

7 Things Swimmers Should Start Doing

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As George Bernard Shaw said, “Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.”

No doubt.

How often have you found yourself caught in a loop of doing the same things, having the same behaviors, displaying the same attitudes, and yet still expecting different results? If you are like me, a few times.

Change is foreign, difficult, and requires us to remove ourselves from our comfort zone and the outlooks and mindsets we have developed over the years.

Here are 7 things swimmers can start doing in order to inflict some change this season:

1. Face the tough stuff head on.

We all have those sets that intimidate the draw strings out of our swimsuits. We squirm and are swamped with dread each time coach throws it up on the board. Whether it is a test set, a long rep for time, or all out efforts that will give you an indication of how much (or how little) progress we have made. The only way to attack those big, scary sets is inch-by-inch, meter-by-meter. Avoid thinking about the set as a whole and focus on the rep in front of you, and you'll find yourself more willing to give those tough sets an honest thrashing.

2. Spend time with the right people.

Life is far too short to spend it with people who complain, who berate, who naysay and live to shoot down the aspirations of others. The path to success – whatever your version of success in the pool is – is not easy, and it is made infinitely harder when you surround yourself with people who have no interest in seeing you flourish as an athlete and as a person.

3. Be honest about where you are at and where you want to go.

Take a few moments and be honest about where you are at as a swimmer, and what you would like to do with your abilities and talents. Once you have a solid understanding of who you are, what your strengths and opportunities for improvement are, you will be better equipped to choose a path which will showcase your own particular brand of awesomeness.

4. Be willing to forge your own path.

It's easy to look at our idols, or even the elite swimmers that we train with on a daily basis, and want to copy their path to success. While there will be some similarities in what you need to do in comparison to what they are doing – hard work, consistency, and so on – be willing to find your own way, to forge your own path towards your individualized form of success.

5. Value your mistakes as much as your successes.

We grow from friction, from bouncing back from failures and setbacks. Victory, while undoubtedly sweeter, doesn't always provide the same lessons that we get from coming up a

little bit short. Instead of brushing aside those moments where things don't go your way, pick them apart for lessons in where you can do things better in order to drive forwards with purpose.

6. Start seeing yourself as more capable.

We tend to place limits on what we think we are capable of, more often rather arbitrarily. Because we haven't done something before means we cannot do it now. Because a particular interval was challenging means we can't do an even faster one. Suspend your doubt and limitations long enough to try, and more often than not you will find that you surprise yourself.

7. Trust yourself to be okay.

Big goals scare the chlorine out of most swimmer's hair. It's not even necessarily the goals themselves that are intimidating, it's the thought of giving it their absolute goal and then coming up short. It's the failing part that is scary. But how many times in the course of your swimming and life have you failed, and yet you still came out of it? You survived then, and you'll be okay in the future too, so have faith in your own resiliency.