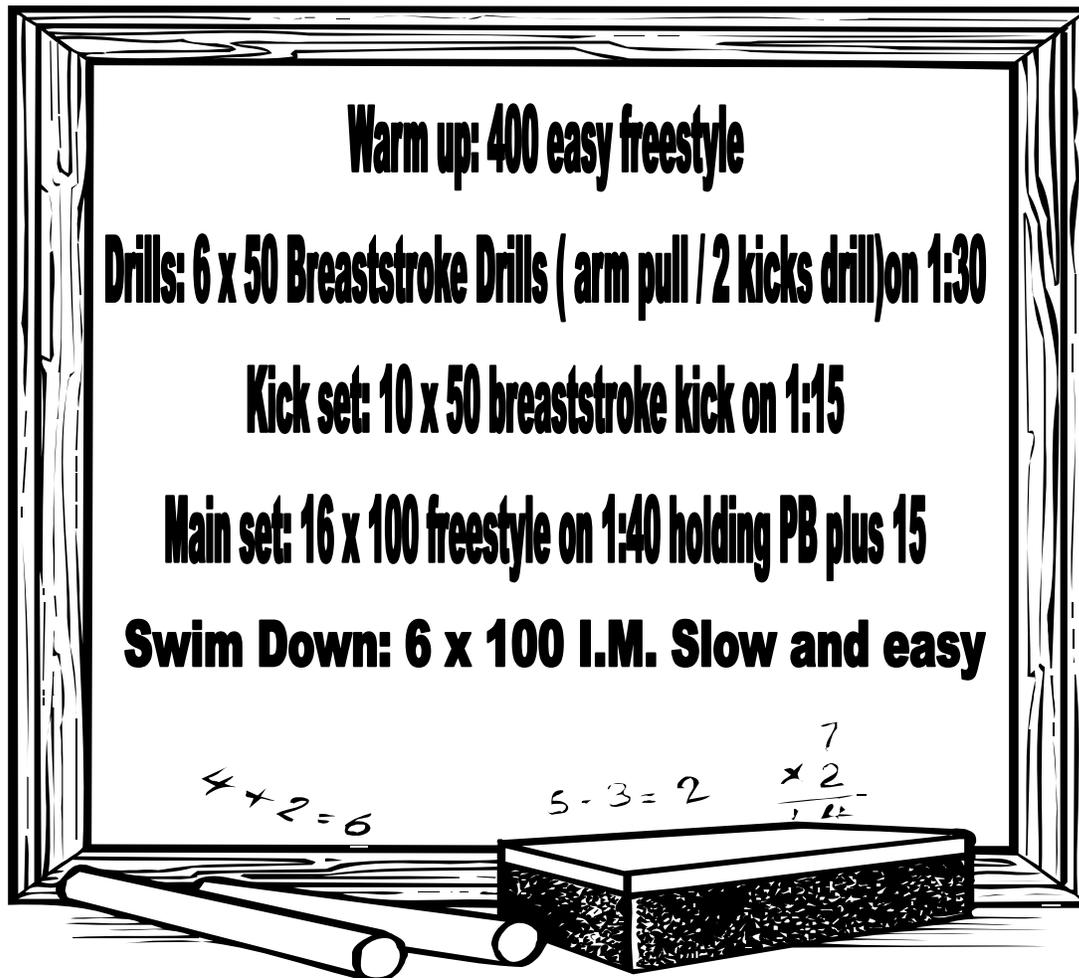


The Difference is YOU

By Wayne Goldsmith

OK. It's 5:00 a.m. It's still dark. You would probably rather be home in bed asleep. Your coach has come in as enthusiastic and motivated as ever and has written up this workout on the whiteboard:



The question is now, what do you do next?

The obvious answer is 400 Freestyle, 6 x 50 breaststroke drills etc, etc. **Everyone** one in your team will be doing that.

The Difference is YOU

The question really is, what will you do that is better, faster and smarter than everyone else to give you the winning edge? What will you do in this session that will make you a better athlete?

If you want to be the best swimmer in your club, your state, Australia or the World, you must be the best swimmer in your **LANE** first.

You must set yourself a higher standard than anyone else in your lane is prepared to. You must set a higher standard and more challenging goals than even your coach thinks possible. Successful swimmers set themselves tougher goals than anyone else could possibly set for them.

The difference between good swimmers, very good swimmers and great swimmers is very often their approach to their training. Whilst the workout itself is important, the real secret to success is in how you do the workout. The benefit you gain from the workout is totally dependent on your attitude and approach to the your training program.

How would three swimmers (a good, a very good and a great swimmer) approach our workout?

WORKOUT ACTIVITY	GOOD SWIMMER	VERY GOOD SWIMMER	GREAT SWIMMER
Warm up 400 easy free	Swim slow easy freestyle	Swim slow easy freestyle, making sure not to breathe inside the flags and to streamline off every turn	Swim slow easy freestyle, making sure not to breathe inside the flags and to streamline off every turn, not breathing on the first or last strokes and counting strokes trying to swim each lap with one less stroke than the one before
Drills 6 x 50 on 1:30	Do the drills	Do the drills correctly	Do the drills correctly, aiming to do the minimum number of pulls and kicks each lap, developing great distance per kick and trying to hold an exact pace with a full underwater pull out each 50.
Kick 10 x 50 on 1:15	Do the kick set	Do the kick set fast and hard with strong, powerful kicks	Do the kick set fast and hard with strong, powerful kicks, trying to kick each 50 as close as possible to their 50 metre PB swim time with as few kicks as possible
16 x 100 on 1:40 holding PB plus 15 seconds	Do 16 x 100 on 1:40 holding PB plus 15 seconds	Do 16 x 100 on 1:40 holding PB plus 15 seconds, trying to streamline out of each turn.	Do 16 x 100 on 1:40 holding PB plus 15 seconds, aiming to hold an exact pace, or experimenting with pacing strategies like negative splitting. They may also consider trying to minimise strokes and breaths, whilst holding an exact pace and streamlining a minimum of 10 metres off every turn.
Swim Down 6 x 100 IM	Swim down 600 metres	Swim down 600 metres aiming to do good turns	Swim down 600 metres aiming to do good turns and practicing to improve on any areas of weakness in their worst stroke.

The good swimmer does the training program: does what the coach has asked.

The Difference is YOU

The very good swimmer also does the training program, does what the coach asked AND sets a few personal goals along the way to get a little more out of the workout.

The great swimmer does the same program, does what the coach asks, and then demands an uncompromising level of excellence from themselves to get the maximum benefit from the workout. The great swimmer sees the workout as an opportunity to improve and to get the most out of their efforts.

One of the biggest steps a swimmer must make in their development is the step from age group swimming to open level competition. One of the biggest changes that a swimmer needs to make in order to take this step is in the mental approach to their workouts.

Most coaches set their workouts for the average level of swimmer in their team. The great swimmers understand this and set a personal standard that is well above average.

“Little kids” see workouts very simply. How do I do the minimum amount of work I can get away with?

“Big kids” (those who are trying to take the step from age to open level competition) see the workout activities and then aim to set themselves a standard well in excess of the level of the workout.

They do more than the coach asks. They do the little things well. They aim for maximum distance per stroke, minimum number of breaths, excellent turns and outstanding skills.

Ask yourself, am I a “**big kid**” or a “**little kid**” in a “**big kid’s**” body?

Size and age has little to do with being a senior swimmer. Being a senior swimmer means training and racing with a senior swimmer’s attitude. You can be 12 years of age and think like a senior swimmer or 22 years of age and think like a junior swimmer.

You must “train your brain” in the same way that you train your body. You train your body for speed, for power, for strength and for technical excellence to help you achieve your best. Train your brain to do the same.

This is the difference. The difference is **you**.

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Authors: Wayne Goldsmith

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