

Swimmers "To Do" List

Contributed by: **Matt Russ** on 07-06-2005

There are many things that you can do to swim better. This to do list of 10 ways to swim better could help any swimmer improve in the water.

1. Do swim frequently
If you don't average about three swims a week you will lose your feel for the water and your technique will begin to deteriorate. No feel, no technique, no speed. If the option is between one or two long workouts or three or four shorter workouts, swimmers seem to do better when they swim more frequently as opposed to only doing a few longer workouts each week.
2. Do swim with good technique
Maintain the best possible technique at all speeds during a workout. If you try to go fast with bad technique, you are wasting energy. If you can teach yourself to go fast WHILE USING good technique, you will make bigger gains.
3. Do drills as part of every swimming workout
Early in your workout, in the middle of your workout, or at the end of your workout (or any combination of the three!) do some specific technique work to reinforce good swimming skills. There are many drills you can do to stay tuned up, or to help you develop better technique.
4. Do challenging workouts
One or two times a week (depending upon how frequently you swim) do part of your workout with oomph - push the effort, go hard, whatever you want to call it. If all of your workouts are focused on technique, your technique will improve. But what will happen when you try to go faster? You will get tired, your technique will deteriorate, and you might as well call it a day. If you are doing either some hard or challenging workouts mixed in with technique work, as different workouts or as part of the same workout, you will learn how to hold good technique while going faster.
5. Do easy workouts
Depending upon your swimming goals, there may be no reason to do more than one or two tough workout sets a week, as long as you do one or two easier workouts, too. Work hard on the hard things, and easy on the easy things, and each kind of work will give better results.
6. Do streamlines
It might be a start, a push-off, or a turn, but you should always do things the same way - streamline, then into the transition between the streamline and swimming. But first, always a streamline.
7. Do leave the wall the same way every time
Always push off the walls the way you would if you were coming out of a turn. When you starting a set, you should push off the wall exactly the same way that you would be pushing off the wall if you were coming out of a turn. Most races have more turns than starts, and getting some extra practice with any part of a turn is a bonus.
8. Do wear a swimsuit made for competitive swimming
This doesn't mean spend \$300 on the latest and greatest high-tech slicker than skin piece of swim wear. It means don't wear baggy beach shorts if you are trying to improve your technique or go learn how to hold technique when going faster. There are times to wear a swimsuit that gives you some extra drag, but not before you have mastered good technique.
9. Do ask someone to watch you swim
Better yet, get someone to video you. Getting some eyes to watch what you do (or using your own via a video review) while you are moving through the pool can yield some great feedback on your swimming technique that you may have not realized.
10. Do use flippers occasionally.
Among other benefits, swim fins or flippers can help you achieve (artificially) a better body