

Top 10 Ways to Impress Your Swimming Coach

10. Don't miss practice. Want to be the best swimmer you can be? Showing up is a good start. As a coach, our primary chance to help you is at practice. If you are not there, we simply cannot help.

9. If there is a legitimate reason why you will miss practice, contact your coach beforehand, explain the circumstances, and ask how you can make it up. Connecting in advance of your absence suggests you care about the practice and more importantly, about your own training.

8. Show up on time. Don't be that swimmer who is perpetually late to practice. You'll anger most coaches and frankly, even perturb your teammates. If you think your fellow swimmers are forgiving of your tardiness, you're mistaken. Most dislike it or conclude you feel like you deserve special treatment or consideration.

7. Be prepared for practice. When the coach is planning your training, he is expecting that you will have the necessary items to perform as instructed. Not having your mesh bag, swimming equipment, water bottle, shoes for dryland, etc. is just plain sloppy and makes him wonder whether you really intend to improve or if you are just showing up hoping to get better.

6. Give your best effort consistently at practice. We are not asking nor expecting every swimmer to be a world-beater every day. We merely expect you to perform at your capability and be willing to push that boundary every once in a while. Your effort will determine your results. Even the best coach does not bring magic swim-fast fairy dust to practice.

5. Listen and ask good questions at practice. Coaches like swimmers who are attentive and focused. If your coach constantly has to repeat himself, it wastes your time and his. If you have a question, find the right time to ask it--not 2 seconds before you are supposed to push off the wall, but during the explanation of the set or after practice.

4. Understand that every day is an opportunity to improve and once it is over the opportunity has passed. Be sure to get the maximum benefit each day. Be willing to make changes and seek the coach's insight on how you can do this. Don't just keep doing what you're doing and hope that your hard work will overcome your other mistakes. We know that many of you dream of achieving at the highest levels of the sport, so we have to work together to get you there.

3. Set awesome goals. Make them reasonable yet challenging, clear but flexible. Not only are they important to help you focus your energies, but goals can also help inspire your coach. A good coach is motivated by a swimmer with high goals and the drive to achieve those goals.

2. Let your coach know if he's doing a good job. If the practice engaged and challenged you, tell him. If you enjoyed the new exercise you tried for the first time, let him know. If you're a better swimmer or person at the end of the season, send him a handwritten thank-you note. The flip side to this, of course, is helping him improve. Is he unclear in his instructions on a set? Did he misunderstand your question or put you on an easier interval than you are capable of? Is there something that you are missing in your training? A good coach is responsive to your feedback and will look to improve.

1. Be a leader and make your personalized contribution to the team. The best compliment a coach can give any swimmer is that "you made everyone around you better than they would have been without you." If you hear your coach say that, know this: we were indeed impressed. Be THAT swimmer.