

## WANT TO ACHIEVE BIG THINGS WITH YOUR SWIMMING? START SMALL.

Without water drops, there can be no oceans; without steps, there can be no stairs; without little things, there can be no big things!" – Mehmet Murat ildan

We tend to think of our swimming goals as big, sweeping outcomes. *I want to win gold at state. I want to smash my best time by 15 seconds. I want to break the world record in the 200 butterfly.*

To achieve our big-time goals many of us somewhat mistakenly assume that this means that we need to make huge, life-changing alterations to our training and lifestyle. These wholesale and overnight changes, while they may feel completely necessary in the moment, rarely stick once the initial surge of motivation and inspiration fades.

Another common misstep that happens when focusing only on the big picture is that we imagine accomplishing our goal will happen in one big, fell swoop. Anything short of this drastic and striking result is considered a disappointment or a failure.

In order to make big progress it is important to think small with your swimming. Here are 5 reasons that you should be seeking to create a daily climate of achieving lots of small wins, instead of chasing after the one big win:

1. Small steps and wins inspire action. Big goals are great to fantasize about, but when it comes to inspiring action they fall short. You might be able to look at the long term goal you have with fondness, but when asked where the first step is, most swimmers freeze up. The scope of what is required to achieve the goal is paralyzing. By focusing on small, realistic steps we avoid this paralysis, and insure that you are at the very least getting started.
2. Gets you into the habit of consistently succeeding. If success is a habit, than how do we make it stick if our big competition meets only happen a couple times a year? Simple – make it a daily feature of your swimming. Mastering the daily battle will empower you and provide the framework for feeling confident and in control, especially helpful in warding off thoughts of doubt that spring up between competitions.
3. Encourages you to take greater risks. By achieving things regularly you grow belief in yourself and your abilities. With a track record of small wins in the rear-view you recognize that if you set out to do something, you can actually achieve it. With the confidence of seeing progress in nearly real-time, it inspires you to continue to stretch the limits of what you think yourself capable of.
4. Small steps allow for recognizable progress on days that are challenging. Some workouts you wish you could completely forget and rip out of your log book, never to be seen again. It can be easy to fall prey to the mentality that the workout was wasted, the day a wash. By making progress in some form or another, you are insuring that the mental whiplash of a bad workout is short-lived.
5. The accumulation of small things eventually will make a massive dent. Over the first few days and weeks of making consistent, small steps, you will make some progress. Not much, but a little. In fact, it might be so small that it is unnoticeable. Eventually, over

time those small steps compound and create large, extremely noticeable change. For example, if you decide in order to improve your dolphin kick you're going to commit to do 5 kicks off every wall you might not notice any improvement after doing it for one workout. In fact, you almost certainly won't. The improvement may not become apparent for 2, or 3, or 5 workouts. But after a couple weeks, your patience will pay off when you notice a *big* improvement.

The bottom line is that you don't need to completely revamp your life and swimming in order to start making progress towards achieving your goals. Keep it small, keep it consistent and you'll be crushing PB's in no time.