

Meet the GTD swimmer Brian Evans (45-49 age group)

Brian says he is breaststroke-challenged, however he managed to win a 400 IM heat thanks to this wonderful stroke! Go figure!

I started Masters swimming 8 years ago. I had spent many on/off periods as a runner, and was getting bored. When I was younger, swimming was something I loved but I never belonged to a team. My father was a swimmer as a teenager, and taught my siblings and me to swim, but never pushed any of us to pursue formal training...I always wonder what he was trying to (not) tell me!

Prior to joining the Reston Masters (RMST) in Reston VA, I didn't even know Masters swimming existed - regular practices, new friends and a chance to compete was exactly what I was looking for. Not to mention, swimming alleviated the boredom of run training by alternating workouts.

Since then, I have dabbled in Triathlons as the Washington area has many opportunities to combine swimming, biking and running. I was able to participate in a 70.3 ("half") triathlon, back in 2004, a few marathons and the 2005 Short-Course Nationals in Ft. Lauderdale.

Well, my family was expanding as much as the sports I was training in. My wife and I have 3 kids that all participate in various levels of swimming (summer league or USS). The demands of their activities, a full time job as a Software Development Manager and the hustle of the Washington, DC area, have caused me to dial-down the amount of each of these activities and mostly focus on swimming the past few years.

Now the challenge is how to squeeze everything in. During the winter months, I swim 3 very early mornings a week with my 13 year old son's USS team, Curl-Burke Swim Club and try to attend RMST workouts on the weekends and during the summers. By sharing the same workout, I get to 'enjoy' the experience of my son getting faster in the water while I try not to get slower (with age). At least it provides one less practice session for our family, and has freed up more evenings for the entire family.

I have been participating in GTD from the very beginning and hope to someday pass the 300 mile a year milestone...I seem to have been stuck in the 270 range the past few years. My favorite events are the shorter IM events and some Freestyle events. It appears that stroke strength seems to be somewhat hereditary, as everyone in our family seems to have some natural knack at backstroke and is breaststroke-challenged, although some of my kids would beg to differ this point.

I have a personal agreement with myself to swim the 400 IM every four years (because it takes about 4 years to become motivated). Generally, this race for me is about survival, but I did win my heat after taking the lead during breaststroke! I guess drills really do payoff!

Meet the GTD swimmer Mark Comfort (55-59 age group)



Mark is a very dedicated swimmer, who - amongst other things - attributes his good health to swimming. His advice "never give up" is heartfelt, read for yourself!

I am an Engineering Estimator/Project Manager for NorthWestern Energy in Missoula. I design and oversee the installation of natural gas and electric distribution systems into residential subdivisions. I celebrated 30 years in April with the company. The utility industry has undergone many changes since I started in Consumer Services and Marketing specializing in residential conservation. My wife of 32 years and I have 2 grown boys that are healthy, active and employed.

As long as I can remember, I have loved the water. My parents enrolled me in a swim club at 9 but I hated all the kicking so I quit. I didn't start organized swimming until I was in the 7th grade. I swam and played water polo at a small private school in Southern California, Harvard High School. I gained some small measure of success and a real passion for following the "Black Line". This led me to the University of Montana, where I started swimming as a freshman. However, 5 hours every day in the pool took away from my studies and other social interests and so I hung up my competitive trunks. I continued to swim for my fraternity in intramurals, which we dominated and spent a summer in northern California at a private lake as a lifeguard. After a stint in the Air Force, we returned to Missoula and in 1979 I found myself back in the pool at the university. I laugh now looking back because it took 23 strokes to make it one length of the pool and I could not do a flip turn anymore. I was motivated to get back to my former swimming self and kept at it.

Swimming is a passion and is a major part of my life and everyone knows it. My office knows not to call me during lunch because I am in the pool. I have stayed with it over the years primarily for the health benefits but more than the physical, it is the mental benefits. No matter what my day is like, when I get in the water I am at peace and it is me against the clock. I have met some great people in the pool and the swimming community in Missoula has grown tremendously over the last 30 years. We have 3 pools in Missoula with Masters groups at each one but everyone comes together once a week on Sunday morning. In the summer everyone moves outdoors to the "Lake" a new 50 meter pool owned by the city but helped financed by the entire swim community. We usually have around 30 swimmers at lunch in the summer. I swim 3 to 5 days a week at the Missoula YMCA with a group of up to 16 great folks at lunch. I bring the workout which I get from USMS and adjust to about 3000 yards a session. Our YMCA lunch group, fondly known by some as "The Noon Goons", started with just a few and has grown to its current number. Two years ago one of our members was hit by a car while training on his bike for a triathlon, so 7 of the Noon Goons put together a fund raiser. We swam a relay 15 miles across Flathead Lake and raised over \$10,000 to help with his expenses. The pool camaraderie has turned into sincerely deep friendships and we truly care for each other.

I got back into competition in 1985 after being goaded by a young female all-American swimmer, Eddie Van Buskirk, who got me to swim a one mile swim in the Kessler Pond in Helena. In June, the water was 62 degrees and the air temp was 55 and raining. No wet suits back then but I won (not much competition!) the adult men's one mile and I was hooked. Because of family and other commitments, I have not traveled very far to compete. I usually make the State Masters Meet, and have competed in Senior Olympics. Over the years I have garnered a few state records in the backstroke but love to swim the 100 IM as well. I swam in Short Course Nationals in 1998 and did OK but this year an injury kept me from Fresno. My qualifying times would have placed me in the top 10 in the 3 backstroke events! There are 2 major swimming events I train for each year. My birthday swim in Dec., started at age 40 and this year will be 56 x 100 on the 1:30, and the Long Bridge Swim in Sandpoint, Id. This is a 1.76 mile swim in Lake Pend Oreille in August that has grown to 800+ swimmers.

<http://www.sandpoint.org/longbridgeswim/>. I set these as goals to shoot for and keep me motivated to keep going constantly trying to improve.

I survived a blood clot in my lung almost 3 years ago, caused by a foot injury that I ignored, and the call of the pool helped me recover. My motto has become "Never give up, don't ever give up!" and "You quit, you die". As long as I breathe and I can get into the pool, I will swim. GTD has been a fun way to keep track of my yardage and I have a goal of making 365 miles, but not this year. One of these days I will retire and I would love to see just how many miles I can swim in a year when I have more time. My swimming buddies would probably describe me a driven, competitive and dependable, because the old bald guy is always in the pool at lunch pushing them to go harder longer. They keep me feeling young! When not in the pool I am usually hiking and biking the mountains around Missoula with my wife and dog.



So, keep putting one hand in front of the other and Never Give Up!

MEET THE GTD SWIMMER MICHELLE FRAPPIER (35-39 AGE GROUP)



See if this sounds familiar: "swimming keeps me sane". How many swimmers say this? This is another great, must-read story!

"It's best for everyone when I swim"... my friendly reminder to all family members and friends. The pool keeps me sane.

When I was little my two younger brothers and I were pool rats. Summer days were spent biking to and from the Rec Center where we would jump, splash, dive and swim from open to close. Swim lessons began at the crack of dawn in the frigid outdoor pool. Treading water and swimming laps filled summer after summer.

Then came the call of the lifeguard tower. One day when I was 17, I decided I wanted to twirl that all-powerful whistle. I grabbed a suit and jumped back in the pool. So began my days of fitness swimming and training. Much of my time was spent building up a little distance and strength so I could retrieve that 10 lb. brick from the deep end during the looming lifeguard test.

One of my favorite swim experiences was during the summer after my freshman year of college. I worked as an aquatics director of a YMCA camp. Teaching swim lessons and managing the pool in a beautiful mountain setting with a bunch of my friends was a blast!

USMS edged its way into my life the first year after college. Competing was a new part of my fitness swimming adventure. The energy on the pool deck during a meet was such a thrill! A couple of ribbons and swim camps fed my chlorine addiction.

Then my career in education caused a perpetual time crunch. Lesson plans and grading papers took priority over my Speedo and goggles. Trying to figure out how to balance all that life entails taught me I must, absolutely must, swim.

The past dozen years reflect a myriad of hobbies, ministry here and overseas, several career moves and miles of stress management swimming. New to my experience is Go the Distance. GTD appeals to my Type A, checklist-making, box-checking self. 100 miles is a few swims away; an exciting accomplishment since I started 2009 with a broken foot!

Richmond, Virginia is the place I currently call home. That is where Masters practice fills a few days each week. Many thanks to the coaches at ACAC who are tweaking every angle of my hands, refining the rotation of my hips and pushing me to perfect each stroke. Freestyle is my favorite, but eventually my fly is going to be strong, fluid and pretty. IM here I come! Maybe one day my feet will hit the top of the block again. Until then my toes are in the pool and I'll just keep swimming.

MEET THE GTD SWIMMER FRED BAIRD (60-64 AGE GROUP)

Oooh, that dreaded rotator cuff injury is playing an ugly part in Fred's life. Let's wish him well in his recovery process, and a healthy return to the pool!

I began my competitive swimming career when I was 8 years old. I swam in the old AAU program until I entered high school where I competed in the Southern California area and obtained All-American honors in my junior and senior years in the 100 yd. butterfly.

I received a swimming scholarship to Brigham Young University where I competed in NCAA competition for four years gaining All-American honors in my sophomore and junior years in the 100yd and 200yd butterfly events.

Upon graduating from college, I stopped swimming for 32 years. I did a lot of running which caused problems with my knees and my doctor gave me a choice between replacing my knees or start swimming again.

As I started up in January of 2003, I began losing weight and to date I have lost a total of 25 lbs. and have so far avoided a knee operation. I entered my first National meet in 2004 and have continued to enter the Nationals since then achieving a dream of winning the 200 yd. butterfly last May in Fresno, California.

As I was swimming in a long course meet in June, I tore the rotator cuff in two areas of my right shoulder which has really been a set back and presented me with lots of challenges. Rather than undergo surgery, I decided to try a new procedure to repair torn tendons known as PRP injections which allow the body to heal itself through your own blood platelets and fatty injections into the injured site.

I have one more procedure next week and then the hope is that I can start the recovery process in the pool towards the end of December. Swimming is so great for your physical and mental well being. I will be so grateful to swim again as one surgeon told me that I would never swim again with my injury.

I have been staying active through a structured weight lifting program and using the cardio machines at the gym which has been great but not the same as swimming! I will be happy to keep you updated with my rehab process.

Meet the GTD swimmer Kristi Kay Chenoweth (30-34 age group)

Swimming helps to keep more people "sane" than we know! What a great sport we have!



I work for a Fortune 500 power gen company as a technical accountant. Right now, I am embroiled in a very large project implementing a new complex accounting standard and am averaging between 60 and 80 hours a week.

I have no children, but I do have a dog and a cat. I am right where I want to be at this point in my life.

Swimming is a hobby, but it is also an integral part of my life. When I am stressed out, I take out my frustrations in the pool. The pool is like an old friend. It takes all my frustrations and makes me feel much better. I have been swimming since I can remember. I started swim lessons when I was 3, and I have not stopped. I competed in college, and was practicing with a team for a while, though I prefer to swim on my own. I would like to compete, but in long distance, open water races. Just have not had a lot of time recently.

I was going every day for a while. Unfortunately, during extremely busy times, my routine gets disrupted. Tomorrow will be my first workout in 3 weeks. My typical workout distance is 3,000 yards, though when I have been out of the pool, I start around 2000 yards and work back up. I prefer to swim alone, but swimming in a group motivates me. I recently relocated to The Woodlands, and while I am a member of the team here, I have yet to go to a group practice. Before the move, I was swimming with the Belton Masters in Belton, TX.

My favorite stroke, and the one I raced in college, was the 200 free. I also like fly, though it is a struggle for me to complete even a 100 at the moment. I guess that is why I like it...it is a challenge. I like both open water and pool swimming, though for workouts, I much prefer pool.

I participate in GTD just to track my overall distance and give myself a goal. I admit, I have not turned in my mileage in a while. :) My bad. My advice is to write down a

reminder on your calendar to turn in your entries. I always forget! I still track, just forget to report.

Other than swimming, my hobbies include rugby, college sports, and cooking.