



NORTH CAROLINA SWIMMING

Athlete to Athlete Quarterly Winter 2016

North Carolina Swimmers,

We are all in the midst of holiday training and the break that your school friends are enjoying may not feel very relaxing to you. Holiday training is a vital aspect of the short course season but it can seem never-ending. Practices get harder and more frequent and it is often difficult to stay focused on a single practice or set when there is so much more coming. Like many of you, I have been through quite a few holiday training cycles so I thought I would share my ideas on how to make it both a productive and positive experience.

1. Understand the purpose

Often if the practices are long or your body is so broken down, it is hard to remember why the amped up holiday training is a thing. It helps me to think about long-term goals, but also to focus on practice goals to stay accountable. It all comes down to working hard, and being willing to give your best effort every day will give a sense of purpose to each practice.

2. More importantly, understand your purpose

Something that really helps me push myself is finding what I want to prove. When I define the characteristics I want to pursue as a person, it gives me the motivation to embody those daily. For example, one of the values I work towards is trusting myself. Remembering this during swimming gives me a setting to practice the skill to become a better person and swimmer. Trusting myself in the water allows me to have faith in the hard work we all put in. Finding yourself is a big feat, but defining a few key values you choose to live by can improve your attitude and practice habits.

3. Build on the good, learn and let go of the bad

You are going to have good and bad practices, but thinking positively after a good one can really get the ball rolling to have a string of great training. Unfortunately, a bad practice can also spiral into consecutive sub-par performances. However, it is important to understand that the bad practice was somewhere around 2 hours of your incredible, exciting, and long life. Learn what you can do better and then move on! You always have the power to control how you respond to adversity.



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4. Use positive reinforcement with your teammates
Building up your teammates can really help excite the team during practice. And, there is nothing better than the feeling of someone recognizing how hard you are working. It can be awkward starting out, but positivity is a key to a successful team atmosphere. I'm sure every swimmer has felt it- meets are especially fun when your team is killing it! The same can go for practice every day, but you have to be the one to take the initiative if you want that to happen! Everyone can be a great leader and a great follower.
5. Appreciate and take advantage of any off time
This time of the year is about family. Take the time that you are given off to truly relax and have fun! A lot of our time is devoted to swimming, so use the time that isn't to show your family how much you appreciate them. Swimming, although important, is a temporary thing in life while family is forever. And (most importantly) eat some good food!!
6. Be thankful
This is pretty self-explanatory, but be thankful for everyone and everything in your life! Coaches, parents, teammates, and many people beyond the swimming world make our lives so incredible. Be thankful that swimming has given you this life and do your best to give back!

I hope you all find at least one thing to take away from this newsletter! If you have any questions or would like someone to listen to your thoughts you can email me at seniorathleterep@ncswim.org and I would love to talk. From an athlete to other athletes, I hope you all have a wonderful holiday and great training!

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