

Q1: Are you currently a member of the Montgomery Ancient Mariners? (172 responses)

Yes – 69%
No – 31%

Q2: How old are you? (172 responses)

18-24 – 0%
25-34 – 5%
35-44 – 13%
45-54 – 37%
55-64 – 26%
65-74 – 13%
75+ – 5%

Q3: If you are not currently swimming with Montgomery Ancient Mariners or have started swimming elsewhere either part-time or full-time, with whom else are you currently swimming? (88 responses)

On your own – 52%
Not currently swimming – 23%
With another masters team – 20%
With an unaffiliated group – 5%

Q4: If you are swimming elsewhere (even on a part time basis), please indicate the main reason you stopped swimming with Montgomery Ancient Mariners (87 responses)

Dates/times of workouts – 44%
Geography – 16%
Makeup of workouts – 7%
Cost – 2%
People – 2%

Follow on to Q4: Why Stop Swimming with ANCM

I can swim for free - job perk
I swim on my own at Olney pool twice weekly. I tend to stop swimming and pull out of AM periodically. Will probably start again with AM. Workouts sometimes vigorous and can be hard to keep up with swimmers half my age
Started sculling (rowing)
weekday practices are too late and lanes on Sunday were too crowded
Swimming too sporadically to warrant joining but I will when I'm more consistent.
Still an Ancient Mariner....
I swim for Germs but swim w/ Mariners for the Sunday practice
Shoulder injury. Unable to swim competitively
illness
Living in Olney and working at Ft Belvoir, the times/dates and cost of workouts is a deterrent. I prefer early morning swimming (5am-6am) which MC pools won't support.
Out of town travel
No lanes for too-slow swimmers like me.
One "coach" was totally passive
Doctor order
I swim w/ ANCM on Sat's and w/ Masters at RMSC MWF -bec of dates/times of workouts
Swim in summer at Rockville
Health
Injury
Dates and/or Times of workouts AND Cost
I swim mainly long course in the summer with ANCM
a lot going on in life
We moved to Colorado.
Not enough time anymore

Q5: If you are not currently swimming anywhere, what is the main reason you stopped? (44 responses)

Injury/illness – 20%

Other – 18%

Family obligations – 16%

Work obligations – 14%

Focusing on other sports – 11%

Too busy – 9%

Not motivated – 9%

Cost – 2%

Follow on to Q5: Why Stop Swimming

There's no pool convenient to where I live.

8:30 is too late

I just rejoined but the initial reason I left the first time was the group was too "clicky" or unwelcoming... I never partook in that kind of behavior as a child, teen or young adult. I will most certainly not partake in it now.

Nevertheless there are a couple of coaches I really like and the reason I am giving this a second chance. Also in memory of a fantastic swimmer and role model...

Multiple reasons. Wish the practices were not so late at night

injury first then children

Swimming with ANCM part-time throughout the year, marathon training during another part of the year

Q6: How did you first learn about Montgomery Ancient Mariners? (171 responses)

Friend/word of mouth – 49%

Internet – 16%

Saw team practicing – 11%

Montgomery County activities list – 9%

Other – 9%

USMS Places to Swim – 7%

Q7: Rank what attracts you to a Masters Swim Team (percent of time ranked no. 1) (169 responses)

Dates and times of workouts – 40%

Geographical location – 21%

Type of workouts – 18%

Having friends on the team – 10%

Condition of pool facility – 8%

Name of team – 4%

Condition of locker rooms – 3%

Cost_{SEP} – 3%

Speed of lanes – 1%

Number of swimmers – 0%

Social activities/chance to meet outside the pool – 0%

Q8: What marketing/outreach recommendations do you have for attracting new members to the team?

Paid facebook ads to target market. Sponsor/advertise with youth Sports groups like OBGC to reach demographic of active parents

Social media.

(1) Thousands read "The Express" every weekday on the metro. It mostly features activities in the District, but some of the riders are from Montgomery County. There is often a Fitness section, which may, I believe, feature activities in the suburbs. (2) Put out flyers in the aquatic centers, to reach the solitary lap swimmers. Also in recreation and senior centers.

Updated website /social media. More hours to swim - morning swims.

Encourage more word of mouth from current swimmers. Signs at pools. Signs to recruit parents at summer kids swim meets. Offer a free drop in to try it out.

Alumni from college swimming.

Promote more social and swimming events and publish them in advance on social media, public pools and gyms.

Several free trials at workouts.

digital marketing, friends referrals

Advertise at community events

I swim with L4 - we are experiencing a similar issue. I don't have any great suggestions but if you come up with anything that works you should share so we can collectively give PVS masters swimming a boost.

Offering a few free visits before joining. Also being able to participate on an adhoc basis.

Outreach to triathlon clubs, bike stores and bike clubs, and running stores & clubs.

Triathlon clubs need lots of help with swimming, and those in MoCo are limited. MCRRC runners could be pitched some cross-training. Talk with HS/club swimming seniors--many return to the area after college.

Health benefits. swimming in a group/team makes it more encouraging to swim. Emphasize and enable swimming for all levels; there is possible perception that it is for advanced swimmers only.

Word of mouth

Incentives for team members bringing friends. Focused FaceBook pop-up ads. Some type of cooperative arrangement with a health club that has no pool.

Advertising at other local pools and gyms (colleges, YMCA's, etc.)

everyone on the team should press their friends and acquaintances. Person referrals are most effective. Also, each team member should where team gear as much as possible and definitely any time they are at a pool.

Depends on who you are trying to attract to the team. Young competitive swimmers or middle aged people who are new to swimming.

Some kind of partnership agreement with the Montgomery County Road Runners club that might encourage runners to cross train with us.

Continue keeping the website updated. I'd recommend putting on the website that you can subsidize sessions so that people aren't discouraged from joining if the team is already mid-session.

Gyms, local running and triathlon groups

More important than a marketing/outreach is being friendly/welcoming to those that show up, even if they are not regulars. Some members were very friendly but others were not.

I don't have any fresh ideas—sorry!

flyers to local summer pools

Word of mouth. NPR ad.

Try to draw in MoCo summer swimmers at neighborhood club pools. I swim alone at my club pool in the summer. In the past, I tried swimming solo at Olney SC but it is hard to effectively swim laps during lap swimming times (crowded lanes, other swimmers unaccustomed to sharing lanes, walkers, etc...). I typically stopped swimming by early October and started again in May when my local pool opened. This year, I started swimming with the AMs and it has been a good experience.

Make a meetup group thru meetup app

Reach out to local college teams for graduated members of their swimming programs, or post an ad in the school paper

Keep the email list going; Inclusive of past members so they can re-join when ready and help spread the word.

Thank you

Email & networking

shorter timed workouts; more introductory workouts for newer swimmers, those returning after taking a break, those with lots of competing priorities

Signage at the pool would be a good start. Masters swimming is almost a secret- few people even know it exists. Why not start by recruiting people who already swim at our pools?

market to parents of younger age group and high school swimmers, especially in summer leagues. Emphasize that their prior experience as a competitive swimmer is helpful, but not essential.

Word of mouth, FB

Signage and flyers at all summer pools in area - that is how I initially got back into swimming, through a short "master's training" course at my pool, Carderock.

More use of Social Media - Instagram, Facebook

Emphasize that Ancient Mariners isn't just for competitive swimmers. The workouts are great from a fitness and stress relief perspective. I swim for sanity and fitness.

Feature article in the Washington Post

Twitter. Or even linked in - most masters swimmers are professionals. For some, swimming is an important part of their identity.

advertising at pool, earlier hours for night swimming. 8:30 is not always viable.

be more active on social media

Have current members re-post to social media and send info out on their neighborhood listserves

I've been an off and on again member for 10 years or so. For me it is just my own schedule/family that has caused me to stop coming. Prior to ANCM I was on a "younger" team. I recall the practice times being earlier by an hour or more, not sure if that is a big reason or not, but 8:30pm is pretty hard. Maybe advertise more on social media? Do we have a Facebook page?

We need to attract lap swimmers who think that they are too "slow" for masters. They are not.

Outreach to team members has been good. Perhaps challenge members to bring a guest once a quarter or something to that effect.

More of a social media presence

I think your practices cost too much. Also when I've gone to the closest facility - MLK - the swimmers are not friendly at all. Turned me off completely but I would still like to compete so have stayed on the team. That likely will change

Sponsoring swim events that bring awareness of the team to new audiences.

More emphasis on Master's Swimming by MoCo Parks and Rec. on their social media outlets and The Guide, athleisure wear that promotes our team, presence at community events, local farmer's markets, and running events

Market to leisure swimmers at pool - for exercise, competition, group activities, etc.

I think better coaching involvement during workouts is more important. This question unfortunately is not in the survey. Most of the times, coach writes down (or not even that) the workout, and walks away. Some tip here and there would be of benefit. Autopilot is not helping. With all the costs added together (USMS and local membership, and swim costs), the benefit to cost ratio is low. I feel one benefit more reading swim books and practice elsewhere.

This is a tough one. Social media blitz is likely the best approach. It is less costly and circulation of printed material is increasingly low today.

Having members reach out to the people they know

Ask us to contact friends

Maybe signs in locker rooms and at pools to attract unaffiliated swimmers, a good website, presence at meets and practices. Advertising at gyms and on lists of group workout activities.

Please have a portion of the program serve slower swimmers. It is very difficult to keep attending when you know you are "in the way" of the rest of the lane.

Social media; don't know if things like trial sessions are offered? (idea to attract those who want to try it out without signing up); t-shirts; caps; swag with branding; if there are options to partner with area gyms or pools where people are members, where it would enable them to get discount on registration (it's affordable but the concept here is partnering with other places to get people to join). Also, question, are people registering through Montgomery County Recreation but somehow not joining Masters/MCAM?

offering free swim clinics for members; having a weekday early morning practice or early evening practice

Push word of mouth...encourage friends to join

Morning workouts

There's no active outreach seen at the moment. Have a welcoming committee for new members so others feel welcome.

Not sure

no idea

Keep the website up to date as much as possible, make sure relevant google search terms send users there.

Brochure at front desk of pool. E-mail to pool pass owners. Encourage less skilled swimmers to join. New swimmers should be welcomed/introduced to all.

Focus on social connections because the team is strong on that front. I'm preferring swimming earlier and for less money, so I probably won't be back unless those features change. \$4 or \$5 for rec swim vs. \$15 per masters swim.

Free sessions for newbies. More clinics and focus on improving strokes.

Word of mouth; especially making clear to prospective members that "Masters" does not mean that you have to be a former college (or even high school) swimmer to participate

I think the lanes are full enough. I like it less when there are more people.

The longtime members, especially at the more crowded locations did not make newcomers feel very welcome.

There are quite a few triathletes in the area who need/want to improve their swimming. Maybe reaching out to teams and tri coaches?

Connecting with local Tri groups.

Maybe trying posting practices on MeetUp and in swim stores. Maybe getting RMSC to email parents of the kids that swim there.

Recruit lap swimmers at local pools. Link up with adult swimming instructors to have them introduce advanced students to our team

Social media and clinics for nonmembers

Ask each person to bring a friend at the start of each registration period.

market at local open water swims..that's where I met Tom!

Ask team members to bring a friend. Have local neighborhood pools post announcements about Masters Swimming on the bulletin board at the end of the season for people to keep swimming throughout the year. Run a clinic at these local pools to encourage interest in Masters Swimming.

I first learned about the team when I was 22. My former RMSC coach told me about the program. Do age group coaches know about masters swimming now, and do they consider referring their former swimmers to us?

meet-up or facebook group

referrals from current team members; maybe some google ad word buys on healthy start to new year

You would get more of a triathlete crowd if you advertised at local Tri clubs.

Highlight social life/friends / Potential to change life

neighborhood listservs flyers at pool Montgomery County Recreation

Open House, Flyers at local pools

Several people I've spoken to about joining the team indicated the practices are too late. The time is OK for me but wondering if there should be some practices that are earlier?

Notice for MCSL summer pools, more signs at KSAC, cross training opportunity for athletes

Run workshops, some for stroke technique, some for triathlon, some for open water, one on turns, etc. Bring in an expert to teach offer to members and the public

Changing name from "Ancient Mariners" may attract a younger crowd. Advertising a free trial/drop-in session might incentivize people new to masters swimming to check out the team and see the range of abilities.

Advertisements for masters swimming are often buried in general Montgomery County emails/bulletins; thus, have an exclusive ad for the team could increase awareness

Advertise in MCSL swim league booklets/website

I'd be curious about the average age of members. It seems like the majority is older, and that the club is not attracting new younger members.

Internet links. Placement of billboards at pool.

recommend price for number of swims - not number of days per week, gives people flexibility to pay for what they use

outreach to Tri Clubs

sending invitations to members on list servers. For example, reach out to Kinetic multi sports and see if we can get/purchase/sponsor/ a list of folks who do triathlons with them that live locally and need a swimming home?

None really. Maybe look at attracting MCSL parents? I was an MCSL swimmer in ancient times and the mom of 4 swimmers.

Post signs at the aquatic centers where we swim. Make sure our website ranks high when people try web searches for masters swimming in DC area.

Twitter and Facebook. We don't use them at all, really. Instagram is a good one as it can be programed to reach nearby targets.

Difficult to say, not that I'm retiring I may have more time for regular workouts. I've registered through USMS as a club member, but I'm not actively a paid member.

On the committee:-)

this is a huge question and given that you undoubtedly want people under 40, i.e. 20 years younger than me, I am probably not qualified. But.... I do note that I recently briefly inquired as to the status of DCRP, a team with which I was quite active 20+ years ago and which was very easy to join at the time. Now, to my surprise, the web site says that they're closed to new members with a long wait list! That means there is significant un-met demand. I wonder if we can tap into that demand. In fact, maybe ask someone at DCRP if we can have their wait list. Or get them to advertise us on their web site ... i.e. "we're filled now, but ANCM is open to new members" etc etc.

Flyers or bulletin board at each facility (if not used already) to advertise to parents bringing their kids to the pool. Also, is there a list of contacts for the outdoor pools in the region - could ask them to post a flyer to share with their members. For the Potomac Valley region - get in touch with aquatic clubs (swimming, water polo, under water hockey) at local universities to share information with their members.

Earlier weekly workouts

social media

Update the website and add Social media

ANCM swims in MoCo, which is already in the suburbs. Most younger swimmers swim on teams closer to DC and Arlington.

Go on social media publicizing club events, regional competitions, contact local YMCA's, Maryland Senior Olympic Commission, and Montgomery County Recreation Department.

Q9: Do you think that the name Montgomery Ancient Mariners discourages younger swimmers from joining? (165 responses)

No – 69%

Yes – 31%

Ages of those who answered yes: (51 responses)

18-24 – 0%

25-34 – 6%

35-44 – 18%

45-54 – 35%

55-64 – 29%

65-74 – 10%

75+ – 2%

Q10: If you are not currently swimming with the Montgomery Ancient Mariners, what would entice you to come back?

More convenient practice times! Like a 10 am workout on Sunday. I find 8 am a little too early and can't make any practice times during the week. I think the team name is hilarious but you are right to ask if it might be offputting for younger folks.

Less crowded lanes on Saturday morning. I prefer morning workouts

I live in Ocean City half the year and Stuart, Florida the other half. Geography is the biggest reason I no longer swim with MAM.

Currently I am living in Colombia, South America.

variable cost to schedule arrangement; dates and times

Swimming!

I'm coming back this spring! :))

If i move into the neighborhood

I have no issues with ancient mariners... I swim with friends and have a coach I like at L4 so I will stay Ability to join practices on an adhoc basis. I find it difficult to sign up for a full season at this time.

swimming

mustering the courage to go back in for 8:30 - 9 pm workouts, especially in the winter

Love Ancient Mariners!

I am planning on coming back

It would be great if Montgomery County went to a punch card system. I do not like how you pay in advance for an entire season and then you end up paying for days you cannot attend and it is expensive. Therefore it would be best to have a punch card for the whole year.

One or two more of me to help with the work load.

I may come back once my daughter is a little older

currently swimming

morning practice options

If I swam regularly then I would rejoin. I stopped swimming after a shoulder issue a couple years ago and have recently been trying to gingerly get back in the pool.

More friends on team

getting recovered from illness

lower prices better coaching ; keep the racing but make it a social thing. IOW do it like this. Have people join MoCo pools. Get a year membership. Then match people up with other members. Then it becomes more fun and social. You still come together for the swim meets though. We are still a team but we practice on our own. Send out ideAs and coaching videos etc.

I took some time off when I got sick in October....I'll be back soon.....

I was with NIH, now in California. Still with USMS so can visit clubs. I have wished to visit MAC and swim together last year but my email wasn't returned so I didn't come. I still have friends in the Bethesda and Rockville area. I remember Dorothy, Tom, Joannie Shen

Schedule & location & time tradeoff v work hours

having to worry less about whether I can fit in and complete the work outs

I'm still swimming with the Ancient Mariners.

I LOVE the Sunday practice! I believe it's the only 2 hour practice around. Thank you!!

A program that lasts a few weeks to get back into swimming shape before going straight to the workouts.

if i got interested in swimming again i would give it a go.

Morning workouts

Earlier hours on weeknights would be helpful. 8:30-10pm is late!

Currently swimming w/ ancsm

I am swimming but the #1 challenge/complaint is the practice times. The KSAC/Bethesda weekday times start too late at night and we need a Saturday morning practice at KSAC. Would much rather have an hour on Sat. and an hour on Sunday at KSAC than two hours on Sunday. Maybe lanes wouldn't be so crowded on Sunday then too. Weekday early morning options might be good too - that's something other teams in the area offer.

Completion of rehab from 2 shoulder surgeries : would then like to come back!

Earlier hours during the week . . . probably difficult due to all the other activities at the center.

If it is free. As I swim for free at Rockville since I coach RMSC there.

Reduced cost; friendlier swimmers.

I still am. I have been sick with bronchitis for the past few weeks and then I was out of town. The name may be a deterrent for younger swimmer... Not sure though. I wasn't crazy about it, but got over it because it met my needs in so many other ways. I am enjoying being a part of a team again after over 30 years.

I love swimming with the Mariners!

A more diligent coaching staff, who pay some attention to each individual, and can offer some advice during or after workouts. Understandably this is not a private coaching environment, but for years, it is at the other extreme: no input, and workouts seem unplanned with progression, or need. Just off the cuff whatever. It is not a good use of time and money.

Better pricing and more disciplined workout assignments. When I last swam with Ancient Mariners, there were no set interval targets, just do these laps at easy, moderate or fast pace. I like more structured workouts for speed and stamina lane assignments. That said, my schedule has freed up enough that I am considering rejoining Ancient Mariners at least once a week and for tournaments. (I currently swim 3 times a week at Ft Belvoir before work). Also, the club was a bit clickish. Despite being one faster if not fastest for my age group, as a relative new comer, I was never considered for relays. The relays always went to the same people as prior years--but that was around 2012. Things I may have changed. I think relays are open to all now. I still keep track of Mariners' activities. Overall, I really enjoyed my time with Ancient Mariners. I will likely rejoin for 2019 independent of any changes from this survey.

Workouts on weekdays in the early morning. I can't make the practices in the evenings on weekdays or on Sunday morning.

I will when my kids get older

I would love to swim more with the team, my schedule just makes it very hard right now. I am still affiliated with the team but I can't get to many workouts.

See previous response. Skew some portion towards the less-fit.