



[39] Do a long swim in your favourite lake

»» It was an August afternoon with barely a ripple on the lake. Perfect. I had always wanted to swim to my cousins' cottage, a mere half hour from our dock. But that's as the canoe glides, out past a rocky point, jogging slightly to the east, then straight across open water. To swim would mean following a meandering course along the jagged shoreline of pink Kawartha granite. I pegged the distance at two clicks, give or take.

My partner Kim assigned herself the task of spotter aboard our leaky canoe, and I was off. It took a few minutes to get settled into my pace, but then I began to enjoy myself. Immensely. This was different than swimming the obligatory 80 lengths at the Y twice a week. For one thing, I wasn't churning through the wake of a hirsute 50-year-old man in a Speedo. So the view was much improved. With no wall to launch from, I felt a satisfying burn in my shoulders more quickly—a real workout. And I loved the sense of freedom, not hemmed in by those follow-the-rules lines on the bottom of a pool.

With more than a third of the way to go, I felt as though I had swum the equivalent of 300 lengths behind Mr. Speedo, but there was no stopping now. I could make out someone watching from my cousins' dock. My pride was on the line. In the last 500 yards, I dug in for a power crawl and then touched down in triumph. My cousin Penny declared me nuts and brought me a towel. But I knew then that this was one for the books. Literally. Penny keeps a log of such things, and that would always be the day I swam across the lake. Though Penny still can't understand why.

—Kate Barker