

6 pieces of equipment every swimmer needs in their mesh bag

Coach Ross Davis

The best tools are a preference, but all tools are not created equal and certain tools are required for certain jobs. Look in the average swimmer's mesh bag, you'll probably see a kickboard, pull buoy and fins. For day to day training, that's the bare minimum and you will get the bare minimum out of them unless you use them effectively.

For the **Kickboard**, coasting into the wall, using it for a paddle, floatation device, surfboard, kneeboard or using it for anything other than kicking isn't helping you be a better kicker.

Most swimmers love their **Pull Buoy** but it's amazing how many swimmers put on a pull buoy only to start kicking while they are supposed to be pulling! Keeping the longest line through your hips and legs without fishtailing is the purpose of a buoy. Help your buoy help you.

Fins are also a great addition to any mesh bag. They "can" allow you propel yourself at incredibly faster speeds but only when you use those LEGS! Fins also permit injured athletes during healing. The final three pieces help to compliment the others and will allow you the swimmer to gain the edge on your competition!

Get a **Snorkel**. Get a snorkel. Get a snorkel. I guess I should say, get a snorkel and KEEP your snorkel. Nothing is more evident between a good swimmer and developing swimmer than head position in every stroke. The snorkel can help you not only relax with your head down but also raise awareness of body position without worrying about turning to breathe.

TT. What? Two words. **Tempo. Trainer**. As one of the most despised and hated pieces of equipment, the Tempo Trainer may also one of the most valuable to improved performance in the water. Watch any race and almost always a loss of tempo equals a loss of speed. Training yourself to maintain a faster tempo to hold a faster pace is a win, win.

Paddles come in at number six but not last place. As with any common accessory item, a paddle's true mission isn't what it's generally used for. Manufacturers have been making paddles to strap to swimmers' hands for years. That's the problem, the strap. The paddle can tell you quite a lot about the efficiency of your stroke...if you didn't have them all but surgically attached to your hand. Keeping the paddle on your hand is your job, through hydrodynamic pressure, not rubber bands, straps or holes. Get rid of the wrist straps! At most, a paddle should be attached to one finger (snug but not tight) near the middle of your palm. When performing the pull, the paddles will stay still on your hand if your pull is efficient. Little

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slips of the paddle around on the palm means you've let water between your palm and paddle. Paddles coming off your hand altogether while swimming means there was more water pressure on the backside of the paddle next to your palm wanting to pull it off than on the pulling side of the paddle that would keep it in place!! This SHOULD NEVER happen!

Using your equipment as intended and always having it for practice will make incredible improvements to your swimming. If you have any extra room, try these simple additional accessories depending on your need. **Ankle/Leg Band** - Great for additional help in body awareness. **Nose Plug**- Great for backstroke underwaters. **Tech. Goggles** - All the new rage, data while you die! Distance per stroke and other feedback metrics. **Kickboards, Pull Buoy, Fins & Paddles**- these come in various styles, colors and designs. There are breaststroke fins and backstroke paddles. Find the right accessory for you! **Spare Water Bottle** -better to have and not need than vice-versa. **Socks**-Helps with fin fit. **Catch-up Stick**-all ya need is 9-12 inches of old PVC.