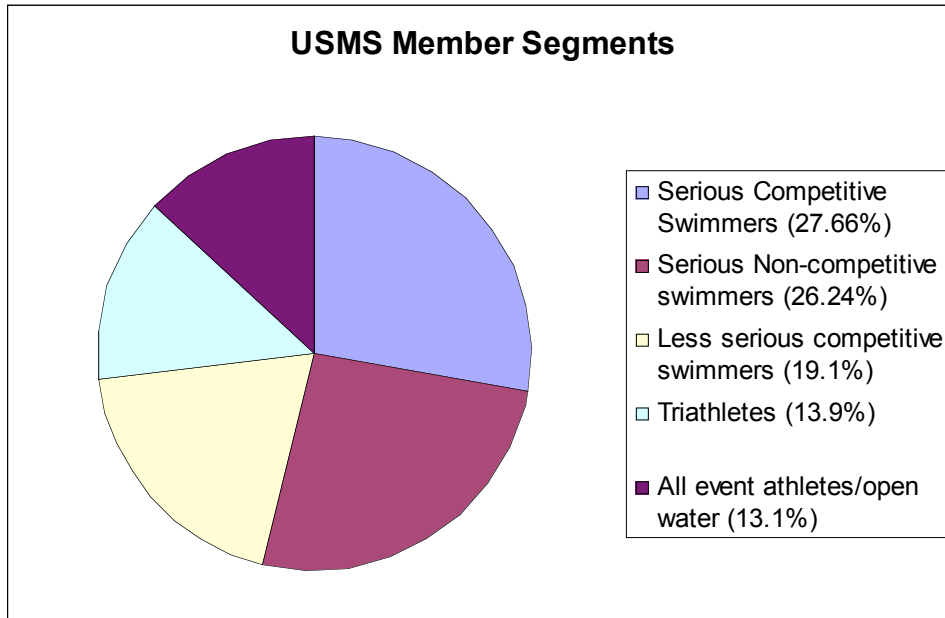


**Report on USMS Member Preferences, Attitudes  
and Demographics for Zone Representatives**

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This report is based on the segmentation of all USMS swimmers (see report on USMS Segments). There are five distinct segments within USMS and they have different preferences and concerns. For a more complete description of each of these groups the reader is referred to the report on USMS Segments.



#### USMS Segments

- Segment 1: Serious competitive swimmers
- Segment 2: Serious swimmers who are not competitive/less competitive
- Segment 3: Non-serious competitive swimmers
- Segment 4: All event participants/open water swimmers
- Segment 5: Triathletes

**Note: Values reported in this section are based on a seven point scale where 1=unimportant, 4=neutral, and 7=very important.**

**What all groups want:** This section describes the things on which all segments place high importance. If there is a group that is an exception they will be mentioned here. Following is a list of the things that all groups indicated were important to them (ratings higher than 5.0).

- Coached practices (except for less serious competitive swimmers who were 4.39)
- Stroke and technique work (except for less serious competitive swimmers who were 4.64)
- Getting in shape or maintaining fitness level
- Coaching (except less serious competitive swimmers who were 2.92)
- Improving technique (except less serious competitive swimmers who were 2.79)

**Serious competitive swimmers:** This group places very high importance on swimming in coached practices, stroke and technique work, and they joined masters swimming in order to compete in swimming meets (in pools). They place moderate importance on open water events (3.25) and on fitness events (3.17). They joined a club so that they can do sanctioned competitions and to maintain their fitness level or get in shape. They also place high importance on the social benefits of the team and on convenient practices. They place the highest importance on sprint work and stroke work in practice. On average they attend 3.2 practices per week. This group is about equal female/male.

**Serious non-competitive swimmers:** This group places very high importance on swimming in coached practices, stroke and technique work. They have low interest in swimming in swim meets but are serious about getting in shape and maintaining their fitness level. This group is very concerned about being too slow and about the competitiveness of others. On average they attend 2.9 practices per week. This group is 58.6% female.

**Less serious competitive swimmers:** This group places less importance on coaching, technique work, and attending coached practices. They like to swim in meets but they train less than other groups. They also place low importance on the social benefits of a team. On average they attend 1.9 practice per week. This group is 67.6% male.

**All event and open water swimmers:** This group places high importance on swimming in coached practices, stroke and technique work. They have higher interest in open water swimming (5.16) than in swim meets (4.37) and also have relatively high interest in fitness events (4.13) and triathlons (5.71). They also like running (5.01) and cycling (4.23) races. This group places high importance on the social aspects of the team (5.08) and cross training (4.76). On average they attend 2.9 practices per week. This group is 60.3% female.

**Triathletes:** This group places high importance coached practices, training, and fitness. They rate swimming meets (in pools) as low importance (2.4) and triathlons high (5.94). They join USMS because they have to when they join a club (5.0). They joined their club to improve their triathlon swimming (5.9). They enjoy distance sets (5.33). Initially, this group is concerned with being too slow (62%), not understanding instructions (40%), and the competitiveness of the group (32%).

## What Concerns New Swimmers

We asked members about things that they were concerned about when they first started swimming. We then asked them what they were still concerned about after they had been swimming for a month. Their answers are reported below, broken down by segment and total. This information can be used to develop introductory materials, information on team web sites, and coach or welcome committee scripts to be used when dealing with new swimmers.

The numbers that appear in each box are the **percentage** of people who said that they had that concern at that time. The segments are abbreviated at follows:

Segment 1: Serious competitive swimmers

Segment 2: Serious swimmers who are not competitive/less competitive

Segment 3: Non-serious competitive swimmers

Segment 4: All event participants/open water swimmers

Segment 5: Triathletes

<b>Concern of new swimmers at first practice</b>	<b>SEG1</b>	<b>SEG2</b>	<b>SEG3</b>	<b>SEG4</b>	<b>SEG5</b>	<b>ALL</b>
I would be too slow	56	66	39	68	62	58
About reading the clock	10	13	6	21	14	12
About understanding instructions	28	33	18	46	40	31
Wearing a suit in front of others	10	12	4	12	7	10
I couldn't do it	23	26	17	29	21	23
I would embarrass myself	20	22	15	27	23	21
People would be too competitive	31	41	21	42	32	33
Circle swimming	7	9	7	16	12	9

<b>Concern for new swimmers after 1 month</b>	<b>SEG1</b>	<b>SEG2</b>	<b>SEG3</b>	<b>SEG4</b>	<b>SEG5</b>	<b>ALL</b>
I would be too slow	14	22	13	24	24	19
About reading the clock	6	7	4	11	9	7
About understanding instructions	9	11	6	14	15	10
Wearing a suit in front of others	2	4	1	3	1	2
I couldn't do it	4	5	3	4	5	4
I would embarrass myself	3	5	3	5	2	4
People would be too competitive	6	13	9	14	7	10
Circle swimming	2	4	4	5	3	4

These tables tell us several important things. First, teams and coaches are doing a good job of helping people to overcome their fears about swimming at a coached practice. Second, more than half of all new swimmers are concerned that they are too slow. About 1/3 of all new swimmers are concerned that people will be too competitive.

### Comparison of Women and Men: Concerns about first practice

Concern for new swimmers at 1 <sup>st</sup> practice	Women	Men	ALL
I would be too slow	64	49	56
About reading the clock	17	8	12
About understanding instructions	34	28	31
Wearing a suit in front of others	10	7	8
I couldn't do it	26	18	22
I would embarrass myself	21	19	20
People would be too competitive	38	27	33
Circle swimming	10	8	9

From this table we can see that although men and women tend to be concerned about the same things, more women report concern about more things at their first practice. If we can figure out ways to reduce these fears, we can improve the likelihood that a new swimmer will feel comfortable enough to try swimming.

In addition to trying to allay concerns about a first practice. We can also try to emphasize the benefits of Masters swimming. We asked our members their beliefs about swimming and how it has affected their lives. Their strong positive feelings about the effects of swimming on their lives provide a powerful testimonial. Teams can craft messages that help people to understand the benefits of masters swimming with evidence about how masters swimmers benefit.

### How women and men rate the effect of swimming on their lives

	Wome n	Men	Combined
Swimming has made me happier	6.5	6.3	6.4
Swimming will cause me to live longer	6.2	6.0	6.1
Swimming has improved my personal relationships	5.1	4.8	4.9
Swimming has made my sex life better	4.0	4.3	4.2
Swimming gives me more energy	6.1	5.8	5.9
When I am swimming I perform better at work	5.8	5.6	5.7
Swimming makes me calmer in my daily life	6.0	5.5	5.7
Swimmers are healthier than other people	5.5	5.8	5.7
Swimming makes me a better spouse/partner	4.8	4.6	4.7
Swimming gives me more confidence socially	4.8	4.5	4.6
Swimming has helped me to overcome personal fears	4.3	3.8	4.0

Ratings in the above table are based on a seven point scale where 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree, and 4 represents the neutral point of neither agree nor disagree.

## Demographic Information

This report reflects the responses of 3521 USMS members. The response rate was 35.2%.

### Age

The average age of survey respondents is 46 years.

18-29: 9.9%	60-69: 9.8%
30-39: 9.6%	70-79: 2.8%
40-49: 32.2%	80-over: .6%
50-59: 25.1%	

### Sex:

Our subject population is 49.5% Female, 51.5% Male

### Education:

The education levels achieved are well above those of the general population. As can be seen in the table below, a remarkable 95.3 percent of respondents report having completed at least a college degree. There are also an unusually high number of people with advanced degrees.

**What is your highest level of education completed?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	High School	166	4.7	4.7	4.7
	College	1400	39.8	40.1	44.8
	Masters/Professional Degree	1584	45.0	45.3	90.1
	PhD	345	9.8	9.9	100.0
	Total	3495	99.3	100.0	
Missing	System	26	.7		
Total		3521	100.0		

### Other household information:

Most USMS members own their home (82.3%). 20.6% of members are the only adult in the household, 72.9% live in a household with two adults, and 5.9% live in a household with over 2 adults.

The average USMS household has .88 children, well below the national average, but that is expected because of the higher average age of our members. The breakdown of children in households is:

1 child	12.0%
2 children	20.8%
3 children	8.1%

Over 3 children 2.4%

**Income:**

USMS presents a highly attractive population, with almost half of members living in households with income over \$100,000. This identifies our membership as a group with unusually high discretionary income. (see Table below)

**What is your annual household income (in thousands of dollars)?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than \$35,000	232	6.6	7.0	7.0
	\$35-50,000	322	9.1	9.7	16.7
	\$50-75,000	503	14.3	15.2	31.9
	\$75-100,000	608	17.3	18.4	50.3
	Over \$100,000	1645	46.7	49.7	100.0
	Total	3310	94.0	100.0	
Missing	System	211	6.0		
Total		3521	100.0		

**Questions for CLUBS/LMSCs/ZONES to use in self assessment:**

- **What segments do we currently attract and retain?**
- **What segments would we like to attract and retain?**
- **What do we do to orient new swimmers?**
- **How does the way we orient new swimmers affect whether they return/stay?**
- **Do we engage in too much competitive rhetoric?**
- **What are we doing to help ease the concerns of new swimmers:**
  - **Before they come via literature and our web page?**
  - **At their first practice?**
  - **After their first practice?**
- **Could we be producing press releases and stories for the local press that help people overcome their fears about masters swimming?**