

Set Personal Swimming Goals

Although most of you do not consider yourselves to be “competitive” swimmers, this is not an excuse for not setting swimming goals. **Doing anything without a defined purpose will become dull, boring and repetitive before too long.** Goals are necessary to keep one motivated to continue . . . especially on very cold days, early morning workouts, etc.

I am sure you have been told many times, maybe from friends, teachers, bosses or even a swim coach, to set goals. What is so important about setting goals? “It seems so silly to spend the time to sit down and write the things that you already know you want to do.” “I just want to swim” you may say. “I set goals for my career, but I don't need to set goals for my recreation.” This sounds reasonable, but is not true if you take a closer look.

Deep inside we all need justification for everything we do. It is human nature to feel the need for accomplishment. The reward of completing a task worked hard at is something we all strive for, whether it's in the working world or in our personal lives. What are you trying to accomplish by swimming?

Make a list of some short-term and long-term goals for the coming year. Try to set numerous goals in a variety of areas. If you only set one or two simple or wishy-washy goals, it probably won't help to motivate you. **The more goals you set, the greater the chance for success you have.** Remember, you have not lost anything if you do not reach a particular goal, but you have accomplished something when you do achieve one. Be specific whenever possible, including numbers (distance, times, places, dates, etc.). Many of you don't realize how much progress you have made. If you record your times or mileage, you may be surprised by how much progress you have really made.

Overcome the Fear of Failure. I have noticed that many people do not set goals to improve swimming skills or enter events to check their progress due to a “Fear of Failure.” When asked to do a timed swim in workout or to enter something such as an Open Water Swim or pool event that is not your usual specialty, do you say “Oh no, I'm not in good enough shape yet,” or “I'm too slow,” or “I don't think that I can do as well as last year.”? These are fear of failure responses. So what if you don't go as far; so what if you're not the fastest. It's the process of trying to improve that's important. **Every experience you have in your journey to reach your goals will contribute to your ultimate success when you are fully prepared to reach your potential in your best event at the right time.** A great quote I like to refer to goes like this: “Failure is not the worst thing in the world. The very worst is not to try.” However, chances are you'll be quite pleased with the results and you will occasionally ~ if not frequently ~ reach your goals.