

How to mix Maxim for a Channel Swim

By Nick Adams

I must first start with a disclaimer. There are many ways to prepare your maxim for your Channel swim, this is just my way. Feel free to try it if you want to.

STEP 1

Acquire three 2 litre plastic drinks bottles. I personally like to use Diet Coke bottles, as I am addicted to the stuff!



STEP 2

Place the bottles in the airing cupboard for at least 24 hours. Leave them upside down with their tops off. This completely dries the inside of the bottles so that when you leave dry maxim powder in the bottle it doesn't form horrible hard lumps.



STEP 3

Get yourself a funnel. Mine was £1 from Tesco, but I think it was intended for use with cars not food products! Take this onto the boat with you too.



STEP 4

Acquire the maxim. I get mine off Freda on the beach, or through www.wiggle.com
You will need two types:

Maxim Original which you use most of the time, and for which these instructions are aimed, get at least 2 x 2kg tubs for your swim.



Maxim Hypotonic which you use sparingly on a swim and mix up in a similar manner but at a different concentration which is outlined on the tub (I prefer the iced tea flavour).



STEP 5

Go outside and add the maxim powder to the dry bottle. This is a messy process, and I hate doing it. Don't worry if the odd scoop contains more or less than is intended, it evens itself out in the end, and it will not ruin your swim!

For a 2-litre bottle add 28 scoops of Maxim powder.

For those of you that are weaker in the mathematics department, here are the numbers of scoops for different sized bottles:

2-litre bottle	28 scoops
1.5-litre bottle	21 scoops
1-litre bottle	14 scoops
0.5-litre bottle	7 scoops

This might sound like a lot of Maxim, but we are making up double-strength Maxim.



STEP 6

This is what the finished product will look like. Put the cap on firmly and wash the outside of the bottle, as Maxim powder that lands on the bottle will inevitably get wet, sticky and grim.



STEP 7

When you get the call up that you are swimming the next morning you need to add water and juice to the prepared bottles. You will find it hard to dissolve all the maxim powder into water, but persevere and keep shaking at regular intervals. **DO NOT** fill the bottle to the top with water, fill to the level shown in the photo below.

Eventually you will manage to get to go clear, see on the right.



STEP 8

Eventually you will manage to get the maxim dissolved, and the liquid will become clear, well done. You now need to add in you flavouring. Don't forget this is double-strength so you need to add more than you would to a normal drink you are preparing. I personally love summer fruits in my maxim, the cheaper the brand the better.

The finished product is on the right below.



Make sure you take your tub of maxim with you on the boat if stronger feeds are required, or you run out of double-strength maxim.

STEP 9

Now this instruction manual should be over, but many people ask how to feed with this stuff on the day of the swim, so here are some tips to get it into you.

If the weather is not too rough, a cup of the stuff can be passed over to you by hand.

Acquire a few cheap plastic beakers that hold roughly 300 ml of liquid. Attach a line of at least 15m in length to it by first drilling a small hole in the top of the cup.

When it's feeding time, fill up the cup to the level in the photo below with your double-strength maxim:



If you fill it too much the feed will end up being too cold. Fill it too little, the feed will be too hot and not have enough maxim in it.

STEP 10

Now you need to add the boiling water to the cup. I recommend that you have one of the [3.5-litre pump action thermoses](#) below on deck during your swim. You can even get a [5-litre version](#)!! This can be secured to the boat with the bungee cords also pictured below.

The benefits of this setup are:

- 1) Your support team can make you feeds without having to go below deck where they might become seasick, and cannot keep looking at you.
- 2) One person can make up feeds easily, whereas messing around with thermoses that have lids usually ends in mess!
- 3) You might only have to boil the kettle using the gas stove once during the swim. This is not a fun task on a rolling boat.
- 4) Feeds can be made up very quickly, so if the swimmer spills the first drink, or seawater gets in the cup, another can be produced in seconds.



If you feel the swimmer needs a 'special' monster feed you can chuck in another scoop of maxim powder at this stage.

STEP 11

If it is rough during the swim, and the swimmer is struggling to feed via the cup method, use 500ml bottles attached to the same long length of line.

Do not fill the 500ml bottle to the top, as it will be too much liquid for the feed. After adding the double-strength maxim (using Tesco funnel) and hot water it should be a half to two thirds full. This leaves air at the top of the bottle which enables the swimmer to squeeze the bottle and force out the liquid at a greater rate.

I have tested various makes of bottle, and have found that [HIGHLAND SPRING](#) bottles have the greatest flow rate of any 500ml water bottle sold in the major UK supermarkets.



LAST MINUTE TIPS

- A quick feed is a good feed; keep them under ten seconds if possible
- It's a feed not a rest
- Try to keep your body horizontal in the water at a feed, as it takes time to drop the body to a vertical position and longer to get back to horizontal, this also requires a breaststroke leg kick usually which can induce a cramp in some swimmers
- If you feel hungry and want to eat, EAT
- Give the swimmer painkillers in a cup for them to glug/swallow, as the hands will not be working properly and will be wet. You can quickly follow up with another cup of liquid if they need it to swallow the pills.