

11 Things I've Learned from Two Weeks of Masters Swimming.

Courtesy of Elizabeth Wickham

A ton of swim parents are former swimmers—some are Olympians, too. Then, there are parents like my husband and me, who have next to zero swim experience. We non-swimmers are at a decided disadvantage from former swimmers, but we can learn from watching meets, coaches and our kids. I'll never forget when my husband told our son who was 12 years old, "You need to try harder in practice."

Son: "Dad, how far do you swim?"

Husband: "Out to the rock and back." This was during summer vacation at the beach.

"How many yards do you think that is?"

Husband: "At least 200 yards. I do it twice a day."

Son: "I swim 5,000 yards per day."

Husband: silence.

Here's my tip for non-swimming parents to better understand the sport:

TRY MASTERS!

My husband joined Masters the following week and swam for five years, five days a week at 5:30 a.m. and he competed in a few races. He never gave advice to our son again—about swimming.

After 15 years of swim parenting, I joined Masters two weeks ago.

My first day, I was afraid I was going to drown or get kicked out during warm-up. I was breath-holding, spluttering, lifting my head as I gasped to reach the other side of the pool. The coach assured me he's never kicked out a master, nor has he ever lost a swimmer. My fears were unfounded.

Here are 11 things I've learned from two weeks of Masters:

ONE

I jumped out of my comfort zone and was scared to death. Now, I look forward to practice. I'm up to 1,500 yards.

TWO

I feel improvement daily, although some days are better than others.

THREE

I'm getting stronger. Physically and mentally.

FOUR

No food is safe in our fridge the hour after practice.

FIVE

I sleep really, really well.

SIX

I'm learning about technique, drills, and breathing.

SEVEN

I've discovered muscles I didn't know I had, or haven't used in 20 years.

EIGHT

I'm making new friends and getting reacquainted with old ones.

NINE

I have a new appreciation for the coach. What he does takes skill, knowledge and thinking on his feet.

TEN

I admire my kids and what they have done on a daily basis for 15 years. Wow!

ELEVEN

I get so tired. I asked my kids when the tiredness stops. "Never," was the answer. As a swim parent, are you a former swimmer? If not, give Masters a try. You'll learn to appreciate this great sport, your kids and coaches, in new ways.



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