

Pre-Senior  
Senior  
Senior Foundation

Coach Don and Coach Dalton

April 7, 2020

### Positive Thoughts

Good,  
Better,  
Best,  
Never Let it Rest  
'Till your GOOD is better and your better is BEST!

### Task Focus

Each day I will give you things you CAN do while training and racing are on hold. Below are activities and tasks for Thursday, April 2, 2020.

Commented [a1]:

READ! Yes, read! Here is a list of books for you to choose from:

- |   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1. No Limits—The Will to Succeed                          | Michael Phelps                       |
| 2. Champions are Raised Not Born                          | Summer Sanders                       |
| 3. Visions of Excellence; The Art of Achieving Your Dream | Mark Tewksbury                       |
| 4. Beneath the Surface                                    | Michael Phelps                       |
| 5. Gold in the Water                                      | P.H. Mullen                          |
| 6. Silver Lining  | Elizabeth Beisel                     |
| 7. Restless Spirit  | Missy Franklin                       |
| 8. Golden Girl—How Natalie Coughlin Fought Back           | Michael Silver and Natalie Coughlin. |

- Have you looked at any of the above books?
- If so, what book or books and have you found any positive thoughts/ideas from them?
- Please take a look at the dryland program and the video we included with the e-mail yesterday and try your best to follow the suggestions.
- Search on YouTube and watch great swim racing.

## Mental Focus

### *The Element of Speed*

By Dr. Alan Goldberg

AWARENESS IS THE KEY to change in everything that you do in your life, both in and out of the pool! For example, if you are getting frustrating and disappointing race results because you're making technique or tactical mistakes, then you will not be able to correct these until you become aware of exactly what you're doing wrong. Similarly, if you consistently study well enough for your tests in school, but then get too nervous pre-test to score the way you should, then this confidence-eroding problem will continue until you can become aware of what you're doing leading up to your exams that is driving your anxiety through the roof. Without awareness, we are all doomed to continue to struggle, make mistakes and underachieve!

The same can be said for the mental part of your swimming, both in practice and at meets. If you are unaware of the critically important role your mind plays in your swimming success and failure—specifically, if you are unaware of your pre-race focus of concentration and your pre-race level of nervousness, then you will be unknowingly holding yourself back from reaching your goals in the pool. These two important, interrelated mental factors (pre-race nerves and concentration) are always at the heart of a swimmer's repetitive performance problems.

Far too many swimmers think getting good and achieving their goals is primarily a product of how hard they work in practice. They mistakenly believe that if you are not seeing the race results you should, then you simply need to work harder. While your physical investment in practice is certainly crucial to your success, when it comes down to race time, it's your mind that ultimately determines whether all of your hard work will pay off.

What makes this so?

This is because of the mind-body-performance relationship. That is, what you think about and focus on the days leading up to, the night before, and day of the meet, goes directly into your body and makes physiological changes. Those physical changes, in turn dramatically affect your race performance.

So, if you're putting too much pressure on yourself to go fast, thinking about and focusing on what might go wrong in "your" events, or are too preoccupied with how fast teammates or others race, or worried that you will be disappointing others unless you swim fast, then you will immediately make yourself nervous. When this happens, your breathing will speed up and get shallower, your muscles will tighten, and the end result of these physical changes is that you will unknowingly drain your energy, disrupt your stroke mechanics and swim poorly.

If you're serious about reaching those big swimming goals of yours, then you need to become aware of and learn how to recognize and work with both your level of pre-meet/pre-race nervousness and your concentration. How anxious you get leading up to your races is directly determined by what you focus on. If you concentrate on outcome, what's riding on this race or other swimmers, then you'll get way too nervous to swim well. Simultaneously, if you get too nervous pre-race, then it will be impossible for you to control your focus of concentration.

Without an understanding of and awareness of the interrelationship between these two crucial mental factors, you will be inadvertently holding yourself back as a swimmer. Keep in mind that you can't consistently go fast without first using your head. Don't allow yourself to go into your big meets hoping that you will stay calm and be properly focused. Start today to devote some of your practice time to strengthening your concentration muscles and learning how to both recognize when your nervous system is revving up into "bad nervous," and how to get yourself to calm down.

### Physical Challenge

Alright, so we have a bit of a challenge physically not being able to get in that water. So, today's "physical" challenge is *visualizing physically* going through your Butterfly. Hali Flickinger has 5 Butterfly tips and drill ideas.

1. **Keep your hips high.** Ever feel like you're swimming vertically in a butterfly race, or at practice? If you feel like your body is straight up and down in the water, it probably is. Your hips should follow a wave like motion as you move through the water. When swimmers tire, that motion tends to become smaller and smaller until the hips remain flat or continue to drop, creating more and more drag. Focus on getting your hips to rise as you start the arm pull, while getting your head down between your arms.
2. **Strong up and down kick.** Butterfly kick isn't just a strong downward motion. Your legs should also be kicking upwards. Try practicing dolphin kicking on your side or vertically to emphasize kicking equally in both directions.
3. **Press with your chest.** When your arms are barely clearing the water, and getting a breath is a struggle, the last thing you're probably thinking about during fly is pressing your body downward. But, pressing with your chest is actually extremely important at the end of the arm recovery, and will help keep your hips up and avoid the "vertical" feeling described earlier.
4. **One arm drill.** One arm fly allows you to practice the rhythm and timing of the stroke with less effort than when swimming full-stroke. Focus on keeping your shoulders relaxed, arms straight and low to the water and palms facing back.
5. **Fly arms with flutter kick drill.** A drill combining butterfly arms and freestyle kick, this drill emphasizes the importance of getting the head down following a breath and keeping the shoulders relaxed on the recovery, two aspects of the stroke that can fall apart quickly when swimmers get tired. It also reinforces how important the second dolphin kick is for getting the arms out of the water, when it's taken away completely.

### Motivational Moments---More Positive Thoughts!

Confidence comes from what you do in practice every single day. When race day comes along, and you've done all the work you can do, there's really nothing else you can do to prepare. So, you just got to let your swimming do the talking and have fun.

*Jordan Wilimovsky 2020 Open Water Olympian*

<https://www.teamusa.org/News/2019/July/15/Open-Water-Swimmer-Jordan-Wilimovsky-Becomes-First-Man-To-Qualify-For-2020-US-Olympic-Team>