Swimmers get food and drink in a plastic bottle using a pole from the pilot boat. Channel swimmers can only wear standard swimming costumes: wetsuits are not allowed. To help stay warm, however, they use “Channel grease”, a 50:50 mixture of lanolin and petroleum jelly, which provides an extra layer of fat and, hopefully, keeps sea life away too. Bradshaw isn’t afraid of the elements, but she is afraid of one thing: jellyfish! In summer there can sometimes be thousands of these creatures in the water, some of them giving nasty stings. Sometimes swimmers encounter porpoises and seals.

STAY POSITIVE
What makes a successful Channel swimmer? “You need to be able to stand cold water,” says Bradshaw. “And you need to have a very positive mindset: this is most important. I know Olympic swimmers who have tried the Channel and not made it.” It is also important to stay relaxed, but not too relaxed: “I know people that have swum overnight, and they’ve actually gone to sleep and still been swimming!”

CHANNEL FACTS
• The English Channel separates southern England from northern France, and joins the North Sea to the Atlantic
• The Channel is 560 km long and varies in width from 240 km at its widest to 34 km at the Strait of Dover
• Summer water temperatures average around 15-18°C, with 10.6-13.9°C at night
• The first recorded, unassisted Channel swim was made by Englishman Captain Matthew Webb in August 1875. He took 21 hours and 45 minutes to complete the crossing
• The fastest Channel swim was made in just 6 hours 57 minutes by the Bulgarian swimmer Peter Stoychev in August 2007
• British swimmer Alison Streeter has completed 43 Channel swims to date and holds the record for the only three-way Channel swim, which took her an incredible 34 hours 44 minutes

www.getset4success.co.uk
www.channelswimmingassociation.com
Watch Julie Bradshaw in action at www.youtube.com/user/getset4success