

Hi fellow swimmers!

My name is Reyna and if you do not know me, I swam for PCA for 12 years. I currently attend and swim for Long Island University Brooklyn, a Division I swimming program. Although I have only completed one season as a collegiate student-athlete, I have learned so much thus far, and would love to share some valuable lessons I've learned with you.

Whether you decide to pursue your swimming career into college is completely your decision, but if you are interested in becoming a collegiate swimmer, here are some of the most important things to know (in no particular order):

**1. You are a STUDENT-athlete**

Being an athlete in college means that you are a student first, ALWAYS. Remember that you should be in college not just to swim, but to gain an education. Always put in your best effort in practices, but do not let that take precedence over your classes. You are there to get your degree, so make sure to study just as hard, if not, harder than you practice.

**2. Go with the flow**

Of course it depends on the college you attend, but practices will most likely be harder than what you are used to. Don't freak out. This is normal. It may take you a while to get adjusted, but in the meantime, you must be willing to adapt to the different styles of workouts/coaching.

**3. Be ready to work hard and play hard**

Being a collegiate student-athlete ain't no walk in the park. Between a rigorous practice schedule, weightlifting and classes, be ready to be exhausted all the time. You will be expected to work hard at every practice, in the water and out, as well as receive acceptable grades in the classroom.

**4. It's all you**

One word: Accountability. College swimming is all about you! Here, your successes are all dependent on you: your work ethic, how you take care of yourself, etc. In age group swimming, this accountability can easily be taken on by parents, but if your parents have not taken a step back already, college is the time to do so!

**5. Time to adult**

In college, you are responsible for yourself. Figuring out your class schedule, finding a good time to eat meals between classes/practices, or even remembering to put your laundry in the dryer are all on you.

**6. Keep your mind in mind**

Mental health is no joke. Being a student-athlete in college can be tough on your body, and just as tough on your mind. Remember to take time for yourself and prioritize what is best for you. There is nothing wrong with a little self-care or even reaching out if you are feeling a little stressed. Your teammates, friends, coaches, counselors and professors are all there

for you as your support system — so lean on them if you need! Talking things out can help, more than you think!

**7. Stick with your team**

Although you may feel like you are alone and tired and sore and missing home, remember — you are not alone! The best thing about being a college student-athlete is the fact that you have an entire team that is going through the same thing as you. They are all going to classes, attending practices and most likely missing their families/home just like you. Do not be afraid to reach out to them!

**8. Have fun**

One of the most important things to remember when swimming in college, is to have fun. Don't put too much pressure on yourself to always have to improve your times because it may not always happen. Never forget the reasons you joined the sport in the first place and strive to make the most out of your experience as a college swimmer — it won't last forever!

I hope that if you choose to continue your swimming career throughout college, these tips can be of great use to you. My freshman year/season was no breeze, but learning these things and keeping them in mind definitely helped to make things a little easier for me. And I hope they can do the same for you!

Keep up the great work,  
Reyna