Swimming Self-Assessment
Open Water Swimming at Walden Pond

Before you attempt to open water swim, you should complete this self assessment developed by experienced open water swimmers:

Open water swimming is an endurance sport requiring strong swimming skills, good physical fitness, and mature judgment. Walden Pond is a half mile long and more than 100 feet deep.

Lifeguards monitor a guarded swimming area extending from Main Beach to Red Cross Beach designated by ropes and buoys during the statewide swimming season from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Lifeguards do not monitor swimmers beyond the buoyed area or outside of the statewide swimming season.

Water quality is checked inside and outside of the guarded area during the swimming season. Before you attempt to open water swim, you should complete this self assessment developed by experienced open water swimmers:

General Ability:

- Am I a trained and confident open water swimmer?
- Am I a member of a swim team? Do I practice regularly?
- Are my skills up-to-date? Do I swim regularly throughout the year?
- Can I swim two or more laps in a conventional swimming pool without stopping?

Medical Readiness:

- Do I have medical conditions that limit my ability to swim in open water?
- Am I taking medication that might affect my heart rate, breathing, stamina, or distance perception?
- Has my medical baseline changed since my last swim?

Support:

- Does anyone know my plans to swim today and the route I plan to take?
- Am I swimming with a group or swim buddy?
- Do I have check-points with my group on our expected route?
- If I am swimming alone, do I have a swim buoy or other self-rescue device?
- In case of emergency, do I have a method to call 911?

Equipment:

- Do I have a wetsuit?
- Am I prepared for self-rescue with a swimming buoy and white cap for improved visibility?

Open Water Route:

- Am I familiar with this particular body of water (Walden Pond)?
- Do I know how deep it is and where the deepest areas are?
- Am I capable of staying on my route in fog, sun-glare, inclement weather, or "chop" on the surface?
- How far from shore will I be?
- Do I have an exit plan in case I get cramps or feel tired?

Awareness:

- What is the water temperature? Do I need a wetsuit to protect me?
- Have I checked the weather forecast for today?