

## Things Every Swimmer Needs in December

By Mike Gustafson//Contributor | USA Swimming Website

As any competitive swimmer knows, the season has its ebbs and flows, its peaks and valleys. The September and October months are “getting in shape” season — a time of extra dryland, technique drills, and aerobic sets. February and March is “speed season” — a time of starts and turns, sprints and quickness drills, refinement and honing.

So what “season” is December and January?

### Pain season.

December is a time of challenges and long sets, pushing one’s limits and setting new ones. It is a time of colder weather, of course, and with that cold weather, “cold weather challenges.” Colds. Coughs. Cradling space heaters (kidding, don’t do that).

To help with the transition from “getting in-shape” season to “pain season,” I’ve compiled a handy list of Things Every Swimmer Needs in December. Perhaps this could serve a dual purpose as a holiday wish list. Perhaps not. Either way, any one of these items would surely make “pain season” morph into a season of “jolly happy warm easy swim times.”

Here they are.

#### 1. “The Swimmer’s Survival Pack For Chlorinated, Scale-y, Dried-out Skin.”

Included in this pack are basic necessities during any cold-weather month of the competitive season: First, moisturizer. To this day, after lap-swimming, I take out my manly coconut-scented moisturizer and masculinely lather up. Smelling like a coconut may not necessarily be work-appropriate, but I stopped caring when I turned twelve and my chlorinated swimmer’s skin resembled an alligator. (If your skin actually resembles an alligator, you should probably see a doctor and/or NASA.)

The rest of the Skin Survival Pack items are basics, like a fuzzy parka, a beanie to keep your ears warm, and some heavy-duty socks.

#### 2. An extra alarm clock.

December: A time of darkness. Metaphorically, sometimes, and literally, all the time. It can be incredibly difficult to rise out of bed before the birds in complete darkness and trudge towards a cold 70-degree pool where an onslaught of freestyle and butterfly sets await. Thus, every swimmer needs an extra alarm clock stashed somewhere in the house, something that is hammer-

## Important Upcoming Dates:

12/2-3	BGSC Holiday Invite at the BGSU Rec Center
12/8-9	St Francis Invite (HS only)
12/10	USA Paralympic Swimming Clinic @ BGSU Rec Center, 10am to 3pm
12/15-17	US Paralympics 2017 Can-Am Open, Charlotte, NC
12/21	Winter Break Practice Schedule Starts!

proof and hidden from a swinging arm seeking the snooze button.

#### 3. An ability to make the pool warmer five degrees (for warm-ups only).

Every swimmer needs this magical ability. Though I’m told this ability “doesn’t exist,” check your local retailers anyway.

#### 4. That thing in Men In Black that zaps one’s memory of any and all distance sets.

See #3.

#### 5. A positive attitude.

We’re all sick and tired of hearing about the benefits of having a “positive attitude.” (See what I did there?) Seriously, having a positive attitude is the only thing you \*actually\* need this winter. A positive attitude will make the pool feel warmer, make those distance sets feel shorter, and make one’s overall enjoyment of this great privilege called swimming feel even more privilege-y. What is a “positive attitude,” exactly? It means flipping every single “I’m tired” or “I don’t want to” comment into, “I choose to swim in my free time, so I should make the best of it.” It means cheering for your teammates as much as you want them to cheer for you. (And if you don’t want them to cheer for you, cheer for them anyway.) It means taking a few moments to appreciate this sport and remember what you love about it even during those occasional moments when you may not totally and completely love it. And it means being polite and supportive to your teammates, and yes, your coaches, too.

#### 6. And if that positive attitude is missing, a panic room with a stocked refrigerator of peanut-butter and jelly sandwiches is always good. Just in case.

## December Birthdays!

Kate B- 12/7  
Jack B- 12/11  
Jaden D- 12/30  
Garrett G- 12/27  
Sydney L- 12/17  
Lang L- 12/22  
Dillion O- 12/22  
Ivy S- 12/31  
Lilly S- 12/15



Clayton S- 12/9  
Aiden X- 12/3  
Alex X- 12/6

## The History of Swimming: Part 2



### History of Swimming: Early Modern Era

Swimming was initially one of the seven agilities of knights during the Middle Ages, including swimming with armor. However, as swimming was done in a state of undress, it became less popular as society became more conservative in the early Modern period. Leonardo da Vinci made early sketches of lifebelts. In 1539, Nikolaus Wynmann, a German professor of languages, wrote the first swimming book *Colymbetes*. His purpose was to reduce the dangers of drowning. The book contained a good methodical approach to learning breaststroke, and mentioned swimming aids such as air filled cow bladders, reed bundles, and cork belts.

In 1587, Everard Digby also wrote a swimming book, claiming that humans could swim better than fish. Digby was a Senior Fellow at St. John's College, Cambridge and was interested in the scientific method. His short treatise, *De arte natandi*, was written in Latin and contained over 40 woodcut illustrations depicting various methods of swimming, including the breaststroke, backstroke and crawl. Digby regarded the breaststroke as the most useful form of swimming. In 1603, Emperor Go-Yozei of Japan declared that schoolchildren should swim.

In 1595, Christopher Middleton wrote "A short introduction for to learne to swimme", that was the first published guide recording drawings and examples of different swimming styles.

In 1696, the French author Melchisédech Thévenot wrote *The Art of Swimming*, describing a breaststroke very similar to the modern breaststroke. This book was translated into English and became the standard reference of swimming for many years to come. In 1793, GutsMuths from Schnepfenthal, Germany, wrote *Gymnastik für die Jugend (Exercise for youth)*, including a significant portion about swimming. In 1794, Kanonikus Oronzio de Bernardi of Italy wrote a two volume book about swimming, including floating practice as a prerequisite for swimming studies.

In 1798, GutsMuths wrote another book *Kleines Lehrbuch der Schwimmkunst zum Selbstunterricht (Small study book of the art of swimming for self-study)*, recommending the use of a "fishing rod" device to aid in the learning of swimming. His books describe a three-step approach to learning to swim that is still used today. First, get the student used to the water; second, practice the swimming movements out of the water; and third, practice the swimming movements in the water. He believed that swimming is an essential part of every education. The Haloren, a group of salt makers in Halle, Germany, greatly advanced swimming through setting a good example to others by teaching their children to swim at a very early age.

Next Month: Swimming as a Competitive Sport

## Coach's Corner

### 'Tis the season for family!

As the holidays fast approach, it is important to keep some sort of routine while spending time with friends and family, even when going out and visiting new places. Routines help reduce the risk of illness, while helping swimmers reacclimate to school when break is over. Here are a few tips to get through the holidays and break.

1. Plan out allowing your swimmer to get to bed at a normal time, or allow them to sleep in later the next morning if staying up late. Sleep boosts the immune system as well as helping normal growth rates for children, teens, and adolescents.
2. Bring snacks such as fruit or vegetables when going on trips. Healthy options are the key.
3. Take water with you! Even in winter, dehydration is a big risk, and staying properly hydrated helps with everything from maintaining energy to keeping skin from drying out.
4. Go to as many swim practices as possible. Keeping a routine of being in the water daily allows your swimmer to feel a sense of normalcy, even during winter break when trips and breaks from school occur.
5. Allow your swimmer to enjoy their free time! Spend a few days with nothing special planned, giving your swimmer time to decompress and relax, so when they are back to school they are ready to take on the world!

-Coach Beth

# 6 Under-appreciated Truths of Fast Swimming

by Olivier Poirier-Leroy, SwimSwam.com

*The path that fast swimmers take on their way to the pages of the record books are as varied and unique as they are.*

Some arrive to the party late, not hitting their stride in the water until their late teens (or even mid to late 20's), while for others they always displayed a glimmer of something special in the pool.

Regardless of the route they took to the top of the podium, fast swimmers know that there are certain inescapable realities and features of the trek to the top of the podium.

Technical proficiency. Having an environment that supports their success. As well as these 6 other under-appreciated truths of swimming at an elite level—

## 1. Wishing for your goals won't make them happen any faster.

When you go to sleep at night, what do you fantasize about accomplishing with your swimming? If you are like me, it is the same couple of dreams. Over and over you ruminate over the details of swimming at the highest levels, of taking your abilities to their outer reaches, of slamming into the wall first, looking up at the scoreboard and feeling that satisfying warmth of achieving beyond what you or anyone else considered imaginable. Having the goal is important—whatever it is, it acts as your North star, your compass—but having the daily schedule or routine in place to make it happen is absolutely critical. Without the daily quota of work, without knowing what you gotta invest on a day to day basis, those dreams will never leave the quiet pillow of your bedroom.

## 2. Two athletes, training for the exact same amount of time, will produce two different sets of results.

What works for you won't work for someone else in the exact same doses. And that is fine. The journey is yours and yours alone—no two paths to elite swimming are the same. They all require varying amounts of work. Comparing the things you are doing to those who have been there is risky in that what a successful swimmer is doing now is rarely the exact same thing that got them to where they are. Embrace the same broad concepts that propelled them to elite status—hard work, consistency, having a positive attitude—but comparing yourself to where Phelps was at a certain age, or how fast Franklin kicked at a specific time in her career is priming yourself for unreasonable expectations.

Appreciate the fact that your path is yours and yours alone.

## 3. Consistency trumps motivation every time.

There is a mistaken belief that in order to get jacked up and perform well at the pool, we need to be fully and thoroughly inspired. That every workout needs to involve a Cesar Cielo-style chest slapping, a Gary Hall-shadow box, and a Michael Phelps-themed thousand yard stare. The problem with motivation is that rarely is it ever constant—some days we feel fully primed, ready to take on the world, while others we struggle through the day, grasping on the first passable excuse to tone down our effort in the pool.

Our performances in the pool are a reflection of the consistency we show at pool. It's not a motivation contest, it's a "who can show

up most consistently and drop the most number of gangster workouts into the inventory" contest.

## 4. The sucky moments will teach you more than your successes.

Yes, failing at something we are working towards

sucks. Big time. When you come up short, when you perform below expectations, when things don't go the way they shoulda or coulda, it hurts. There is no questioning that. We begin to doubt ourselves, our talents, our training. It's precisely those moments that teach us more about ourselves than the biggest victory. We learn how resilient we are, how we deal with adversity, and perhaps most notably for whatever is next—what we need to improve on. There is nothing



like a glaring setback to shine a bright light on the aspects of our training that we have been glossing over, taking for granted, or full-blown ignoring. It might feel a little bizarre to imagine that braving our failures improves us, makes us smarter, better prepared, and in the end better swimmers, but that is exactly what you should be using them for.

## 5. Showing up isn't half the battle... it is the battle.

The sense of starting over from scratch is one of the most frustrating experiences over the course of a swimmer's career. During the latter stages of my age group career I was brutal for this. I would train my butt off for a couple months, get frustrated when I didn't see the progress I expected or hoped for, and then would fall off for a week. By the time I got my head right again, I couldn't help feeling like I was starting from square one. It took me a long time to figure out how to be more consistent in my own life (suspending expectations being the main key) and to dial in on the workout at hand, and not where my performance stood in the grand scheme of things.

## 6. Be ready so that you don't have to get ready.

Being ready means that you are willing to push forward even when you don't feel like getting started. It means that you don't need conditions to be perfect in order to act. It means that you are ready to rock and roll whether you are training or competing in a dimly-lit 23 yard pool or a brand new 50m aquatic complex. Being ready gives you a mental resilience that becomes even more important as you progress in your swimming career. When you are used to competing and performing at a high level in sub-standard conditions you are better suited to competing at your best when the circumstances are sub-optimal. You can complain about how crowded the lane is in practice, but keep in mind that this is great prep for warm-up at meets. Fast swimmers use the hand they are dealt with and make it work for them.



# December 2017

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
					1	2 BGSC Holiday Invite @ BGSU Rec Center
3 BGSC Holiday Invite @ BGSU Rec Center	4	5	6	7	8	9 St Francis Invite (HS only)
10 US Paralympic Clinic @ BGSU Rec Center, 10am	11 Registration Deadline for SOS Puppymania	12 A/B @ Ayersville, 5:30pm start (HS)	13	14	15 US Paralympics Can- Am Open, Charlotte NC	16 US Paralympics Can- Am Open, Charlotte NC
17 US Paralympics Can- Am Open, Charlotte NC	18	19	20	21 Last day for SLG until Jan 8th!	22 Winter Break Prac- tice Schedule Starts! Age Group Blue and Gold Regular Times	23
24 Christmas Eve!	25 Christmas Day! No Practice!	26	27	28 HS meet @ Findlay, 12:30pm WU	29	30

## December Practice Schedule:

Watch emails for Winter Break  
Schedule!

### Sooner-or-Later Gators:

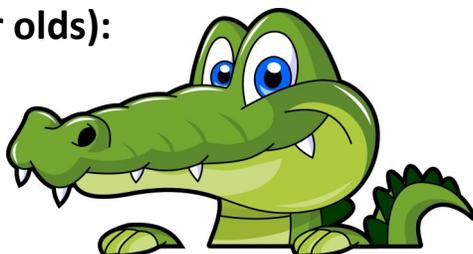
Mon/Tues/Thurs– 5:30 to 6:00pm  
Dec 21st will be last day until Jan 8th.

### Age Group Gold (8-unders):

Mon/Tues/Thurs/Fri– 6:00 to 7:00pm  
Dec 26th—29th, 9:00 to 10:00am

### Age Group Blue (9-12 year olds):

Mon thru Fri– 5:30 to 7:00pm  
Dec 26th — 29th 8:00 to 10:00am  
(George's Group: Jeans Practice on Dec 27th)



### Gator Fact: Healing Power!

naturesfancy

Alligators are tough—and not just because of the bony armor in their skins. Serum in American alligator blood is incredibly effective at combating bacteria and viruses, meaning that even alligators that lose limbs in mucky swamps often avoid infection.

### Senior (JH/HS):

Mon-Fri— 3:15 to 5:45pm  
Tues/Thurs— 6 to 7am (HS)  
Check calendar from Carolyn  
for practice times!