

8 WAYS TO MAKE THIS YOUR BEST SWIMMING YEAR YET

August 31, 2016

It's 2016, time to step it up. Here are eight ways to make this your best year yet.

1. WARM-UP LIKE A BOSS EVERY DAY.

When you get your [core](#) warmed up, and your joints and muscles loosened up there really is no better feeling. One word of caution here, you will feel so amazing when you dive into the water, having been pre-pre-warmed up, that your body will want to fly. Oh, and warming up tends to lead to less injuries, which is a nice little side bonus.

2. UNSUCK AT SOMETHING.

We all have parts of our swimming that we resist doing because we feel like we aren't as good at it. Whether it is butterfly, breaststroke kick, streamlining when you are tired, decide to tackle that suckiness with everything you got this year. There are fewer things more rewarding than mastering (or at least significantly improving) something you previously felt inferior at.

3. CHALLENGE YOURSELF ON THE REGULAR.

One of the best parts about swimming and sport is the ever-growing change of what we believe ourselves to be capable of. "10x100 on 1:10? No way." And yet it's barely two weeks later and you are doing them on 1:05.

4. SHARE YOUR GOALS, ERR, "STUFFS" WITH YOUR COACH.

Phelps wouldn't have gotten where he was without Bowman, so don't feel that you need to keep your goals to yourself. Our goals can be a weighty burden, so unload yourself a little bit and expound on your ambitions for the year with your coach.

5. BE PROACTIVE ABOUT STAYING HEALTHY.

You've probably noticed this before... After a sequence of tough workouts you feel a faint tickle in the back of your throat while your nose begins to go for a little jog. After a solid night of rest, however, you are back to normal, having narrowly dodged the cold/flu/SARS.

If your hunch was that you were on the breach of getting sick because you're training your posterior off, you are correct. Megan Fischer-Colbrie wrote [a good blog post over at Bridge Athletic](#) which outlines the increased susceptibility high performance athletes face to illness when training over-time.

It can be challenging with all the commitments athletes have with school, swimming and what little of a social existence they have to properly take care of themselves. Generally swimmers begin cutting corners with things like sleep and diet when stressed or over-trained, putting them in a prime position to get sickie. Stay ahead of the sniffles by clocking in for a solid night of rest each night and fueling yourself properly.

6. BREAK DOWN WHAT IT IS GOING TO TAKE FOR YOU TO SWIM FASTER THIS YEAR.

What are you specifically going to have to do to achieve your goal? Writing down "work hard" is a step in the right direction, but ultimately, what does that mean? It's way too vague and open to endless number of interpretations.

Split down your goal into meaningful, actionable chunks. "I need to improve my start by XYZ seconds. Here is what I am going to do to accomplish this: Do 10 timed dives at the end of practice on Monday and Wednesday, improve my jumping ability by XYZ, etc."

7. BE AN AWESOME TEAMMATE.

I feel the need to point out that being a rad teammate isn't about being overly peppy and cheery all the time. In fact, you will find forcing that type of attitude will have the opposite desired effect. Make your support authentic, without being overbearing. A simple, "Let's do this" is more effective than ten minutes of "You can do it, Bob! You can do it, Tiff! Come on guys only nine more sets..."

8. SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE WITH THE YOUNGSTERS.

No matter where you are at with your swimming, there is someone that looks up to you.

There will always be kids that look up to you regardless of where you are in the swimming circle-of-life, so use your knowledge and experience and share it!