

Coaches Corner by Coach Helen (Head Coach)

Hello everyone,

I miss seeing all our swimmers daily. You are the highlight of my day and always bring a smile to my face. I am bringing you another addition to our Coaches' Corner. By now most of you have been home for several weeks and hopefully are getting into a regular routine. I enjoy interacting with our swimmers participating in dryland via our Zoom broadcast Monday-Friday and if you haven't had the chance to join us please do!! It is for ALL of our developmental swim groups from Bronze to Platinum. We have a daily trivia swim question that has become a fun activity and I look forward to seeing what our swimmers come up with each day.

This has been a challenging few weeks for all of our families, swimmers and coaches. Yet I see so much strength and caring in people that my heart is uplifted daily. I feel blessed to have you all in my life. As we walk this uncertain road together, contact with our family and friends is vital for our mental and physical health. Exercising daily with family and friends also helps us stay connected and in shape for when we can return to training in the pool. Sometimes it is hard to relate in our minds why dry land training is so important to swimming so hopefully I can answer a few of those questions and dispel a few myths.

First let's talk about what is Core Stability and Core Strength? It is a person's ability to have control of a body's movement and position. A body's core region is often called the torso or trunk. Without going into all the muscle groups, your core is your midsection and it involves all your muscles in that area including front, back and sides. When your core muscles are weak, they can cause poor posture and decrease your ability to perform the necessary skills in the pool swimming. This can lead to injuries during exercising and as we get older can lead to a multitude of health issues.

So how do we prevent injuries and strengthen our core to make us faster and stronger swimmers/athletes? A strong core is the answer for swimmers looking to improve technique and increase speed while minimizing drag resistance through the water. A strong core helps swimmers

leverage/balance larger muscles to help move them through the water. Often swimmers want to improve times by focusing on power of the stroke or kick but forget about the time they actually spend cutting through the water in a streamline position. A stronger core will improve your streamline and the technique throughout all strokes as your core muscles (obliques and hip flexors) help control the movement of upper and lower extremities (arms and legs).

The benefit that will appeal to you as a swimmer for building a stronger core is that it allows you to have greater power in our outer muscles. These include your arms for pulling and your legs for kicking. Once you have increased your core strength you will find you do not get as tired thus allowing you to train harder and longer. Swimming is a non-impact sport and as such we don't naturally get a strong core without additional exercises. That leads us to why we do dry land.

Here is a list of just a few dry land exercises we do regularly and how they help you swim faster:

Dips: these improve your pull in breaststroke and butterfly as well as your freestyle and backstroke finish (last part of your pull).

Push-ups: helps with strengthening your upper body and lower back allowing you to have a tighter core throughout all strokes and more power in the catch phase of the stroke.

Planks: strengthens your abdominal muscles and glutes. This helps with having a strong, long and lean streamline. It strengthens body position throughout all strokes allowing for rotation through the hips and not shoulder driven.

Sit ups: help with abdominal strength for strong body position in the water and again the ability to rotate with your hips first not your shoulders in freestyle and backstroke.

A strong core is key to better technique in the water as well as faster, stronger swims and helps prevent injuries. This is a winning combination for any swimmer. I hope I have inspired you with all the benefits of regular dryland training to join us or continue with your dryland training.

While we are still out of the water, I would like to also encourage you to take a walk with your family, go

for a run or shoot hoops outside to get a little aerobic exercise. The fresh air will do wonders for you.

Don't forget to practice good social distancing with those outside your household and stay healthy and safe.

See you all at dryland,

Coach Helen