

Tapering, Shaving, Tech Suits?

- ***Should my swimmer participate in the shaving process?***
- ***Should my swimmer have a “fast” tech-high performance swimming suit specifically for the last meet of the the season?***

YES - It is VERY IMPORTANT TO COMPETE IN A FAST-TECH SUIT!!

A number of Arapahoe swimmers do not own a fast suit...

NOTE: Out of Breath Sports on County Line Rd will order new tech suits for our team Monday, or Tuesday at the latest.

Recommendation - Go to the store and get counsel from the reps at a swim shop or talk to an experienced veteran upperclassmen.

For most swimmers, we recommend the Arena “basic” tech swimming suit.

COST - \$80

SIZING - Typically one size smaller than the suit they normally wear

“What to look for in a High Performance Tech swimming suit”

Swim race suits that offer speed-enhancing compression should have a snug fit, but shouldn't feel so tight you can't move freely. The style of the suit should also allow movement both in and out of the water.

More information regarding fast suits below:

<https://www.competitorswim.com/swim-race-suits-4-features-to-look-for/#:~:text=Swim%20race%20suits%20that%20offer,and%20out%20of%20the%20water>

“The taper and shave in competitive swimming”

- Wearing a fast tech suit is an important part of the systematic process swimmers utilize in preparation for a championship (final) postseason meets.

The tapering process physically and mentally prepares the swimmers for their best performance!

Tapering involves progressively reducing yardage, adding speed with increased rest, over the course of 1-2 weeks.

Shaving:

1. **Only HS swimmers (male & female) should shave the day before B, A or State meets.**
2. **Night before the meet:** Shave legs, arms, shave back, shave the chest too if male.
3. Go slow, don't cut yourself.
4. The purpose is NOT necessarily just for the hydrodynamics of less hair, but for removing the top layer of skin. Swimmers literally feel smoother and 20 pounds lighter in the water. This feeling comes when the under layer of skin feels the water for the first time; it definitely and consistently results in time dropped for the vast majority of swimmers
5. We strongly recommend swimmers get a head hair; as shaggy long hair is heavy and slower when wet.
6. Shaving heads - Many swimmers shave their heads. However, Arapahoe does not enforce or expect our swimmers to shave their heads.
7. **NO HIGH SCHOOL SWIMMER SHOULD FEEL PRESSURE TO SHAVE THEIR HEAD! IN FACT, WE ASK THE PARENTS TO ENDORSE AN ATHLETES DECISION TO SHAVE THE HEAD...!**

More information on Tech Suits:

Washing Tech swimming suits

Don't wash your tech suit in the washing machine - do not dry it in the dryer. Simply rinse it out with clean water and hang to dry

ONLY wear it at the end of the end of the season Championship meets. Tech suits are limited in their effectiveness; the more you wear them the less effect they have. Wearing it before you get in end-of-season shape, wearing it before you taper, wearing it at lower level meets, **undermines it's usefulness and falsely guides swimmers to believe their time drops are due to a suit, not their training.** THE MORE YOU WEAR IT THE LESS EFFECTIVE IT IS. The more it stretches with each and every wear, reduces it's usefulness too. Tech suits may help a swimmer race "faster". Tech suits (depending on the level of technology of the suit, which of course equates to higher cost) may help swimmers achieve faster times because they:

- Use water repellent material in making the suit.
- Are seamless; fabric is heat bonded, not stitched, or if there is stitching the seams run with the flow/direction of the water.
- Compress swimmers muscles and body.

Various tech suits do all or some of the above at different grades of quality. However, the goal of all is to:

- Reduce drag.

- Improve blood/oxygen circulation, efficiency, and economy.

It's not just physical, but psychological. If a swimmer "techs" up, it's the same as "suiting up" in some professions. If a swimmer believes something makes them faster, it will. It's the equivalent of putting one's "game face" on, psychology prepping to do battle, to exert the body beyond what it's used to, but mentally overcoming the pain. Whether it's a tech suit, a favorite pair of socks, a pre-race meal, a pre-race routine, or one's "racing goggles", it's the brain telling the body to get ready, we're doing this!! So, it's not really the suit, but the brain.

Tech suits do have physical advantages over regular race suits; however, swimmers who can "psych-up" with or without a tech suit have huge advantages. Many swimmers spend the night before or whole day of the race being nervous, thinking of the race, with their adrenaline pumping and not sleeping well, being stressed. As a result, by the time they get to their race, they are tired.

Learning to manage one's fears, anxiety, and stress, and when to release it all for best performance, will do more than a tech suit.

An expensive tech suit may make a swimmer more hydro dynamic and compress muscles to improve the body's efficiency and explosive power.

There is no secret sauce, dedication and hard work wins!

Don't get me wrong, I'm not anti tech-suit, but they are expensive and most swimmers should not wear them until they get to high school. Even then, a lot of high school swimmers who wear them would be better served through pushing themselves consistently harder in practice. I've seen many occasions (probably about 50%), where the swimmer did not improve their times with a tech suit. So, it's an expensive 50/50 bet. Compare that to tapering after a swimmer truly dedicated themselves to training, there is about an 80% improvement rate at no extra monetary cost, and just plain showing up to practice consistently has a 95%+ improvement rate.

Endurance and good stroke technique will beat a tech suit every time.

There is no secret sauce, dedication and hard work wins!

Coach Richmond