY THE GULF LMSC. FULL STORY ON PAGE 4

The Chlorine Chronicles Gulf Masters Swimming

Fall 2023

IN THIS ISSUE

Join Us to Celebrate Gulf Swim University's Tenth Year

The long running fitness event, Gulf Swim University, celebrates its tenth year in 2024. This anniversary will be celebrated with participation awards, a special recognition award for those who have participated in all ten events, and a post-event social.

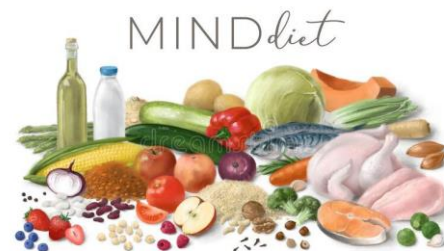
This event is completely free to you as a Gulf/USMS registered swimmer and is easy to enter, as follows:

- Let Gulf Fitness Chair, Karlene Denby, know you are participating by emailing her at txswimmer53@hotmail.com
- Beginning on January 1st, either join or renew your entry into the FREE Go the Distance Event (<https://www.usms.org/events/fitness-events/go-the-distance>) and easily track your swimming distances (daily, weekly, or monthly).
- Get to the pool regularly, have fun, and get FIT. This fitness event may be just what you need to get to the pool consistently as we enter the new year. Make swimming regularly the one resolution that you keep in 2024.

There are five levels of challenge. The event runs from **January 1, 2024 to April 30, 2024.**

- * Swim 20-39 miles and earn an Associate's Degree
- * Swim 40-79 miles to earn a Bachelor's Degree
- * Swim 80-119 miles to qualify for a Double Major
- * Swim 120-159 miles for a Master's Degree
- * Swim 160 miles for a PhD

We are looking to have our highest level of member participation for the tenth anniversary event and encourage all our teams and members to join us for the fitness challenge.



MIND diet

Eat to Improve Your Brain Health

Nutritionist Catherine Kruppa discusses the MIND diet which offers the potential to help improve and preserve brain function.

Page 3



Gulf's Coach On Deck Program

Thanks to Patrick Harrington and Andreas Lorenz, the Gulf LMSC has instituted a coach on deck program during meet warmups.

Page 7

The 2023 Emmett Hines Award Recipient is Nicole Christensen

Nicole Christensen was the recipient with the 2023 Emmett Hines Award, the highest honor bestowed by the Gulf Masters Swimming Committee. The award is presented to those who best exemplify enthusiasm, expertise, and advocacy of Masters Swimming in the Gulf region. Nicole was presented with the award at the Gulf LMSC annual meeting held at Fuzzy's Pizza on December 2nd.

Nicole's nomination letter illustrates the level of commitment to Masters swimming that earned Nicole this year's award.

"If there was a definition for "swim volunteer extraordinaire" in the dictionary, it would feature Nicole's picture beneath it. Nicole has been the consummate volunteer in both the Gulf LMSC and South Central Zone for many years.

Nicole has been the race director for both the Sweetheart Swim SCY meet and the Graham Johnston LCM meet for over a decade. Additionally, Nicole was the driving force and event director for the South Central LCM Championships held at Texas A&M in 2016-2019. She was able to obtain a world-class facility, secure volunteers, provide an event social, and conduct a high-quality three-day competition despite the distance between her home in Houston and College Station.

Anyone who has attended any of Nicole's meets knows that they run like a Swiss watch. They are well organized, with ample volunteers, and excellent officiating.

Nicole's efforts are not limited to swim competitions. She has set up and maintains both the Gulf LMSC and South Central Zone websites, keeping both sites up to date and easy to navigate. She has also set up email blasts and social media pages for both organizations with the goal of providing better communication with all our swimmers.

Nicole was South Central Zone Chair for the past four years. During her tenure, she organized a virtual Zone Championship meet during the pandemic. This was the gargantuan task of getting five different LMSCs to pick a common weekend, rent pool space, promote and conduct the meets, and then merge the results to determine our virtual Zone champions. Nicole also spearheaded a multi-event open water Zone swim series beginning in 2022 with three events in the Gulf, South Texas, and Arkansas LMSCs. The series expanded into North Texas in 2023, and it plans to host at least four swims in 2024. Nicole was term limited as Zone Chair to a four-year tenure, but she will continue to assist the Zone as its webmaster and communications chair.

Nicole is currently the Gulf LMSC chair, ably organizing and overseeing the LMSC's efforts to provide multiple services to our membership, such as stroke development clinics, virtual fitness events, open water clinics, the annual Thanksgiving Day swim, Gulf Swim University, and multiple pool and open water competitions.

I trust you will agree that Nicole would be a worthy recipient of the Emmett Hines award, one who will continue to carry on Emmett's legacy of giving back to the Masters swim community."

Congratulations, Nicole, on this well-deserved honor.



Kris Wingenroth (left) presents Nicole Christensen (right) with the 2023 Emmett Hines Award

2024 USMS Registration is Underway

It is time to renew your USMS registration for 2024. There are many benefits of USMS membership such as access to an extensive workout library, Swimmer Magazine, open water and pool competition opportunities, fitness programs, and discounts from USMS partners including TYR, SwimOutlet.com, FINIS, and many more. Special offers will be emailed to members who renew or join early (by Dec. 31). So, don't delay and renew your membership now!

The MIND Diet

Catherine Kruppa, MS, RD, CSSD, LD

281-974-1559 • www.adviceforeating.com • catherinekruppa@adviceforeating.com

Numerous benefits stem from following a healthy diet and lifestyle. Nutrition serves a major role in the aging process, disease prevention, and overall quality of life. Part of prioritizing our physical health means taking care of our brains as well. While it is becoming more common knowledge that diet and exercise can positively impact both physical and mental health, scientists continue to uncover new findings concerning nutrition's role in overall brain health. These discoveries include specific diets and foods that have the potential to help improve and preserve brain function.

As our population continues to age, the need to keep our minds and memory sharp and focused is more relevant than ever. The MIND diet, a nutrition plan targeting the health of the aging brain, has recently gained significant momentum as several research studies reveal its potential in improving overall brain health and reducing cognitive decline that occurs with aging. Through this mostly plant-based diet plan, with emphasis on limited animal and highly saturated fatty foods, this "brain healthy" diet has come into the limelight.

The guidelines of the MIND diet promote the consumption of:

- 3+ servings a day of whole grains
- 1+ servings a day of vegetables (other than green leafy)
- 6+ servings a week of green leafy vegetables
- 5+ servings a week of nuts
- 4+ meals a week of beans
- 2+ servings a week of berries
- 2+ meals a week of poultry
- 1+ meals a week of fish and
- Olive oil (for cooking, dressings, added fat, etc.).

It also suggests limiting the consumption of foods high in unsaturated and trans fats such as:

- Less than 5 servings a week of pastries and sweets
- Less than 4 servings a week of red meat (including beef, pork, lamb, and products made from these meats)
- Less than 1 serving a week of cheese and fried foods
- Less than 1 tablespoon a day of butter/stick margarine

The MIND diet, similar in idea to the Mediterranean and DASH diets, was originally studied to determine its possible effects on the onset or slowed progression of dementia. It contains nutrient-dense and vitamin-rich foods that are believed to have protective effects on the brain by reducing oxidative stress and inflammation. In one study, researchers found a 53% lower rate of Alzheimer's disease for those with the highest MIND diet compliance score. Even after adjusting for factors associated with dementia including healthy lifestyle behaviors, cardiovascular-related conditions (e.g., high blood pressure, stroke, diabetes), depression, and obesity, the results from the study found the MIND diet to be associated with preserving cognitive function and promoting brain health.

Although the focus of the MIND diet is on brain health, these benefits extend to heart health, diabetes management, and certain cancers, as the foods included have been shown to lower the risk of these diseases.

The MIND diet does not include a rigid meal plan, which can prove to be a challenge for some who require more guidance. However, that is what we are here for as Registered Dietitians at Advice for Eating. This diet also does not restrict one from eating *only* the foods suggested, nor does it emphasize portion sizes or exercise. However, if brain health is a priority for you in your health journey, the MIND diet may be something to try and incorporate into your everyday lifestyle. Those who do not like to cook or prefer to spend their time at restaurants may find following this diet to be a challenge. However, "nothing in this life that is worth having comes easy" is a quote that comes to mind.

Overall, following a healthy lifestyle with plenty of nutrient-dense foods and exercise can significantly impact overall brain health, thus making nutrition a priority in anyone's health journey. When this diet incorporates balanced plates, it may also promote healthy weight loss (if desired). Currently, there is ongoing research going on to fully understand the MIND diet's role in reducing cognitive decline that occurs with aging.

Aging is inevitable, but by nourishing our MIND and body through nutrient-dense foods and exercise, we can promote our overall health and well-being and keep our memories as sharp as possible during the process.

Catherine Kruppa, M.S., R.D., C.S.S.D., L.D. earned her Bachelor of Science in Nutritional Sciences and Master of Science in Nutrition from Texas A. & M. University. She is a registered, licensed dietitian, and wellness coach, with Board Certification in Sports Nutrition. Catherine specializes in weight management, sports nutrition, diabetes, gastrointestinal disorders, endometriosis, heart disease, and pediatric nutrition.



The First Gulf-Sponsored ALTS Classes Begin

Thanks to the tenacity of Gulf Diversity and Inclusion Chair, Anna Bass, the first Gulf-sponsored ALTS class is currently underway.

Anna has faced numerous challenges in getting the program started, including navigating HISD permission to hold the classes in one of their pools, and closure and repair of these older pools.

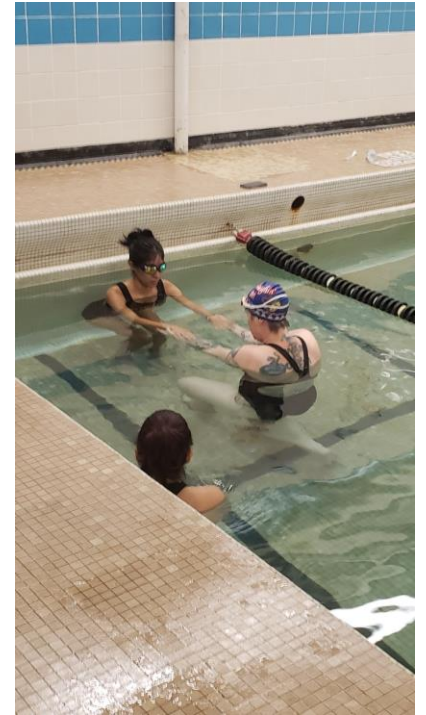
Anna is a USMS certified ALTS instructor, and she recently received her USMS Level 3 coaching certification when the course was held in Houston in early November.

This first ALTS course is being held at Northside High School. The classes are small by design to provide individual guidance and encouragement for the daunting challenge of overcoming fear of the water and learning to swim as an adult.

The Gulf LMSC is providing financial support to the program as needed. For instance, the Gulf is paying for swim goggles for each of the participants.

To increase awareness of USMS and the ALTS program, Anna will have a car in Houston's Art Car Parade in April 2024. More on that in a future newsletter.

Thank you, Anna, for your dedication in providing swim lessons to Houston's underserved communities.



Gulf Holds Its Annual "Tanksgiving" Swim

On Thursday, November 23rd, Gulf swimmers met at the Dad's Club to get in some exercise before enjoying their holiday feasts.

Despite light showers and temperatures in the 50s, 23 members were put through their paces during the hour+ long workout.

This event would not happen without the efforts and cooperation of:

- The Dad's Club for providing access to their facility on a day when all pools are normally closed.
- The two life guards who took time off from their holiday plans to watch over our swimmers in less-than-ideal weather conditions.
- Nicole Christensen for working with Dad's Club to schedule and organize the event.
- Nicole and Kris Wingenroth for running the workout.
- The Gulf LMSC paying for the costs associated with the swim.

The Gulf leadership is hopeful that it can continue this Thanksgiving tradition for many years to come.

This Quarter's Workout

Thanks to Gulf LMSC Coaches Chair and MACA coach, Patrick Harrington, for this quarter's workout.

Warmup: 200 free/200 kick/200 alternating drill, swim by 25s/200 pull
6 x 50 free, descend 1-3 and 4-6, interval is first swim plus 10 seconds – Get that heart rate up!

Main Set: Combination kick and pull set (wear fins and paddles continuously throughout the set)
Cycle through 100 kick/200 pull four times non-stop (pausing just long enough to put pull buoy in place for pull and to remove it after the pull portion)

200 easy free

6 x 50 free – swim golf drill (# of strokes + your time = your golf score)
The more you reduce each component, the lower your score.

Do this as two sets of 3 x 50. You can either count your strokes within each 25 for easier recall (at least that works for my brain). If you want to/can count strokes for the entire 50 then... JUST DO IT!

6 x 100 IM, descend 1-3 and 4-6, interval is first swim plus 10 seconds

Cooldown: 200 easy and smooth

TOTAL: 3,600 YARDS/METERS

If you want to increase your yardage, you can either repeat the four x 200 warmup or increase the number of cycles in the kick/pull set.

Take a Break From Your Smart Watch

You'll see them at almost every swim workout. The lanemate who is busily looking at and punching buttons on their smart watch between intervals while a huge digital pace clock is right next to them on the pool deck. And they invariably leave on the :37.

Smart watches have a great allure with the ability to track almost every aspect of your health and fitness. Heart rate? Check. Strokes per length? Check. Number of steps? Check. Duration and quality of sleep? Check.

It started innocently enough. My husband purchased me a Garmin Approach 40X, a very basic smart watch. Its primary purpose was golfing where it could tell you the distance from your location to the center of the green. Since it had GPS, it could also show you your walking routes, count your number of steps, keep track of your heartrate during the walks, and tell you your pace per mile. It tracked the duration and quality of each night's sleep. While waterproof, it did not track various swim functions. So, I only turned it on and off at the start and end of swim workouts after which it would tell me my minimum, maximum, and average heartrates. And it was wildly inaccurate on those heartrates.

I wore it for several years, abandoning many of the lovely watches I'd been given by my husband over the years, as the Garmin tracked my various health metrics 24/7.

And then it died on November 1st. My initial thought was to repair or replace it. But I then said "no." I've gone 45 days without being continuously monitored, and I don't miss it one bit. I have always counted strokes and worked in the pool by perceived effort. Nothing has changed in my swim workout with or without the Garmin. But it is liberating to not be continually advised of my sleep time and quality, my daily number of steps, and my heart rate. Nothing in my life has changed. I'm still sleeping the same number of hours, doing the same levels of daily activity, and swimming the same number of weekly workouts. And if I need a distance on the golf course, my husband is there with his range finder.

Athletes naturally tend to be a bit obsessive. The smart watches make that obsession even worse. So, I'd encourage you to take the leap and spend a week or two without your smart watch. You may find that you don't really need or miss it.

The only downside? I've had to replace all the dead batteries in my dress watches so that I can wear them again.

November 4-5 Was a Big Weekend for Masters Swimming in Houston

The USMS big dogs came to town during the first weekend of November as USMS Senior Director of Club and Coach Development **Bill Brenner** and 2001 Speedo U.S. Masters Coach of the Year **Mel Goldstein** shared their decades of coaching experience with Gulf coaches and swimmers.

Saturday, November 4th was spent in the classroom as Bill and Mel conducted Level 2 and Level 3 coaching certification courses, and the classroom portion of the Clinic Course for Coaches, a course that teaches how to conceptualize, organize, market, and deliver stroke development clinics. The courses were well-attended and included five Gulf members in the Level 2 certification, five members in the Level 3 certification, and two members in the Clinic Course for Coaches.

The venue moved to the Memorial Athletic Club's indoor pool on Sunday, November 5th for a USMS Stroke Development Clinic. The stroke clinic presented a dual opportunity for both coaches and swimmers as the newly certified coaches assisted Bill and Mel in conducting the stroke clinic, putting to practical use the classroom knowledge from the day before. The clinic, attended by over 30 swimmers, was 4.5 hours long and covered all four competitive strokes.

The Gulf LMSC provided refreshments for the stroke clinic, offered grants to Gulf members taking the certification courses, and reimbursed the \$50 registration fee of all Gulf swimmers attending the clinic.

The clinic was very well received by our swimmers, as indicated by this follow-up email: "It was fantastic! I loved the skill progression, individualized feedback from coaches, and excellent venue. I can't believe it was free. I would've happily paid the registration fee, which was very reasonable. Really appreciate the LMSC sponsorship."



Swimmers receive instructions from Bill Brenner before hitting the pool.

The 2024 USMS Annual Meeting Held in Houston

Delegates from all over the nation converged at the Houston Airport Marriott at George Bush Intercontinental Airport on September 8-10 for USMS's Annual Meeting. It was a hybrid format in which delegates could either attend remotely or in person.

The Gulf LMSC and Woodlands Masters Swim Team hosted a swim workout for the delegates on Saturday at the Conroe ISD Natatorium with the LMSC providing the transportation and WMST providing the pool rental and coaches for the workout.

The meeting business included rules, long-distance, and legislation amendments, financial planning, annual awards presentations, and election of new officers. Congratulations to **Jill Gellatly** on her election as USMS Treasurer.

The major news coming out of convention was USMS's acquisition of Grown-Up Swimming. Grown-Up Swimming is basically Summer League swimming for adults. Approximately four meets are held locally each summer. The meets are low pressure, just for fun, and often have a social event immediately following the races. The events will be 25-yard and 50-yard swims and relays. Swims will be timed but not reported to USMS Top Times. This organization will be separate from USMS and has its own registration fee. There is currently a Grown-Up Swimming league in the Conroe area, and the organization is looking to expand into other parts of the Houston metropolitan area.

Gulf Begins New Coach on Deck Program



Patrick Harrington (left) and Andreas Lorenz (right) on deck at the First Time for Everything Meet.

Have you ever been at a swim meet as either an unattached swimmer or with your usual coach not present? Have you ever wished there was a USMS certified coach on deck to help you with your starts during warmup and to answer any questions or offer advice?

That became a reality this fall, thanks to the efforts of Coaches Chair Patrick Harrington and Long Distance/Open Water Chair Andreas Lorenz as they launched the Gulf's new Coach on Deck Program.

So far, Andreas and Patrick have assisted swimmers at the First Time for Everything, the TEST Fall Opener, and the Sabine Weiser November Classic meets. Their presence has been appreciated and well received at every meet.

In order to sustain this new program, we will need assistance from our USMS certified coaches (any level) as it is unreasonable to expect Andreas and Patrick to be present at every Gulf meet. We have many newly certified coaches this past year, thanks in large part to the certification courses being paid for by Gulf grants. It would be greatly appreciated if these certified coaches could "pay it back" by being the coach on deck during the warmups of at least one Gulf swim meet.

If you are interested in participating, simply email gulfmastersswim@gmail.com, and there will be a bright yellow tee-shirt and the thanks of your fellow swimmers in your future.

Start Your New Year Right by Participating in These Upcoming Events

It's not too early to start thinking about your 2024 racing plans. The following events are being held in the Houston area.

- January 27, 2024 One Hour Swim, Dad's Club, Houston, TX
- February 10, 2024 Sweetheart Swim Meet, WW Emmons Natatorium, Houston, TX (registration is open)
- March 9, 2024 March Madness Meet, Rice University, Houston, TX
- April 14, 2024 Lake Longhorn Round-Up Open Water Swims, League City, TX
- April 26-28, 2024 South Central Zone Spring Championships, Conroe ISD Natatorium, Shenandoah, TX

Eighteen Gulf Swimmers Earn 2023 LCM National Top Ten Times

The U.S. Masters Swimming National Top Ten List for 2023 LCM swims was finalized and published in December 2023. Eighteen Gulf swimmers posted 41 individual top ten times.

Congratulations to David Guthrie (RICE), Bruce Kone (UNAT), and Joann Leilich (WMST) who swam the fastest time in the nation in one or more events.

All our national top ten swimmers listed below.

Men

30-34: Alexander Aceino (UNAT), Austin Wilson (RICE)

35-39: Leonardo Leiva Rivera (UNAT), Kevin Nead (RICE)

40-44: Kyle Ediger (SSC)

45-49: Oscar Bermudez (COOG)

60-64: David Guthrie (RICE)

65-69: John Fields (RICE), Bruce Kone (UNAT), Gary Schatz (WMST)

70-74: Greg Tharp (WMST)

80-84: Tom Boak (WMST)

Women

30-34: Margo Aceino (UNAT)

35-39: Alisha Anderson (DADS), Lindsay Price (COOG), Tania Rangel (UNAT)

40-44: Christina Toth (WMST)

80-84: Joann Leilich (WMST)