



## Ten Powerful Quotes for Swimmers

### **1. The road to success is paved with failure.**

*Do not fear mistakes. You will know failure. Continue to reach out.*  
**Benjamin Franklin**

We tend to view failure and mistakes as fatal, which is a mistake in itself. Failure is a guide, a navigational beacon that shows us what works, what doesn't, where we are strong, and where we are weak. Instead of living out your career as an athlete who vows to steer clear of failure at all costs, realize that failure is an essential part of your eventual success.

As a swimmer, if you aren't failing at some point, you aren't chasing the outer reaches of your talent and abilities. Do not fear coming up short, or failing – you will not find a better teacher than failure and adversity. Don't allow the fear of failure be the reason that you don't chase full-fledged after your dreams.

Learn from your struggles, and apply the lessons to your goals moving forward.

### **2. Embrace hard work.**

*Wins and losses come a dime a dozen. But effort, nobody can judge effort. Because effort is between you and you. Effort ain't got nothing to do with nobody else.*  
**Ray Lewis**

Put "hard" and "work" next to each other and you don't exactly get a sultry catchphrase for a day-and-age that expects instant results. For most the image that comes to mind is pain and struggle. There is no dispute that embracing hard work results in both, but it also brings with it a swath of benefits.

Embracing hard work gives you much more than just results – which are reason enough in itself – but it also acts as a type of release, freeing your mind and soul as you devote yourself utterly to the task at hand. When we bury ourselves into our work or our training, we free ourselves from the shackles of whatever is going on in our lives.

At the end of the day, there is no avoiding the hard work that comes with wanting to be successful. Don't be afraid to do work – instead of shying away from it, or trying to avoid it, learn to love the hard work.

### **3. Meet adversity with a steady grin.**

*The robbed that smiles, steals something from the thief.*  
**William Shakespeare, Othello**

You will encounter adversity and resistance on a daily basis on your trek towards achieving greatness, whether it is in the pool, in the books, and even in your personal relationships. That friction is simply an opportunity to take a step forward. Growth doesn't come seamlessly or without grinding; rather it appears in spurts, groans and fits.

When adversity smiles at you, pick yourself up, strap up, and smile right back.

### **4. Enjoy the moment.**

*Forever is composed of nows.*  
**Emily Dickinson**

With each practice you are given an opportunity to challenge, surprise and improve yourself. Take advantage of these opportunities and make the most of them. One day you will look fondly back on the Hell Weeks, the camaraderie, the long-course morning workouts, and feel a deep, warm sense of nostalgia.

Embrace them while they last.

### **5. You are far tougher than you realize.**

*Promise me you'll always remember: You're braver than you believe, and stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think.*  
**A.A. Milne**

When unchecked, negative self-talk can cripple our ability to chase our goals before we even have a chance to pursue them. Either we believe ourselves to be incapable, undeserving, or not talented enough.



Do not underestimate yourself and your abilities. You have yet to see what you are capable of, so don't cut yourself off at the knees before you've given a serious swing at your goals. Like climbing the rungs of a ladder, strive to continuously challenge yourself so that you can elevate your expectations.

## 6. Take pause and refocus when you are feeling overwhelmed.

Focusing is about saying No.  
**Steve Jobs**

There will be times where you feel like the whole world has arrayed itself against you. As though no matter what you do, you are continually sinking and slipping backwards, fingers and hands grasping at anything to get you back on keel. When this feeling hits you, it is time to step back, take a breath or seven, and pick the one thing that is the most important to you. Just one. It's key to focus on just one, solitary thing; when we are feeling overly stressed or scatter-brained it is because we are being pulled in sixteen different directions at once. Breath, step back, and tackle one thing at a time.

## 7. You will love who you become on the path to your goals.

What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you become by achieving your goals.  
**Goethe**

Elite swimmers are elite long before you ever hear about them. Months and years prior to that gold medal or that World Record, they were already training like elite swimmers. First one in the pool, the last one out. Staying late to work on their weaknesses while hammering away at developing their strengths during practice. Each day they woke up and acted like a championship athlete even though at that point they were still only bottled potential. At the end of the day it is the journey that creates the champion, not merely the final numbers posted on the scoreboard.

## 8. Action will always trump planning.

You are what you do, not what you say you'll do.  
**C.G. Jung**

Ultimately we are judged not by the goals we had, or the natural ability and talent we possess. We are judged instead by the sum of our actions. After all, everyone has amazing goals and plans for their lives and for their swimming. The difference between those who achieve their goals only in their daydreams and the few that have the opportunity to actually live it, is action. The former recognize that the dream is only the beginning and that dreams without action plant the seeds for future regret. Whatever your goal is, do something *today* — do something *right now*. The pangs of self-doubt, the mistakes from the past can all be ushered away simply by taking meaningful action.

## 9. Richness lies in helping others achieve their potential.

From what we get, we can make a living; what we give, however, makes a life.  
**Arthur Ashe**

The sport of swimming gives us so much — fitness, health, friendships, memories and a kinship with water that is difficult to describe. You can enrich this further by donating your expertise (yes, you have this as a competitive athlete, no matter where you are at on the totem pole) and time. Whether it is helping out coaching younger groups, supporting your teammates, or stepping up and leading, giving back provides an additional layer of richness to a sport that already gives us so much.

## 10. When you make greatness part of everything you do, success will come naturally.

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act but a habit.

**Aristotle**

Markham Aquatic Club  
Box 64528, Unionville Postal Outlet  
4630 Highway 7, Unionville, ON L3R 0MR



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