

Why do I swim? Because my mom makes me, well that would have been my answer five years ago. However, over the last several years, my perspective has changed. Thanks to my coaches and amazing teammates I have grown to love this once forced sport.

Two years ago, the coaches on my team started emphasizing our technique. After plateauing for a year or two, I knew I needed to change something, and this was the key. We worked on hand position, angle of entry, and pull position. My team drilled and drilled, and it paid off; my times began to drop again, slowly, but surely. I have grown to love technique work, and the mental workout it provides alongside the physical workout.

I started setting goals, pushing myself in practice and in competition to achieve goal times which would qualify me for the next meet. This gave me a future in swimming, a reason to swim. These goals motivate me- even on the tough days- to jump into the pool, get wet, and do my best. I pushed to make Great Alaska Open times, and to Region XII in Oregon. Now I am swimming with my focus toward Northwest Age Group Regionals 2016.

From swimming in home and away meets, I have had the privilege of meeting a lot of really cool people. I have met swimmers from all over the state, and some from other states. I have visited most of the pools in Alaska; it has been a great way to connect with people and see Alaska. The swimming community is amazing and has so many talented people in it that I cannot even begin to name them. Some of these swimmers have become my good friends.

Without swimming, I would be a different person than I am today. I have not only developed a life-long skill and enjoyed a fun sport, but I have learned to set goals, work hard, overcome obstacles, and persevere. People from the swimming community have impacted not only my swimming, but also my life. The tools I learned in the pool will see me through college,

and beyond. So, ask me again. Why do I swim? I swim because I love the atmosphere, the opportunities, and the sport.