

# The JOURNAL

Official Publication of the  
National Interscholastic Swimming Coaches Association of America, Inc.



Photo by Tom Musch

## In this Issue:

Leadership Lessons From *DESIDERATA*  
Food + Calories + Energy = PERFORMANCE!  
4 Easy Steps to Improve This Season  
Motivating Swimmers to New Heights  
The Over The Hill Gang  
Essential Performance Characteristics:  
STRENGTH (Part 2 of 3)

The Three Laws of Control  
**TWO** Motivation Posters!  
“Mermaid Affair”  
Bits and Pieces  
Daily Coach  
Brain Food

July-August 2023



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# THE NISCA JOURNAL

www.niscaonline.org

July - August 2023



## Table of Contents

Letterhead and Zone Information .....	2
President's Letter .....	3
Leadership Lessons From the Poem Desiderata, <i>by Kevin Pierce</i> .....	4
From The Editor .....	6
New Sponsorship Announcement.....	9
4 Easy Steps To Improve This Season, <i>by Aimee Schmitt</i> .....	11
The Three Laws of Control, <i>by Mark Onstott</i> .....	12
NUTRITION: Food = Calories = Energy = Performance! <i>by Dawn Weatherwax</i> .....	14
Motivating Swimmers to New Heights, <i>by Michael J. Stott</i> .....	16
STRENGTH TRAINING: Essential Performance Characteristics - Strength (Part 2 of 3), <i>by Charlie Hoolihan</i> .....	18
REFLECTIONS: The Over The Hill Gang, <i>by M. Frank Wilson</i> .....	21
REFLECTIONS: Mermaid Affair, <i>by Annette Thies</i> .....	24
BITS AND PIECES: Tidbits to Enhance Your Coaching and Life Experience .....	25
MOTIVATION POSTER #1 .....	27
MOTIVATION POSTER #2 .....	28
THE DAILY COACH .....	30
BRAIN FOOD .....	31
<i>Swimming Art Work by Nancy Bryant: Purchase Information</i> .....	IBC



On the cover

It's That Time of Year Again---  
Time to Start Practice!

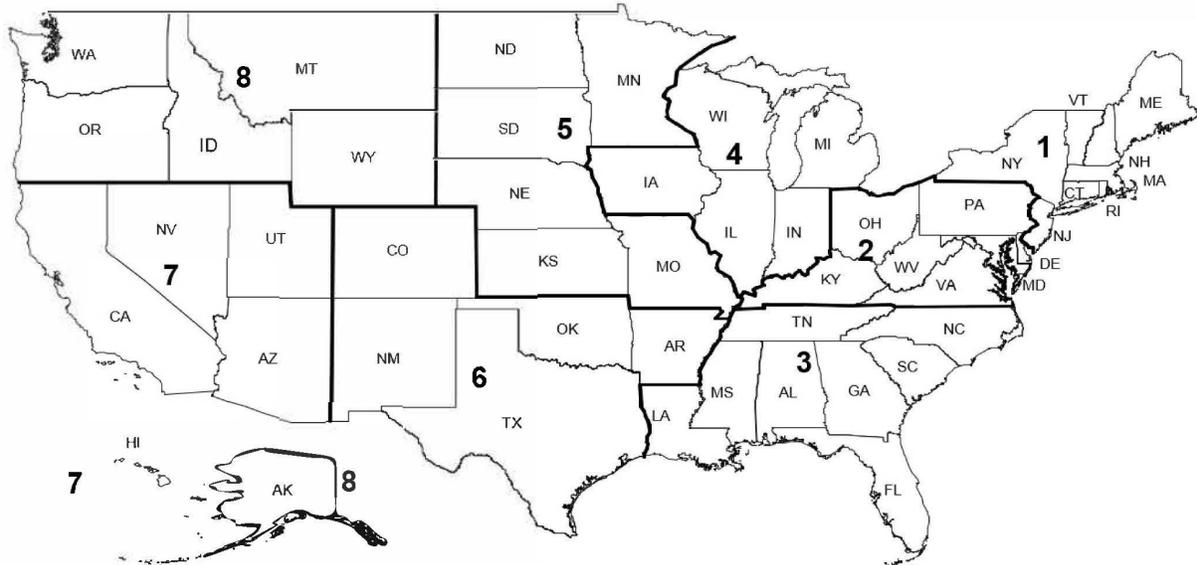
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Back cover

“How’s YOUR Streamlining?”

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## National Interscholastic Swimming Coaches Association of America

*To Educate... To Promote... To Honor.*

Dear NISCA Members,

I hope you all have had a chance to recharge this summer. It never seems quite long enough in my opinion. All the things I had hoped to accomplish such as getting more exercise, reading more and just getting things done around the house always seem rushed by the time August hits.

As we head into the next school year I would like you to think about how you can help grow and support our coaching base, not just in terms of the NISCA membership but in terms of helping the next generation navigate the challenges they may face based upon our careers experience. Coaching and teaching has come under attack over the past few years and the number of coaches leaving the profession has increased at an alarming rate. Even several NCAA institutions have been conducting research as to why Swimming Coaches are leaving. Some have cited pay or the pressure to succeed which has created family challenges as reasons for leaving.

I decided to step away from teaching and coaching high school in May after 27 years in the same district. My decision to retire was based upon my feeling I had nowhere else to grow within the district. Moving upward within the school district which I had devoted so much time and energy, no longer was an option. I know I'll miss being on deck with my athletes this fall, however, this was the right time for me to look at other options in my career.

No one ever said being a coach would be easy and thinking back I'm sure I could have handled some situations in my career differently. But with age comes wisdom and hindsight. Veteran coaches please share your insight and knowledge with the next generation. Even though some new coaches may appear to be know-it-alls they really do watch what we do. There is only so much a youtube video can do to share ideas with someone. Sometimes the story behind why you do things a certain way compared to others is worth sharing. I have been blessed to have many great coaches to watch and listen to over the years and many of the best conversations about swimming often happened far away from the pool.

I was reminded recently of a quote from Winston Churchill that feels appropriate at this juncture. *"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."* So as we prepare for the upcoming school year not only reflect on what you know but how you can share your knowledge and experiences with others.

Best wishes for the upcoming school year and remember that NISCA is here to serve you.

Sincerely,

Mark Jedow

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# Leadership Lessons From the Poem *Desiderata*

Kevin Pierce, *NISCA Coaches Education Chair*

***Go placidly amid the noise and the haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible, without surrender, be on good terms with all persons.***

***Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even to the dull and the ignorant; they too have their story.***

***Avoid loud and aggressive persons; they are vexatious to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain or bitter, for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.***

***Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.***

***Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals, and everywhere life is full of heroism.***

***Be yourself. Especially do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment, it is as perennial as the grass.***

***Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth.***

***Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.***

***Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here.***

***And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be. And whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace in your soul. With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be cheerful. Strive to be happy.***

Desiderata is a timeless poem that was written by Max Ehrmann in 1927. It is a beautiful piece of literature that has stood the test of time and continues to inspire people all around the world. The poem offers a series of practical and philosophical advice on how to live a meaningful and fulfilling life. Let's explore what we can learn from Desiderata.

### **Strive for inner peace**

The first line of Desiderata states, "Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence." This line emphasizes the importance of finding inner peace amidst the chaos of daily life. It encourages us to take a step back and reflect on our thoughts and emotions. Striving for inner peace can help us deal with stress and anxiety, and enable us to make better decisions.

### **Treat others with kindness and respect**

Desiderata emphasizes the importance of treating others with kindness and respect. The poem states, "Speak your truth quietly and clearly, and listen to others, even the dull and ignorant; they too have their story." This line reminds us to be open-minded and empathetic towards others, regardless of their beliefs or opinions.

### **Embrace the beauty of the world**

The poem encourages us to embrace the beauty of the world around us. It reminds us to "be cheerful. Strive to be happy." This line encourages us to appreciate the simple things in life, such as the beauty of nature or the company of loved ones.

### **Practice gratitude**

Desiderata also encourages us to practice gratitude. The poem states, "With all its sham, drudgery, and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be careful. Strive to be happy." This line reminds us that life can be challenging, but there is still much to be thankful for. Practicing gratitude can help us focus on the positive aspects of life and boost our overall well-being.

### **Strive for personal growth**

Finally, Desiderata encourages us to strive for personal growth. The poem states, "Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here." This line reminds us that we all have the potential for personal growth and development. It encourages us to be patient and compassionate towards ourselves as we strive towards our goals.

Desiderata offers timeless wisdom on how to live a meaningful and fulfilling life and how to become a better leader. By embodying these values, we can create a life that is filled with purpose and happiness.



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HITTING THE WALL

If you've run into a wall in making progress, got stuck on a plateau, or failed to achieve desired success, it might not be that you need to put in more time or effort, but maybe change your approach. If you can be receptive and responsive to a change, it may be just what is needed.

It's not always easy to do so, either as athletes or coaches, or even in our personal non-sport lives. Good coaches don't just push their athletes to train hard and smart. They look for ways to effect changes that will benefit them, whether a change in technique, strategy, visualization, or something else.

But humans are resistant to change, and there isn't a coach among us who, after making a suggestion to change something, hasn't heard, "But it doesn't feel right."

Athletes can sometimes be more positively responsive and accepting of changes if the "why" can be explained in a way that they will understand, if the reasons can be translated into terms that can open their minds, enlighten, reassure. "Because I said so" doesn't work. "Trust me" is better but falls short. "Try it, you'll like it" is good for a cereal commercial but lacks punch.

Even Eddie Reese's admonition to coaches at the ASCA World Clinic one year, "You don't have to believe me, but it's true", while better, lacks authority if the element of trust is missing.

In discussing this topic with a very experienced coaching colleague recently, the suggestion was offered to ask the swimmer we were wanting to help progress to tutor a younger, less experienced swimmer in the same area. I asked why. "Because of the Robert Heinlein quote, 'When one teaches, two learn.'" I've shared that quote for years. It's so true and so wise. I'd always assumed it must be Confucian.



It's a given that change can be difficult, and most people are resistant to changing established patterns, methods, habits. (Think about your diet!) But change is necessary to avoid stagnation. Species that don't change or evolve often become extinct.

The US. Marine Corps unofficial mantra is "Improvise, adapt, overcome." (See Clint Eastwood in *Heartbreak Ridge*.)



It's also a given that if you do things the same way you've always done them, you can expect the same results you've always gotten. Expecting different results is insanity, a comment usually attributed to Albert Einstein.

Learning how to embrace change to find success establishes new patterns. Think of how we use progressive skills to teach stroke technique. Change. Find success. Make another change. Find more success. Cultivating and nurturing this process builds optimism and confidence that results in improved receptivity and response to change.



In NYC recently to record the audiobook version of **EDDIE REESE: Coaching Swimming, Teaching Life**

NISCA JOURNAL STAFF and Writers

**Editor:** Dana Abbott

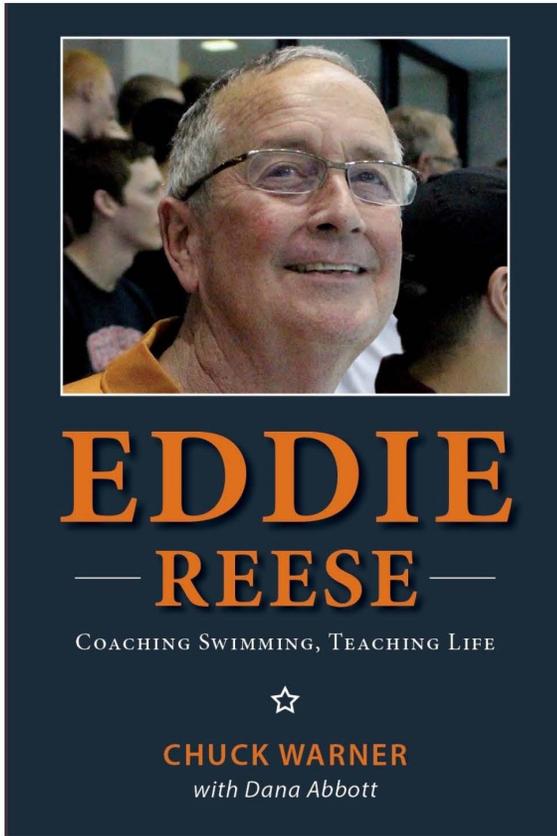
**Contributors:** Dr. Karl Hamouche, Mike Peterson, Aimee Schmitt, Michael J. Stott, Dawn Weatherwax, Don Mason, Charlie Hoolihan

**Medical Consultant:** Karl Hamouche, M.D.





Big announcement at bottom of this page!!!



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**EDDIE REESE**

**COACHING SWIMMING,  
TEACHING LIFE**

**BY CHUCK WARNER**

**WITH DANA ABBOTT**

[Adapted excerpt from book, on *Competitiveness*]

***“Personally, I try to get better at everything I do every year.”***

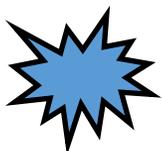
Science says that the entire cellular makeup of a human being is replaced every seven years. As our time on earth passes, we have the choice to strive for personal growth mentally and physically, or not. Like all of us, Eddie Reese isn't physically the same person he was years ago, yet he makes sure that his mind continues to grow. And as he will gladly admit, with that passing of time perhaps a little of his internal fire has been traded for a more philosophical view of competition. In an interview in 2018, he had this to say:

***Now when we compete, we're still as competitive as can be when that gun goes off, but afterward you shake hands and are happy for the winner. I heard something years ago, "At the end of the contest you should not be able to tell the winners from the losers." I realize that might be impossible. But it sure sounds good.***

***No printed word, nor spoken plea can teach young minds what they should be.***

***Not all the books on all the shelves - but what the teachers are themselves.***

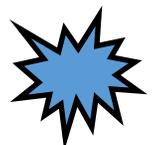
*-Rudyard Kipling*



**The Eddie Reese Audiobook is coming!!!**

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## NEW NISCA SPONSOR FOR ALL AMERICA DIVING WEEKEND!

NISCA is excited to announce a new sponsorship with CleanEntries LLC, the makers of **eDive** and **CleanEntries.com**. CleanEntries/eDive will be the NISCA Sponsor for the All America Diving Weekend in June where every submitted All America diving entry is viewed and judged by high-caliber panels of diving judges from around the country to determine the final NISCA All America Diving Awards. This sponsorship will cover the All America Diving Weekends from 2023-2026.

CleanEntries/eDive provides an outstanding software package called **eDive** which is used to manage and run diving competitions across the country. **eDive** along with its online registration counterpart **www.CleanEntries.com**, provides a complete solution for your diving meets! **eDive** is a Windows-based application that can be used to run any kind of diving meet. **eDive** can run any meet from a simple dual meet all the way up through a 600+ diver meet like AAU Nationals! The best feature of **eDive** is its ability to let you run your meet the way you want to. You are not forced into doing things a specific way. **eDive** has the flexibility that you'll need, and we give it our full recommendation!

**eDive** also has a companion website that is used to collect all of your meet registrations online. You should definitely give them a try for your next invitational. Just send them your meet information to get started. They will collect all of your coaches, divers, validated dive lists and even your entry fees online if you want. The only thing you need to worry about is setting your diving order! No more entering sheets by hand. And the best part is that there is no cost to use it! If you own an **eDive** license you can use the online registration site for free! Go to **www.CleanEntries.com** and check it out!

As a NISCA member there are other benefits for using **eDive** and **CleanEntries**. Current NISCA members are entitled to a **20% discount** on the price of a new license. To get your discount please contact **eDive** sales at [sales@edive.info](mailto:sales@edive.info).

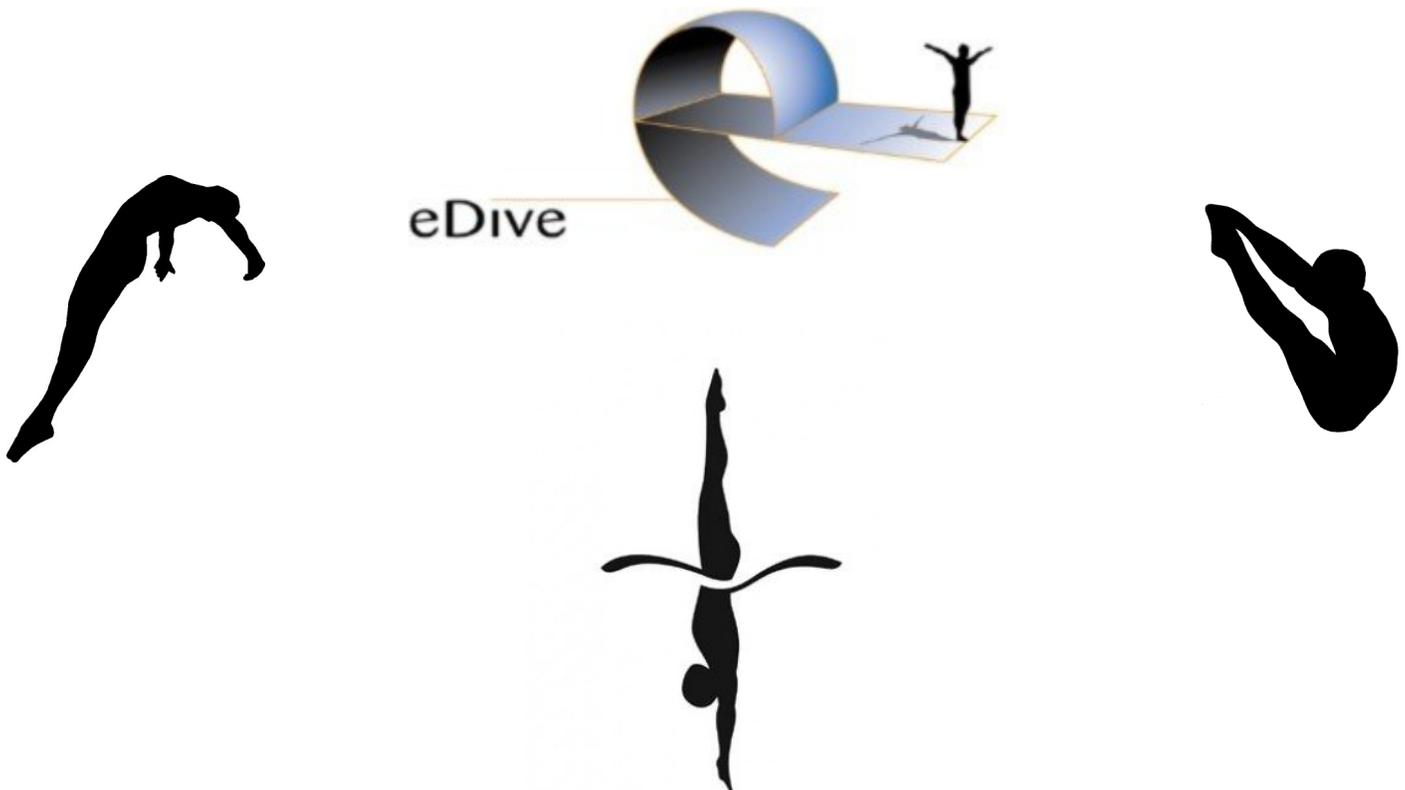
**Kristin Libardoni** *"They are incredibly effective and reliable for efficiently running diving events."*

**Penny DiPomazio** *"They have done a great job for us. They do not charge fees to set up and run meets on their site like others do. You purchase eDive software and renew for a nominal fee each year. It can be as low as \$25 depending on what license you have. eDive and CleanEntries works well for us. Additionally, if there is something you think would make the program easier or better they are open minded about making changes for the better when needed."*

We are very excited about this sponsorship and to bring you this benefit, and we encourage you to visit their websites to find out more about them. You can visit **eDive** at [www.eDive.info](http://www.eDive.info) and **CleanEntries** at [www.CleanEntries.com](http://www.CleanEntries.com).

**eDive website: [www.eDive.info](http://www.eDive.info) eDive contact: [sales@edive.info](mailto:sales@edive.info)**

**CleanEntries website: [www.CleanEntries.com](http://www.CleanEntries.com) CleanEntries support: [support@cleanentries.com](mailto:support@cleanentries.com)**



# Step Up Your Game With These Products From SwimSmart

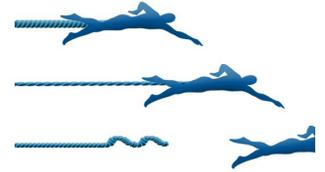


## Push Paddle

Fix bad dolphin kicking!  
Resistance from the top  
Moon cut-out for streamlining  
Three sizes for any ability

## Break-Away

Fix bad resistance sets!  
Automatic release system  
Use with Power Towers  
A whole new ability



## Power Harness

Fix bad body alignment!  
Drive with the shoulders  
Use with any resistance tool  
Carabiner for quick exchanges



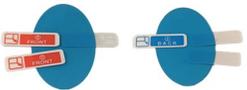
## The Biology of Swimming

Fix bad knowledge!  
Swimming science for beginners  
300+ illustrations  
Fun and easy to read



## Fog-X

Fix foggy goggles!  
Lasts weeks to months  
Fits virtually any goggle  
Two pairs included



## Squeezline

Fix bad streamlines!  
Audible BEEP for feedback  
Soft silicone case  
Every streamline, every wall



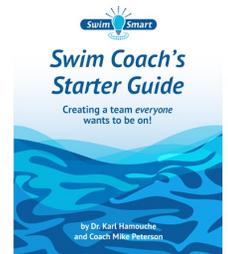
## E(xchange)- Paddles

Fix dropped elbows and train EVF  
Exchange all paddles for variety  
Incentivize the body to grip with the forearm  
Ala-carte combinations available by email



## Swim Coach's Starter Guide

Written by Swim Smart founders  
Perfect for new coaches  
A resource for head coaches  
Directly applicable guidelines



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Improve your coaching ability  
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Learning for the whole team

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## 4 Easy Steps to Improve This Season (*OK, maybe 5*)

by Aimee Schmitt

*Editor's Note: This is a reprint of an excellent article from 2021. We think you will agree it is worth a reprise.*

***The key to being successful is not necessarily doing something big and spectacular; but rather doing the little things extraordinarily well. Have you ever thought about "the little things"?***

How many little details go into swimming just one stroke of freestyle correctly? Your head position, hand position, core position, front arm press, recovery, where your hand enters the water, the depth of the pull, the angle of the pull, head position as you breathe, breath timing, and so on. You get the point...10's if not 100's of details that make up each swim stroke. Some details become automatic, and there is no direct thought about performing the function. You just do it... hundreds of thousands of strokes every week, every month. However, if even one of those little details has been developed with poor technique, and is poorly repeated as a habit, these become the items that when corrected will bring about the most change for improvement this season.

### **Step 1. Identify your details.**

Start with a quick list—what are you already “good” at and what needs improvement. Consult your coach on what they recommend would be the single best item to improve. You can even ask your teammates or your parents for their thoughts on areas of improvement. Be open to suggestions and honestly evaluate where you feel your improvements can come from. Then, choose one of those items to focus one and get to work.

*Example: Kick outs off the wall. Not breathing the first stroke.*

### **Step 2. Be specific on how to change the detail.**

It is one thing to say that you need to have better kick-outs; it is another to actually have a plan to do something about it. So be specific on how you will improve. Do you need to plan to stay after practice two days a week to work specifically on the walls? Do you need to plan to go to a clinic or a camp? Can you work with your coach to create a new dryland exercise specifically for added strength in this area? A specific plan will help you get you started and focus on making the change.

### **Step 3. Establish a timeline for the improvement.**

Clearly delineate and even write down how many weeks you plan to put intense focus on the change, and punctuate that timeline with intermediate measuring marks. For example—if you plan to improve kick-outs off the wall—you must state: “From (today's date) to (6 weeks from now)—I am going to do X, Y, and Z to improve my kick outs. After 6-weeks I am going to ask for an evaluation from coach and I expect that my time will be faster as a result.”

It is important to include a start and finish time window and have your coach or family help you set up a reasonable timeline for measuring improvement. It could be measuring your speed in practice or at the mid-season or end of season meet. In the plan of improving kick outs off the wall—it could be as simple as measuring improved distance off the wall. Or speed in and out of the wall.

All of these are ways to keep you on track with improving a single detail.

### **Step 4. Document the process.**

There are several ways to document the process. Simply writing down where you are at the start point is the easiest way to begin to measure progress. Videotaping is another. If you can ask your coach or teammate to video your current stroke or kick-out—and write down your plan in a logbook, even better. Then, later, verify improvement with follow up documentation at each mile marker. By documenting the process and the progress, you take ownership of the change you want to have, and as a result you create a NEW habit that is a good, skilled, and fast one.

### **Step 5. Go back to Step 1.**

Once you have improved on one detail, go back to your original list and focus in on another detail you know you need to work on to make another improvement. Following these steps will almost guarantee improvement every season.

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*Aimee Schmitt is a former NCAA All-American swimmer for Stanford University, coach, author, and avid believer in goal-setting.*

## The Three Laws of Control

Mark Onstott

*Past-President and Current All America Coordinator*

In a fit of depression sometime in the late 1980s I made a startling discovery: *I realized I didn't control everything.*

If you haven't realized this yet, let me be the first to tell you, **You** don't control everything, either. The whole control thing is something most people realize soon after being grounded by their parents for the first time, sent to bed without dinner (*is this still a parenting technique?*), or made to eat their vegetables or in my case, *any* kind of seafood at dinner (btw, fishsticks aren't seafood!).

I was old enough at the time of this flash of clarity to know this, but maybe not mature enough to believe it. I was coaching at Cy-Fair High School in Houston, Texas, which at the time was just on the western outskirts of Houston proper. Cy-Fair was an interesting place. I imagine it still is. Driving around my old stomping grounds a few years ago I found I couldn't find my way around very well, things had changed so much. The physical landscape had changed but I doubt the core of the area has changed at all. I had been coaching in an area and a school district where a new high school opened about every 5 years. In sports, football was king, followed by rodeo as a close second. Everybody knew football was and is number one in Texas, but I wasn't warned about the whole rodeo thing.



We were fast approaching the next school opening and once again it was going to gut my attendance zone just like the previous two openings had. I would work long and hard building a TEAM at a school where cowboy hats, boots and dusters were the fashion statements for both boys and girls. We would be just about to reach a tipping point and **bam!** 50-75% of my TEAM would disappear, only to reappear (due to re-aligned attendance zones) at the new high school down the road. With the last one to open, before I left, it literally **was** down the road. I could see it when I stuck my head out the pool door and looked down the highway.

I have to admit I was also frustrated with some parents and the club situation at the time. I was really upset, mostly at my lack of control, in so much of my professional life, so I started making a list of the things I did and didn't control. There is something cathartic about writing and (let's be honest about it) lists are the coolest. Strangely, the process of writing about control almost gave me a sense of control. So here is what I wrote:

### Things I CONTROL

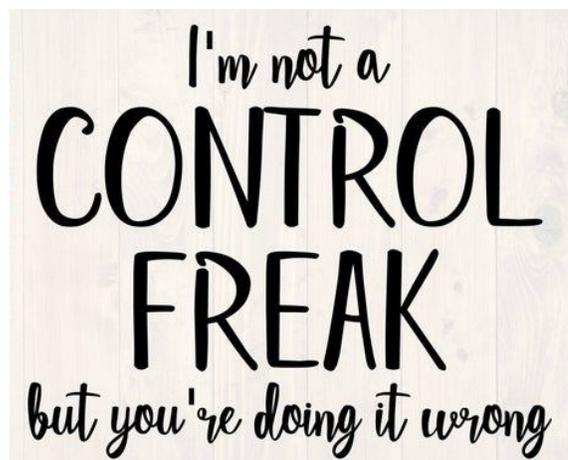
- ◆ Program Content- philosophy, goals, rules, and practice content.
- ◆ My behavior, attitude, commitment, choices, knowledge, preparation, honesty, integrity and purpose (mission).
- ◆ Who is in MY program.
- ◆ My approval- of other people's behavior, attitude, effort, etc.

### Things I PARTIALLY CONTROL (It turns out there is a category in between control and no- control)

- ◆ Attendance- through rules, expectations and consequences.
- ◆ Frequency of Practice- in conjunction with the school and the U.I.L. (state governing body for extracurricular activities)
- ◆ Volume of Practice- within school and U.I.L. rules and regulations.
- ◆ Swimmer Behavior- by setting expectations, rules, and enforcing both.
- ◆ Hidden Training- only to the extent of informing and reminding.
- ◆ Performance- practice or meet, only as it relates to those things I CONTROL.

### Things over which I have NO CONTROL

- ◆ Other people- their attitudes, commitment, honest, choices, or effort.
- ◆ Parents- enough said.



I left Cy-Fair a couple of years later, just before another high school opened. I packed all of my stuff and headed north. After being at my new high school for 5 or 6 years I found the need to revisit my "control" list. The New Trier (Chicago area) High School Boys Swimming and Diving TEAM had just missed winning the state championship. By "just missed" I mean we finished 5th.

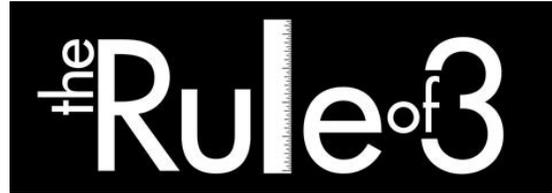
There were only a few people who realized just how close we had come to a championship. It was one of those Rube Goldberg situations where one occurrence caused another and so on. So many things went wrong at our sectional (state qualifying meet) and at the state meet that few people outside of our coaching staff saw what could have been. Our sprint star false-started in the 50 at the sectional meet. In the prelims at the state meet our breaststroker hit the bottom after claiming the official got in his way as he attempted the medley relay exchange. Our medley relay qualified 8th. He went 2 full seconds faster in the finals and we had a time that was second fastest in the meet.

*By the way, the video showed no interference from the official. It did show a swimmer who had such a great take off that he got a little disoriented on re-entry so that he lost control, hit the water and then the bottom.*

## Murphy's Laws

1. In any field of endeavor, anything that can go wrong, will go wrong.
2. Left to themselves, things always go from bad to worse.
3. If there is a possibility of several things going wrong, the one that will go wrong, is the one that will cause the most damage.
4. Nature always sides with the hidden flaw.
5. If everything seems to be going well, you have obviously overlooked something.

Frankly, no one except folks from New Trier would claim we just missed a state championship, but we did. To be fair, the things that happened to us don't happen to state championship TEAMS... at least not all at once!



The mishaps and an accompanying case of the "what ifs?" caused me to revisit my earlier psychotherapeutic writing. This time it wasn't just to save my sanity. It was to devise a plan to actually win a state championship. I now call my notes on control: "**The Three Laws of Winning a State Championship**". Back at Cy-Fair they were more like "*The 3 laws of survival*".

They really are the Cliff's Notes version of a self help book.

Here they are, simple as can be:

- ◆ **Law 1: Control the controllable**
- ◆ **Law 2: Control the semi-controllable**
- ◆ **Law 3: Forget everything else.**

I had a copy of the above on my office bulletin board for quite a few years until I retired in 2014. In my 20 years at New Trier (1994-2014), the boys team won 7 state championships and two mythical *national* championships. We also trophied (top 3) 3 additional times, so it seems to have worked. It isn't easy for a recovering control freak to stick to the rules, but it actually makes me feel better to just read the rules as a reminder.

Author's note: *I didn't openly share these with the athletes. I wrote the list and the laws from my perspective, that of a coach not that of an athlete. Anyway, most high school males don't need someone telling them not to worry. At New Trier if they are worrying, hopefully it is about academics or their social life and **not** SWIMMING and DIVING.*



## NUTRITION

# Food = Calories = Energy = Performance!

By Dawn Weatherwax, RD, LD, ATC, CSCS

### *“How Much Fuel Should I Eat a Day?”*

75% of athletes get it **WRONG!**

As long course, Olympics, and Endurance events get underway a common question is “How much do I need to eat? This is a loaded question.

Athletes need optimal energy to train, recharge, recover, and perform! It is also essential for growth, immunity, avoiding injury and every aspect of bodily functions. It affects both males and females of all ages; however, 75% of athletes undereat.

### Signs of Under Eating

- ◆ Weight loss
- ◆ Fatigued all the time
- ◆ Chronic soreness or prolonged recovery
- ◆ Not finishing strong
- ◆ Hard to stay with pace, timed trainings or not progressing as expected
- ◆ Irritable
- ◆ Lack of growth (weight/height)
- ◆ Not happy, low self-esteem, sadness, not motivated
- ◆ Inconsistent or lack of menstrual cycle
- ◆ Decreased libido
- ◆ Increased rate of sickness/injuries (stress fractures)
- ◆ Dry skin
- ◆ Consistently cold
- ◆ Digestive health changed
- ◆ Change in sleep quality and quantity

### Mistaken Cues: Hunger & Fullness

Hunger and fullness is not always a good indicator of optimal fueling; especially for people on the leaner side or on the lower end of the growth and weight chart. Many times the brain is not matching the signals of what the body needs and the stomach gets full before properly nourished. The best way to see if the caloric needs are being met for all situations is logging on an app. Cronometer is my favorite one so far.

### Common Error

When training intensifies most athletes don't increase their caloric intake to match. This can only lead to substandard outcomes.

### How to Calculate Energy Needs

#### *Quick method for collegiate or younger swimmer*

The average female mid/high school/collegiate swimmer needs ~2200-3500 calories a day and males can range from ~2200-5000 calories a day!

#### *Quick Method for All*

Cronometer: Open free app and input information to calculate energy needs. Make sure you say **Very Active** for activity! Please note that the calculations on these sites are not always optimal for athletes but they are still a good place to start. *(free app download and info at [chronometer.com](http://chronometer.com))*

#### *Advanced Method for All*

Indirect Calorimetry or Resting Metabolic Rate (RMR) testing. This is what I do at my business. We do an actual measurement of how many calories you burn (RMR). Then we do an extensive food and activity recall to see if this matches the recommended measurement/calculations and individualize from there. Some places that have these devices can travel. This measurement is highly recommended for the serious or elite athlete and should be measured at least once a year. The change in daily caloric needs vary greatly pending on training. Working with a Sports Dietitian is highly recommended to make sure caloric needs match the training throughout the year.

### What you Eat Does Matter

Please understand it does make a difference where these calories come from, in what amounts and at what times. To learn more, please refer to past and future Swimming World nutrition articles.

### Conclusion

Fueling properly and varying caloric needs with training fosters an optimum foundation for peak health and performance! To get a sense on how to accurately eat enough with ideal food options go to [www.SN2G.com](http://www.SN2G.com).

*Dawn Weatherwax is a Registered/Licensed Dietitian with a specialty in Sports Nutrition and is the Founder of **Sports Nutrition 2Go** and **Dawn Weatherwax's Sports Nutrition Academy**. She has been working with athletes for over 25 years. She is also the author of *The Official Snack Guide for Beleaguered Sports Parents*, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Sports Nutrition* and *The Sports Nutrition Guide for Young Athletes*.*

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### Athletes' Stories

**Grant H** -Gained over 55lb of lean weight, Top 10 in the country. Added nutrition age 14yr.

**Mariah D.**-Gained 25lb of lean, got leaner, Top 10 in the country. Added nutrition age 13yr.

**Emma D**-Got leaner. Won State! **HS**-13yr. Tired & barely improving to Rocking it at every meet, growing:



# Motivating Swimmers to New Heights

Michael J. Stott, *Courtesy Swimming World Magazine*

Memorable are the sporting events where an athlete or team is “on fire.” This month *Swimming World* checks in with two high school and two age group coaches for insight into how that happens. Spoiler alert: the common denominator is “buy-in” from athletes who connect with a coach.

In February the Richmond, Va.-based Saint Christopher’s and Saint Catherine’s boys and girls teams won the Virginia Independent State Athletic Association swimming titles through inspired above seed swimming. Second place Woodberry Forest boys did the same scoring an impressive 51.5 points above seed while achieving a NISCA A-A and state record time (1:33.09) in the 200 yard medley relay.

## The Woodberry Approach

Greg Guldin, in his 11th year as WFS coach, offers his athletes a very precise, measured season plan that starts with an emphasis on a “mental and physical taper” beginning the first day of September practice. “To me taper is more art than science. I tell the boys taper is not magic, but is directly related to the entire season. I do not care about winning or losing a meet in-season. We don’t rest mid-year. Every meet is a sprint practice and I push them as hard as I absolutely can,” he says.

The Tigers take an annual post-Christmas training trip featuring the traditional rigors (weights, dryland, volume, meets) of hard work. In mid-January Guldin initiates a gradual drop in daily yardage from 7000 yards to 2800 two days before the state meet. After the conference meet and two weeks before the state competition he turns off pace clocks, stops reading out times and asks the boys to swim sets by energy percent while helping them to refine strokes.

Guldin counsels his swimmers on good decision-making in respect to diet, sleep, academics, stretching and the like. He also engages an active alumni community. “We regularly get emails from past swimmers who share memories and excitement about the meet,” he says. Visualization is a constant. But the most galvanizing event is the Tigers’ “I believe Day,” held the Tuesday before States. “Here every member of the team, state qualifier or not, writes an inspirational quote on a bed sheet that travels with us to States. Competing swimmers include their individual event goal times. Each person reads to the group what they wrote and what it means. It is a pretty emotional time - in an uplifting spiritual sort of way,” he says. A shaving ritual follows.

“There seems to be a self-propagated mystique that happens around mid-January each year,” Guldin says. “We can all feel it. We cannot wait to see the psych sheet.. It is all we really think or talk about once it is published. By this time our boys are confident in all they have done and yet we are all more nervous than any of us is willing to admit. It is a remarkable time to be a Tiger.

“I am humbled to have seen our boys year after year pull through when it matters. They do so because they believe in the history of the Tigers, their training and, beyond anything else, believe in their teammates who went through it all with them.”

## How the Saints Go Marching In

Drake “Bucka” Watson knows motivation and winning. He has been a swimmer or coach on seven state championship teams since 2007. In addition his summer league teams have won the last six James River Aquatic Club championship meets.

“It all starts with a positive and cohesive team culture,” he says. “This can be hard to manage with high school swim teams as so many of the athletes swim for year-round clubs and are not on the pool deck with the high school team on a daily basis. So then the key to success at big meets is getting all swimmers to buy in and to care about the team. Having team leadership that buys into a team first mentality trickles down to everyone else and breeds confidence,” he says.

“Ultimately, the swimmers must want to swim for each other, buy in to the team culture and the team goal. And team culture is often a direct reflection of leadership,” he notes. “This year our captains came up with a hashtag #OTOG -- “One Team One Goal.” It became a rallying cry for the rest of the season. It was a tremendously simple, tangible reminder of what we are all about. No question the power of swimming for something greater than yourself brings out the best results. It’s not surprising that many of our year-round swimmers achieve life-time bests at States.

Watson’s 14-week plan includes early season technique instruction, fitness emphasis, repeats of valuable test sets, taper and fine-tuning. He uses test sets to assess progress and help swimmers finish, something his teams do exceedingly well. One set consists of 4 x 50 descend followed by 6 x 50 all out on a choice stroke descending interval. “The all out fast 50s on the descending interval really help our athletes finish strong even when exhausted.

- ◆ 4 x 50 descend to All Out @1:30
- ◆ 50 All Out @1:20
- ◆ 50 All Out @1:10
- ◆ 50 All Out @ 1:00
- ◆ 50 All Out @ :50
- ◆ 50 All Out @ :40
- ◆ 50 All Out

“We also work weekly with resistance bands to effect explosive-ness. For most of the season it’s just resistance training. Then, before States we introduce assisted swimming. We find the added speed is a real psychological lift. The swimmers always get so excited for those practices,” he says.

## A Call to Arms

Megan Oesting is owner/head coach of the Eastern Iowa Swimming Federation. A former UCLA All-American swimmer and champion water polo player she was also the 2019 national age group coach of the year. "I do motivation differently than most coaches," she says. "For me it is not about adding a new goal, target or direction, but rather about removing barriers so swimmers have the freedom to put themselves out there and try.

"My values in practice and meets boil down to ENGAGEMENT. Engagement might look different in practice depending on what the focus is, but at meets it usually means that it's OK to go into battle and see what happens. That's after we have had a great deal of conversation on the plan or techniques involved. I want my swimmers to trust what we've practiced and to know enough to make good decisions in the heat of battle," says Oesting.

"We emphasize effort through engagement. We permit mistakes, but admonish lack of response and disengagement. We want swimmers to try hard, to take risks and be vulnerable. On our team racing is nothing other than full engagement and the willingness to respond to the race. Those traits need no physical talent. Accepting a challenge means leaning over the edge because next time you may find the edge is farther out than you thought thus allowing you to lean out farther and find out you can do so much more. So -- go race and find out.

"The key is to make peace with the fact that you're going into battle and committing fully to the experience. Focus on the battle, not the potential parade or the potential disappointment that may or may not follow. Deal with all that later. Just keep it simple, go out and fight, every time, nothing more nothing less. Learning to fight is what we do," Oesting says.

## A Case Study in Motivation

Sarah Dawson is currently corporate relations director for the Mission Viejo Nadadores. She has been a division director for MVN's 11/12 age group, a Southern California age group coach of the year and has a master's degree in physical education with an emphasis in sports psychology.

She motivates her charges by preparing them for virtually any competitive encounter. "With my 11/12's we constantly DISCUSS event lineups. In daily practice we always do the 200 IM or 200 free, a distance event (400m or 500 yard free) and a smattering of 50's/100's of strokes. In competition I have my athletes swim max events in a typical three-hour meet. To prepare, our daily practice yardage, usually 6200 yards in 120 minutes, breaks down as follows:

A meet lineup example: 200 IM, 100fr, 100br, 500fr = 900 total

- ◆ With warmup and cooldowns: 1700 primary warmup + 500 (wup/cool down of 200 IM) + 400 (wup/cool down of 100 FR) + 300 (wup/cool down of 100 breast) + 400 (warmup of 500) + 500 cooldown of 500 = 3800
- ◆ So, if I'm asking someone to swim that . . . plus finals, we train to overcome those types of yardage at meets.

"I expect swimmers to be able to complete specific sets with high intensity at this practice yardage. If they can then they have the tools and confidence to swim ANY lineup for prelims and finals -- and be successful.

"I once gave 9/10 year old entry level kids, on a Friday night practice, a 400 IM to complete for a fun challenge set, after a week of technique-based IM work. The 400 IM was an accumulation of a week's worth of hard work and was used as a reward and prize for what the swimmers had learned during that week," says Dawson.

"I communicated the 'prize' throughout the week and we talked repeatedly about the strategy of how to swim four laps of each stroke without a breakdown of technique. We talked about the 3rd 25 and how it may hurt and where they may want to stop, hold onto the lane line and quit. We discussed perseverance, fear, what focus points to review when tired to ensure the maintenance of their strokes and for a successful completion of the 400. After one of my highest recorded attendance workout weeks, followed by the highest attended Friday afternoon practice that I had had all year . . . I had 28 9/10 Bronze level kids complete beautifully a full 400 IM. Legally.

"I was chastised by the head coach, who said that it was too much yardage and that I shouldn't have given 9/10's a swim like that to complete and possibly fail. I told him, 'Don't ever underestimate the power or motivation of an EDUCATED kid.' This one incident happened almost twenty years ago and defined my philosophy in coaching," she says.

---

### ***Dawson's Tips to Successful Motivation***

**COMMUNICATION** is key. Talk to the athletes and allow them to voice their fears, needs and end-game. Communicate to the parents about the "PLAN." Involving them only increases your chances for success. Yours and the athletes.

**GOAL SETTING.** Be collaborative. The swimmer's job is to voice what they want to achieve. Your job as a coach is to GUIDE them through realistic steps to achieve that goal successfully.

**SEASON PLANNING.** Give them a season plan, which acts as a road map for their training and meet schedule. Arm them with information that shows daily, weekly, monthly and season plans.

**CONSISTENCY.** Be consistent in your message to your athletes. Flip-flopping all over the place leads to confusion and lack of confidence in them and in you as a coach.

**ENCOURAGE and CONSTRUCTIVELY CORRECT.** A successful coach cannot criticize and expect a successful outcome for the athlete. A coach needs to encourage and correct the athletes and lead them down their paths without force.

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Michael J. Stott is an ASCA Level 5 coach, golf and swimming writer. His critically acclaimed coming-of-age golf novel, "Too Much Loft," is in its third printing, and is available from store.Bookbaby.com, Amazon, B&N and distributors worldwide.

# Training Three Essential Performance Characteristics

## Part 2 of 3: Strength

Charlie Hoolihan, *ASCA Swimming Strength and Conditioning Specialist (SSCS)*

This is the second of the three-part series on developing performance characteristics needed for athletic success. Strength will now be examined as it relates to swimming performance. Power will follow in the next issue.

Several factors are involved when planning athletic strength (or resistance) training.

These are:

- ◆ Athletic Needs - the sport, event, and absolute strength requirements (upper body arm power needs of a football lineman versus swimmers).
- ◆ Age (Chronological and Training) – physical maturity and training experience.
- ◆ Individual variables – limb lengths, gender, and genetics, to name a few

These individual variables can then be factored into a training plan, influencing exercise selection, exercise order, exercise movement patterns, number of sets and repetitions, and combining sports and strength training.

The latter is the most critical aspect of planning for swimming because the number of hours spent in the pool training at various intensities requires a careful balance with strength sessions to avoid overload. This is especially important during the taper phases.

### Exercise selection

There are no magic "sport-specific" strength exercises. Most strength and conditioning professionals regard the athlete's sport as their specific training, while strength, stability, and power training are sport contextual. Research indicates strength training improves performance in all sports, so most programming contains a lot of similar exercises. This can be seen from the chart of the exercise choices for swimmers from a survey of elite-level strength trainers. (Crowley et al., 2018)

Exercise selection should consider how to strengthen all the muscles in the body, emphasize muscle groups needed for athletic success in a specific sport, and how to program the two together in coordination with the athlete's sports training.

Swimming's primary muscle groups, according to a review of EMG research are pectoralis major, triceps, anterior (front) shoulder, latissimus dorsi, posterior (back) shoulder, wrist/forearm extensors/flexors and biceps in the upper body. The quadriceps (upper thigh), hamstrings, and calves are most active in the lower body, and the rectus abdominis (abs), obliques (side muscles), and spinal (back) extensors are the trunk muscles which fire the most. (Martens, et. Al. 2015)

The force production of these muscles can be increased significantly via resistance training. Still, prudent planning needs to occur to balance the load on specific muscle groups to avoid overload and injury. Shoulder injuries are the most common in swimming, and the anterior shoulder group is most used in butterfly, freestyle, and breaststroke. Balancing these sports movements with more posterior shoulder and middle and lower back strengthening is important for injury resistance.

### Exercise selection and exercise order

The chart on the next page breaks out 30 possible exercises requiring little more than a YouTube search for technical advice, and most can be found on ASCA's Swimming and Conditioning Specialist Facebook page.

A few exercises marked by asterisks require clarification: chin-ups with bicep emphasis, partial leg extensions, tricep extension from elbow plank, row from a push-up position, single arm press from bridge position, and pull-overs from the bridge position.

Bicep emphasis chin-ups alter the movement pattern of a standard chin-up by lowering to an approximate 140-degree angle rather than the full 180-degree angle with straight arms.

Partial leg extensions – this adaptation becomes more swim contextual by starting the exercise at a 120-degree knee angle mark

instead of 90 degrees. Finishing at the typical 180-degree mark mimics the quadricep activity in swim kicking.

Single arm press and pullovers in the bridge position – shoulders should rest on a bench or stability ball while legs assume bridge position in these two exercise versions.

Single arm row in a push-up position and tricep extension in an elbow plank position puts the athlete in a full horizontal body position to perform a standard exercise.

There are six exercises for each primary muscle group in each column, and the rows are set up in an order that can be used in a full-body circuit order.

As mentioned in several previous articles, a full-body circuit can benefit more than other exercise splits because of its convenience and efficiency. Research supports equivalent strength gains in full-body sessions as in split-body sessions, and the cardiovascular stimulus is similar to swimming. (Schoenfeld, et al., 2015)

Circuits with four to six exercises can be configured depending on the exercise room set-up and the number of athletes. Use the first three exercises in a column and add a stability and/or power exercise.

The second three exercises can be configured similarly with stability and power exercises.

### Exercise Chart

<b>Pectorals/anterior shoulder</b>	<b>Quadriceps</b>	<b>Biceps/posterior shoulder</b>	<b>Hamstrings/glutes/calves</b>	<b>Latissimus and back</b>	<b>Triceps</b>
Push-ups	Step-ups	Reverse shoulder flys	Hip extension	Pull-ups	Cable Rope push-down
Dumbbell press	Squats	*Chin-ups w bicep emphasis	Kettlebell swing	Inverted or horizontal pull-up	Dumbbell tricep extension
Barbell Bench press	*Partial motion leg extensions	Face-pulls	Single leg Dumbbell deadlifts	Single arm Row in push-up position	Cable Rope overhead tricep extension
*Single arm press in bridge position	Reverse lunges	Band or suspension trainer Y's and T's	Calf raises	Latissimus pull-downs	Overhead dumbbell tricep extension
Decline dumbbell press	Lateral step-ups	Shoulder press	Hip Thrust	*Pull-overs in bridge position	*Single arm tricep in elbow plank position

### Sets and repetitions

Three to four sets of each exercise completed in "rounds" of a circuit may be optimal, especially given the athlete's heavy swim training load. Three to four are recommended because the first set can be utilized partly as a lighter introductory set, the second and moderately heavy transition set, and the third and fourth are peak strength sets.

The transition set is probably the most important because it indicates how much physiological (and other) stress the athlete is undergoing into the peak strength sets. If they struggle with weight and repetition count less than their goal peak efforts, this indicates the strength set goals should be adjusted accordingly.

Research into optimal repetition counts indicates a wide range can be used (5-20) to stimulate strength gains. (Iverson et al. 2021) The key to the rep count is training as close to full exertion as possible at the end of whatever rep target is set. This is good news for less experienced lifters who can lift lighter with more repetitions and get similar benefits while mastering the exercise techniques.

### Programming swim and gym training

Coaches have to believe developing strength in the weight room benefits swimmers and plan their swim training accordingly. Peak strength enhancement blocks are best paired with lower load technique or moderate yardage aerobic blocks. This allows the swimmers to focus primarily on gaining strength which can be maintained during other swim phases of each season.

The strength blocks can be inserted two to four times per year near the early phases of fall, winter/spring, or summer seasons. The duration of each block can range from two to four weeks depending on the season – four weeks in fall, two to three in winter/spring, and two in the summer.

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QR codes to access bibliographic references in full:



[1]



[2]



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*Charlie Hoolihan is the Swimming Strength and Conditioning Specialist Certification Coordinator for the American Swim Coaches Association and has been strength training swimmers since 1990. He's also a presenter and writer for numerous national fitness organizations and publications.*

*You can set up a complimentary team-specific dryland training analysis of your resources and programming by contacting him at [charliehoolihan@gmail.com](mailto:charliehoolihan@gmail.com)*



## **OTHG-The Over The Hill Gang** *Fifty Years Later They're Still Together*

M. Frank Wilson

*With Permission*

The Over the Hill Gang gets back together every spring for another Masters National swimming meet, more than fifty years after their first open national meet victory. They come from all over the United States; New Hampshire, Texas, Iowa, Washington, California, Tennessee, North Carolina, Wisconsin, Illinois, Florida, Arizona, New York. Each year the team's spirit is as strong as it was in the beginning. They come together to represent the Cedar Rapids, Iowa Central Branch YMCA, just as they did half a century ago.

The roots of the team trace to their original age group swimming coach, Jim Gilchrist. Jim coached as a volunteer at the Cedar Rapids Central Branch YMCA from 1948 to 1973, creating the foundation for swimming dynasties of Cedar Rapids swimming in the 1960's and 1970's. Many of Jim's swimmers continued swimming competitively as the backbone of the **Cedar Rapids Washington High School** team. ***The Washington team won the Iowa State high school swimming championship 27 times from 1961 to 2008, including a streak of 11 consecutive, and two streaks of four consecutive championships.***

The Over the Hill Gang also includes swimmers from other Cedar Rapids high schools, and a few others who represented the Cedar Rapids YMCA in national competitions for Gilchrist. One of Jim's goals was for his select competition team to win the YMCA national championship. The Cedar Rapids team competed in the National YMCA meet nearly every year starting in 1959; the exceptions being when travel distances were too long for the team to afford.

The Cedar Rapids YMCA team's results improved year by year until it won the national YMCA championship in Springfield, Illinois in 1970. The nucleus of the team had graduated from high school and come back from college to compete for Cedar Rapids. ***They called themselves the "Over the Hill Gang."***

The final event of the 1970 meet was the 400yd-freestyle relay. The Cedar Rapids Y had already clinched the championship. But the team wanted to put forth their best effort for their coach, Big Jim Gilchrist. The relay order was Bruce Rollins, Tim Barnes, Davy Carrithers, and Rob Cook. As Rob later modestly recalled, "Bruce gave us a big lead, Tim improved our lead, Davy increased it even more, and I hung on for dear life." They set a new national record of 3:15.29. Second place was Huntington, Indiana in 3:17.61, which also bested the previous national record of 3:18.20. The Cedar Rapids time averaged slightly better than 48.83 seconds per 100 yards. Rollins had won the individual 100-yard freestyle event in 49.07.

Jim often recited this prayer with his team, "Carpenter, help all of these young men by giving them the strength and courage

to do their best today, and give the other swimmers the strength and courage to do their best. Let thy will be done on Earth today and forever. Amen." Both the Cedar Rapids and Huntington relays had truly done their best.

Cedar Rapids won again in 1971 in Ft. Lauderdale, FL.

Members of the team got on with their lives after the 1971 championship and followed their dreams to all four corners of the country and in between. Some attended college with swimming scholarships. Some eventually became professors, CPA's, attorneys, engineers, or financial advisors. Others pursued careers in real estate, military special forces, water treatment, teaching, and sales. A few became swimming coaches themselves. **All were strongly influenced by the lessons they learned in competitive swimming under the tutelage of Jim Gilchrist, and their high school and college coaches.**

Life events affected members of the Over the Hill Gang as time went by, as they do everyone. Personal struggles, illnesses, deaths, substance issues, heart attacks, joint replacements, organ transplants, and suicide; all the difficult things life throws at us. Several of the Gang would get back together every few years, for a picnic or reunion, with promises to get together again.

Rob Cook's wife, Jane, suffered a recurrence of her breast cancer in 2008. She had beaten cancer once, but it became clear cancer would prevail. Jane had two requests for Rob; to get the team back together, and to become more active in civic volunteerism. The call went out to all of Coach Gilchrist's former swimmers after Jane lost her battle with cancer.

Rob asked Nick Gearhart to organize the team's return to competition. With Nick's persuasion, two people made significant decisions that enabled the team to return. Eric Petersen, branch director of the Cedar Rapids YMCA, decided to offer special non-resident memberships for out-of-town teammates. Gearhart convinced Claudia Multer, National YMCA Masters Meet Director, to revise meet rules to allow a team to enter more than three relays in the same age group. Since the members of the OTHG fall into a narrow age range, most being within a single 10-year age bracket, the three-relay limit would have kept many members from participating. With these decisions, all the members of the OTHG could return to full competition.

Captain Gearhart led The Over the Hill Gang back to competition at the 2009 National YMCA Masters swim meet at the International Swimming Hall of Fame pool in Ft. Lauderdale. This was the site of their second YMCA national championship in 1971. Twenty-one swimmers carried the OTHG banner at the

2009 meet. The members, wives and girlfriends were adorned with neon-yellow team T-shirts proclaiming the return of the OTHG. Starting a new tradition, members of the 1970 and 1971 relays were entered as the Cedar Rapids "Z" relay.

The OTHG has returned for every national YMCA Masters meet since, except 2017. Rob's mother, Jo Cook, had her 100th birthday that year. She was a strong supporter of many of the OTHG members as youths, so the team returned to Cedar Rapids that year to help her celebrate.

The roster of the Over the Hill Gang varies from year to year as life's commitments pull in various directions. Still, every year they compete representing the Cedar Rapids YMCA once again as teammates. And every year Gearhart continues as team Captain.

***The Over the Hill Gang is still together, more than fifty years after Big Jim Gilchrist achieved his national championship goal. They remain teammates for life. And they are having just as much fun as ever.***



## 1970

Kneeling: Bruce Rollins, James Halpin,  
Bill Klahn, Bill Taylor, Chris Wilson,  
Glen Prochaska

Second Row: Tom Wenkstern,  
Dennis Barrett, Joel Grimes,  
Coach Jim Gilchrist, Rob Cook,  
Dave Carrithers, Geoff Mykleby, Tim Barnes

Third Row: Mike Stodola, Bill Fowler,  
Stoney Turley, Kevin Spratt, Rob McKay,  
Alan Schenck, Ben Taylor

Missing from photo: Jim Bell, Steve Reeder

## 1971

Front row: Chet Casali, Brad Henry,  
Bruce Rollins, Jamey Halpin, Dennis Barrett

Second Row: unnamed official, hidden,  
Mark Wagner, John Mummy, Jim Gilchrist,  
Geoff Mykleby, Ben Taylor, Joel Grimes,  
Rick Forrester, Glenn Prochaska

Third row: Jim Nibert, Dennis Malloy,  
Bill Fowler, Warren Smith, Robbie Cook,  
Steve Hahn?

Stoney Turley, Kurt Moehlmann, Steve Shean,  
Bill Klahn

Missing: Al Schenck



The YMCA National Masters swim meet is the focus of the team to come together again. It is at times a reunion, at times a support group, a focus for lifetime fitness. Some are no longer able to compete. Life, and death, have taken their toll. Everyone has had their share of life's events brought on by themselves, by fate, or by accident.

**Those that have been members of any team know the exhilaration of being part of something larger than themselves.**

You'll find the OTHG on the deck rooting not just for their teammates but for swimmers from other teams as well. You'll find them having quiet conversations about the peaks and valleys of their lives, doing what they can to support each other, and sharing their collective wisdom as they face the challenges of aging.



**2009:** Front Row: Geoff Mykleby, Kurt Moehlmann, Tom Proctor, Dan Krizan, Rick Ottsen , Kevin Spratt  
 Second Row: Rob Cook, Ken Krizan, Jack Fritts, Tim Krizan, Tom Wenkstern, Steve Forrer, Barry Mandel  
 Third Row: Rob McKay, Nick Gearhart, Dave Carrithers, John Kinsella, Bruce Rollins, Chris Wilson, Bill Taylor, Jamey Halpin



**2018:** First Row: Pat Prochaska, Frankie Pence, Randy Hartkemeyer, Al Schenck, Joel Melsha, Wayne Melsha, Dave Carrithers, Kevin Spratt  
 Second Row: Glenn Prochaska, Brad Pence, Chris Hartkemeyer, Rob Cook, Kathy Cook, Jody Wilson, Frank Wilson, Laura Spratt  
 Third Row: Tracie Hartkemeyer, Steve Hartkemeyer, Rym Wenkstern, Tom Wenkstern, Jack Fritts, Ed Wadsworth  
 Fourth Row: Jamey Halpin, Mary Halpin, Bill Klahn, Peter Olberg, Jeane Schlatter, Nick Gearhart  
 Fifth Row: Geoff Mykleby, Kurt Moehlmann, Steve Heck, Barry Mandel

## Mermaid Affair

Annette Thies  
*With Permission*



I have an affair with the water  
It's not illicit, nor is it hidden  
I'm happy to tell you the salacious details  
If you care to listen

When the cacophony of life clutters my mind, I swim. Daily, I cavort, glide, dive, cruise, and float in the water. I seek calm, endorphins, frolic, fun and friendship. I'm never disappointed.

The water transforms my aching, plump aging body to a svelte, wrinkle free sea nymph. With each stroke the cool wet on my skin dissolves into warm comfort. My thoughts ebb and flow with the rhythm of my breath and my strokes fall into a familiar pattern.

I recall standing on my father's shoulders, holding tight to his hands. On the count of three he lifts while I jump out to the safe embrace of the turquoise blue. I miss my Dad who taught me to love the water. I hear his voice, *Don't forget your waterplay.*

With each pull and glide the water caresses my skin. Then it lifts me to its surface where I float, suspended somewhere between earth and heaven. If I hold my breath my legs float upward. As I release air my legs drop. Back and forth, hold then release, hold then release, until Nirvana.

Soon my slow, strong strokes couple with a six-beat kick and I'm energized. With each lap a stronger pull, a faster kick. Speed play heightens my connection to the water. My aching back disappears into a vision of a mystery man. Does he like mermaids, does he thrill at the swish of my powerful tail? Does he lust for me as a sheet of blue-green slips from my skin?

The morning sun's refraction on the water catches my attention and I dive into this kaleidoscope of colors. I swim into a prism of blues flowing to green, pink, and yellow. Shadow shapes mirror my arm movements as I swim closer to the bottom. Submerged I release bits of air and watch bubbles drift to the surface. All I hear is what is in my head - everything else is muffled. I sit in the quiet soft surround of water and become fluid - part of the waterscape until I slowly float to the surface, ready to start my day.





## Tidbits (and more) to enhance your coaching and life experience.

If you have something interesting you'd like to see shared here, send it to [nisca.journal01@gmail.com](mailto:nisca.journal01@gmail.com)

I think it was in a book called *Psycho-Cybernetics* by Maxwell Maltz that I remember reading this: ***"The brain cannot tell the difference between actually performing an activity and vividly imagining it."*** A new book by Jonathan Rhodes and Joanna Grover, *"The Choice Point: The Scientifically Proven Method to Push Past Mental Walls and Achieve Your Goals"* discusses that basic concept in much greater depth and detail.

### From Amazon:

*When we choose to go to the gym at 6am, keep running that marathon, or stay up late to study, we are making conscious, value-based decisions that help us fulfill our goals. But even though we know that daily good choices add up to healthy routines and strong results, these days it's just too easy to surrender to negative thoughts and old habits. How can we not?*

*Enter Functional Imagery Training (FIT). Grounded in science, FIT helps us lengthen our Choice Point: that moment when we say to ourselves, "Am I going to make the healthy decision, or am I going to choose to take an action that I know will undermine my success?" Merging mindfulness, motivational interviewing, and cognitive behavioral therapy into a user-friendly model—the first non-academic book of its kind—The Choice Point grants us control of the decisions that define us.*

*Jonathan Rhodes, a British psychologist, helped develop FIT, and Joanna Grover, an experienced therapist and coach, was the first person in the U.S. to be certified in FIT. Together, they work where science meets imagination to achieve peak performance, and their tools help us get to the root of our motivation. They've trained Olympians, C-Suite executives, and elite forces in the military to hack their autopilot systems and break records in their respective fields. The Choice Point is the roadmap they've built along the way, leading us from passengers to drivers of our own minds.*

Grover has an article in the June 24-25 Wall Street Journal that is an excellent companion to the Amazon synopsis:

<https://tinyurl.com/mua5tkj5>



### "Take a deep breath, calm down..."

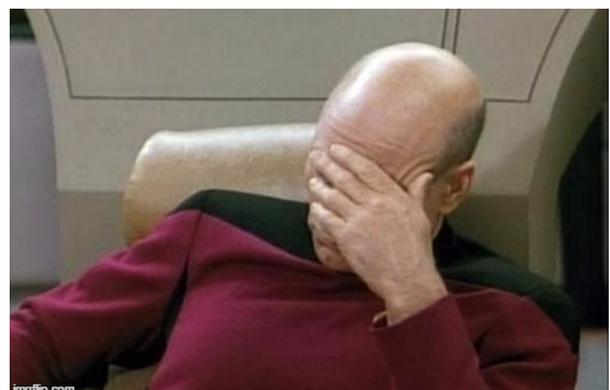
*"As far as we know, [sighing] is the fastest way to deliberately calm down."*

Dr. Andrew Huberman, neuroscientist at Stanford University studies the emotional and physiological effects of sighing. Beyond the differences between inhaling and exhaling, there are three types of respiration: normal breathing, gasping and sighing. When you sigh, you're reinflating hundreds of millions of collapsed alveoli, tiny air sacs, in the lungs. That improves lung functioning by suddenly expanding, clearing and opening up airways, infusing even more oxygen into the bloodstream—as well as balancing the ratio of carbon dioxide and oxygen in our brain and body.

James Nestor, a science journalist and the author of *"Breath: The New Science of a Lost Art,"* explains that most people take too many breaths per minute: *"When we overbreathe, we send the nervous system signals that we're stressed, which further disrupts our breathing cadence. It's a negative feedback loop."* Intentionally heaving a physiological sigh in one way to recalibrate from breathing too much or holding our breath, as we do when we're anxious. *"This isn't a placebo or magic, it's basic biology,"* says Nestor.

The full article from WSJ, "The Positive Power of a Good Sigh", can be found in The Wall Street Journal Issue for July 1-2:

<https://tinyurl.com/5n8ydzhc>





## Part Deux

### “Same old, same old”? Maybe not a great idea.

[Adapted from Joshua Robinson, in *The Wall Street Journal*] Two years ago, the Australian women’s soccer team, known as the Matildas (as in “Waltzing...”) weren’t sure what to expect from their new coach. He was asking a lot of questions about how much they’d slept on the plane, what their goals were, and when they planned to nap. He wanted to administer psychological screenings.

Paddy Steinfort, Football Australia’s new performance director was there to help Australia go as deep as possible at the 2023 Women’s World Cup it is co-hosting.

Since Steinfort took over all matters of physical and mental performance, the Matildas have collected more biological data on their players than in the history of the program; overhauled how they eat, travel, and sleep; and built an entire schedule around facing only top-level opponents.

“We’ve deliberately gone out of our way to play top-10 teams,” Steinfort says of the No. 12 Matildas, who have never been past a World Cup quarterfinal. “As opposed to playing whatever was available or whatever would get us easy wins.”

**COMMENT: Iron sharpens iron. Easy opponents aren’t doing you or your team any favors. Are you staying on top of your game? Are you looking for tougher competition?**

---

**Do you have a Fitbit device?** Do you track your weight, swim laps, biking miles, calories consumed/expended, personal shopping, etc., on an app on your phone? Do you use the calendar on your fridge to keep track? How about an old-fashioned hard-copy journal or logbook like a lot of swimmers use, e.g., the **Ultimate Swim Log and Goal Planner**, created and available from one of our longtime friends and contributors, Aimee Schmitt?

Mental-health professionals suggest tracking your mood and identifying patterns can be pretty helpful, too. When folks exercise and produce those wonderful endorphins, it can lead to a pretty good day, whereas sleeping in or oversleeping, or not getting enough sleep can sometimes produce the opposite effect. Certain types or amounts of foods can similarly affect one’s mood, as well as good or bad interactions with colleagues or friends.

Most of us remember how these things have had an influence on our mental state over the years, but being able to pinpoint any cycles or identify negative combinations of experiences and resulting moods could go a long way to help prevent them in the future.

Fortunately for you, if you’re a tech or gadget nerd, there are apps you can download and start tracking your moods, and maybe even use to discuss with your spouse/partner, personal physician, or mental-health practitioner if you feel a need to. Or maybe just using the app to help you become more aware of your activities and moods will be enough to help.

Apple’s latest software updates (iOS 17, iPadOS 17, Watch OS 10) include a way to track and chronicle your mental state and mood as well. Apple also has its **Health** app which can assess your risk of depression via a mental-health survey.

There is much more material on these topics in a comprehensive and excellent July 17 article by Julie Jargon in her “Family & Tech” column in *The Wall Street Journal* here:

<https://tinyurl.com/mujs3xz5>



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**“Be not afraid of greatness. Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and others have greatness thrust upon them.”**

— William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*

No matter how an all-time great reaches the top, in time they all face the same question: “*When is the right time to pass on the crown?*”

John Elway and Peyton Manning timed it pretty good. They both won championships and rode off into the sunset. But they were the exceptions.

Even William Shakespeare hung on too long. Have you ever seen (or herd of) a good production of “Two Noble Kinsmen”?

**No.**

You don’t want to limp out like a lamb, you want to still be roaring like a lion. And while it may be hard to know when to walk away from the thing that made you great, it’s never the right time to be finished as a person. Life is a gift, every **day** is a gift, and what you owe in return for it is to keep growing, keep learning, and keep getting better as a person.

**WHEN**

**YOU FEEL  
LIKE**

**STOPPING**

**THINK**

**ABOUT YOU  
WHY YOU**

**STARTED**

A photograph of a swimming pool deck. In the foreground, a white starting block is mounted on a dark, wet concrete surface. The pool water is a vibrant blue, with dark lane lines visible. The scene is lit by bright sunlight, creating a strong reflection on the wet deck. The text "step up. dive in. opportunity awaits." is overlaid in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font on the right side of the image.

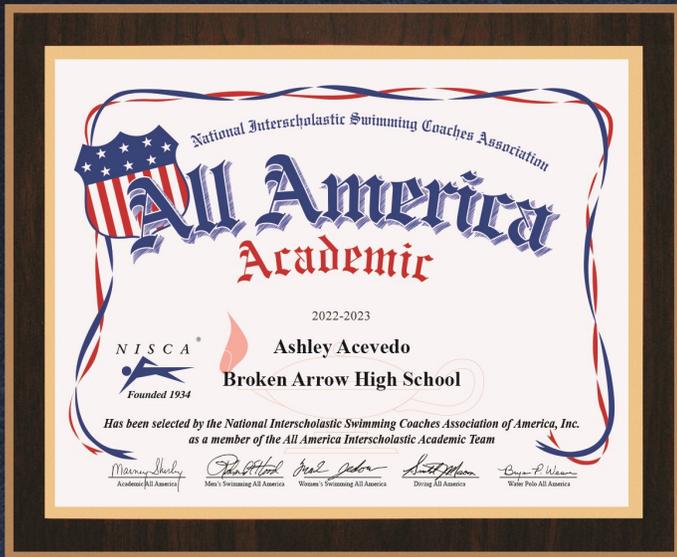
step up.  
dive in.  
opportunity  
awaits.

Courtesy Aimee Schmitt, The Ultimate Swim Log and Goal Planner

# PLAQUES

**\$49.95 / PQ-NISFAC**

Wood plaque displays the All-American certificate printed on a clear acrylic overlay so it's waterproof. It measures 10½" x 13" and comes individually boxed for presentation. Available in Water Polo, Diving, Academic, Team Scholar Award and Swimming.



**\$79.95 / PQ-NISLAM**

Laminated certificate plaque displays actual All-American certificate laminated on a wood plaque. It measures 10½" x 13" and comes individually boxed for presentation. Available in Water Polo, Diving, Academic, Team Scholar Award and Swimming.

**\$54.95 / PQ-NISFDE**

Engraved certificate plaque depicts the All-American certificate laser engraved directly into a black brass plate. It measures 10½" x 13" and comes individually boxed for presentation. Available in Water Polo, Diving, Academic, Team Scholar Award and Swimming.



**\$79.95 / PQ-NISACR**

Acrylic plaque with stand-off displays the All-American certificate printed directly on the acrylic. It measures 10½" x 13" and comes individually boxed for presentation. Available in Water Polo, Diving, Academic, Team Scholar Award and Swimming.

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# THE DAILY COACH

For some, hearing a certain song allows us to journey in our minds to another time and place when life was in front of us, making us smile. A simple melody can bring back a wonderful memory.

Positive Triggers are: Things that bare a literal or symbolic similarity to an aspect of unresolved trauma. They can also be called 'reactive stimuli'.

We've have experienced positive triggers in our life. When we do, we often smile, then instantly forget. We let a positive memory slip away because we are too busy.

**If we take a moment to make the positive trigger a daily part of our life, we can reconnect to our past, thus bringing more happiness and kindness into our present life.**

The joy we experience from the positive trigger allows us to shine a different light on our current status.

***Let's find our positive triggers. They'll make our lives better.***

There's an analogy Andy McKay, the assistant general manager of the Seattle Mariners, frequently uses when he talks to athletes about performance.

*"The worst thing I can imagine is getting to the top of the mountain and realizing you just climbed the wrong mountain,"* he says.

The metaphor is largely about recognizing how fleeting success can be and making sure he's driven by something other than the scoreboard.

***"You have to have a higher purpose,"*** he says. ***"Whoever I'm working with, it's always just about being as good as you can be."***

When things are going well, it's human nature not to question or search for answers. But if we strive to reach a higher standard, asking how to improve is the most important step.

Legendary Green Bay Packers Coach Vince Lombardi once said:

***"Gentlemen, we will chase perfection, and we will chase it relentlessly, knowing all the while we can never attain it. But along the way, we shall catch excellence."***



*"Put the past behind you and prepare for a new day. You cannot live in the past and still be present mentally and emotionally for today. Now is the time to position yourself to embrace what is and prepare for what will be. Keep an open mind; uncluttered with worry, regrets or speculation. Cherish the time you have and the opportunities that present themselves. Get ready to take the next step."* — Unknown

When your moves are led by **love** instead of **ego**:

- ◆ You attract outcomes that your soul needs instead of limited blessings that your mind thinks you deserve.
- ◆ You unlock doors that look at you as the key instead of pathways that require force for you to find a way through.
- ◆ You limit your magic when you're led by ego, you expand everything within you when you're led by love.

Source: Billy Chapata, *Velvet Dragonflies*

Sometimes knowing when to say no is more important than knowing when to say yes.

The superpowers of our time are the ability to focus, learn, unlearn, and evolve quickly.

Curiosity, attention, compassion, and kindness practiced as ways of honoring ourselves allow us to develop a loving relationship with ourselves.

Self-esteem is simply the level of respect and admiration you have for yourself.

No one spends more time with you than you do. You have front-row seats at every thought, word, and action.

## **The Daily Coach**

A daily hands-on approach to becoming a better leader. With the help of some unique wisdom as well as an action plan to tackle your day, **The Daily Coach** aims to be an inspiration in your email inbox each morning. Plus, it's **FREE**. Sign up for **The Daily Coach**: <https://www.thedaily.coach/subscribe>

## **BRAIN FOOD: Ideas, Thoughts, Insights, and Links To Get You Thinking** (<http://fs.blog>)



A reminder from your future self:

***“If I knew I was going to live this long, I'd have taken better care of myself.”***

Mickey Mantle



### **Common causes of bad decisions:**

1. Assumptions based on small sample sizes
2. Wanting the world to work the way we want rather than the way it does
3. Conforming to expectations/authority/group (social default)
4. Blindness to large trends (blind spots)
5. Not asking, "and then what?"



Big ambitions, low expectations, and high standards are a powerful combination for living your best life.

Ambitions pull you forward when it's hard. They connect you to something larger. You can't have a meaningful life without a connection to something larger than yourself.



Your life is designed to get the results you are getting right now.

For the trajectory to change, the approach must change.



*“An initial period of concentration—conscious, directed attention—needs to be followed by some amount of unconscious processing...the key to solving a problem is to take a break from worrying, to move the problem to the back burner, to let the unwatched pot boil.”*

From Dan Rockmore in The New Yorker, November 7, 2019



Everyone is a perfectionist when they care enough.

If you're not obsessed with it, you'll never master it.

The reason you won't master it is because you won't care enough to be a perfectionist.

*“Real love is accepting other people the way they are without trying to change them.”*

— Don Miguel Ruiz in The Four Agreements



Vacation won't make things better. Changing jobs won't make things better. Getting the recognition you deserve won't make things better. Drugs won't make things better.

***The only thing that will make things better is your relationship with yourself.***



The very best don't have to turn it on. It's *always* on. They have to turn it off.



*“There is an expiry date on blaming your parents for steering you in the wrong direction; the moment you are old enough to take the wheel, responsibility lies with you.”*

J.K. Rowling, at Harvard Commencement, June 2008



*Being in the presence of other people who are also working can make you feel more accountable.*

Anne Marie Chaker, in The Wall Street Journal



The difference between failure and success is often just staying with a problem a little longer.

One more rep.

One more step.

One more minute.

One more revision.

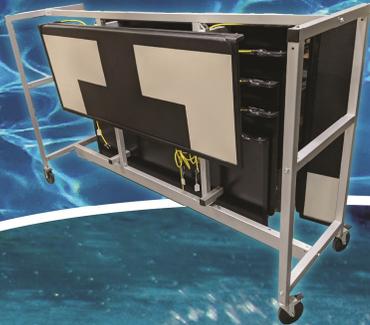
One more attempt.

The difference between average and outstanding is often just one more.





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2	FEET FIRST ENTRY* * *CIRCLE SWIM			2
3	CIRCLE SWIM*****NO DIVING			3
4	TREVANS			4
5	CIRCLE SWIM*****NO DIVING			5
6	FEET FIRST ENTRY* * *CIRCLE SWIM			6
7	CIRCLE SWIM*****NO DIVING			7
8	FEET FIRST ENTRY* * *CIRCLE SWIM			8

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