

Swimmers:

I am very excited today to pass along a wave of information to you!! If there was ever a doubt as to the future of swimming, I witnessed an incredible event last weekend at North Penn. We had the Big Champ Meet and my daughter swam along side (and slightly in the lead !!) 388 of her closest girl friends. That is correct - 388 !!!! only girls!!! and only this area !!! As I worked the meet, I could only wonder how many BOYS were in the meet across town? To give you an idea, the 11-12 year old girls can swim 100 yards in 1:0x. I have quite a few kids (boys and girls) in the 11-12 year old group and for their information.....the top 10 NATIONAL TIMES for that age group looks like this:

100 free = 58.17 girls 55.70 boys  
100 fly = 1.02.49 girls 58.74 boys  
100 back = 1.03.08 girls 1.02.8 boys  
100 breast = 1.09.87 girls 1.09.48 boys

\*\*OK, all you triathletes can breathe a sigh of relief because these are just little boys and girls and the races are only 100 meters..... NO WAY....!!!!

1500 free = 17.01.59 girls and 16.44.67 boys....11 and 12 years old...you know, about 4 and 1/2 feet tall and maybe 85 lbs !!

You would all cry if I showed you the "bigger kids".... The 13 & 14 year olds... 15/16 anyone? 17+.....?

Inspiring? Watch out for anyone born in 1996-1998 !! All my O2 SWIMMERS are hot stuff and I truly appreciate the hard work they put in with me and at their practice pools. They practice with a purpose EVERYDAY. They have a plan EVERYDAY. They wake up hungry EVERYDAY. They are looking to beat **you** EVERYDAY !!

OK, now for my thoughts to help everyone this Feb.... I am beginning to see great light in many of your strokes as we evolve together. I asked you in my Jan 2009 Newsletter to focus on your stroke and slow down some things to give you time to focus... It looks like it is working. One of my great thrills last weekend (besides my own daughter!!) was when a youngster named Shannon swam her fastest time EVER in the middle lane (fastest seeding) and jumped out of the pool with a huge smile on her face. Not only did she win the race, but broke her PR by 3 seconds....I was lucky enough to be timing in her lane - very cool. Never wonder why I do this....

Now, for some direction to what I asked you to do last month... Some swimmers have asked me to be more specific and some even want to know what an old swimmer like me does when he gets wet....

My normal workout is 3,000 to 4,000 meters at the Y and about an hour in the Endless Pool. I start every swim with a 300 meter "connection" swim which I transition into 300 drill/swim, followed by 300 kick drill / kick swim and finish with a 100 IM. This gives me 1,000 meters of pure joy to warm up and reacquaint myself with the water. No clock. The only agenda is FEELING the water and what happens when I apply pressure to it. I try to keep my stroke count right at 14 in a meter pool and make the whole thing feel easy and quiet.

After the warm up, I stretch for about 3-5 minutes in the pool and then decide what I am working on that day. My workouts can be all over the place, as long as I hit my minimum swim of 3,000, its all good. Today, the Y was over 100 degrees and I adjusted for that... I put all my short/fast sets in the beginning; knowing that I would be cramped by 1/2 way. I then stretched out a good 800 pull with finger paddles and finished with 500 yards of lazy IM's and some super fast 25's - ALL OUT.

There, now you know more of my secrets !!

At this point, I think it has been a while since we enumerated our drills; so I will take a minute to list and punctuate a good mix of drills that you can use EVERY day to remind your neuromuscular memory of what perfect feels like.....

1) ONE STROKE FREESTYLE - literally taking one, long extended stroke and waiting until you feel the slightest sink - then moving right into one more stroke. This exercise will show you the way to reduce your SPL (strokes per length) - THE GREATEST measure of your efficiency and your best coach when I am not with you....

2) FINGERTIP DRAG - a slower and controlled freestyle where your hands never leave the water. This drill facilitates a high elbow AND a low hand. It will also correct an lines that are not straight in your stroke.

3) GOGGLE TOUCH

- always a great drill to re-emphasize the golden rule - BALANCE. Remember to start and end in full balance position.

4) LIGHT KICKING ON YOUR SIDE - this is a good streamline drill. Keep the under arm extended and the top arm behind and on your hip. Point face down except to breath. Take long and gentle kicks while feeling your body planing at the surface....no violent kicking...feel the body position.

5) FIST SWIMMING - an excellent drill to remind you of several things - balance, rotation, hand position, and forearm catch.... I like to swim with my fists loosely closed and then after my body has adjusted to the lack of a big/relaxed hand, open the hand back up and feel the new catch....better on all counts.

6) CORKSCREW - the easy way to do this is do not breathe during freestyle...swim free gently and perfectly until you run out of air, roll EASILY onto your back without disturbing your balance and do backstroke with the same side to side roll - do not swim flat backed! Roll easily back and forth feeling a long and balanced body line. Excellent for both free and backstroke !! A perverbial favorite.

7) ONE ARM FLY - I love this one. It engages all your weight forward with very little effort - you really feel where the water can take you if you let it. This is NOT just for butterflyers, it is for all who want to get better in the water. Leave

your lead hand forward all the time and dolphin roll forward while taking a one arm fly stroke - gentle. No splash. Easy. Feel where you are going and how little force it take to get there.... This should feel so magical that you WANT to keep doing it. I have been seen doing this in a long open water race if I feel crampy or tight just to feel the lack of pressure while maintaining forward motion..... Try it, let me know !!!

8) HEAD LEAD VS ARM LEAD KICKING - I do kick sets both ways.... With your hands at your sides, you will adjust your balance or drowned !! You will not have your arms to manipulate any issues....VERY effective. Next, I go to arm lead kicking. Do NOT use a "tombstone" kickboard - they will put your hips in an awkward position that you cannot translate into swimming. All my youngsters use the FINIS ALIGNMENT BOARD for a reason. Personally, I use nothing, but if my mom would give me \$20, I would buy myself only that kickboard!

9) CATCH UP DRILL - this one is an everyday MUST DO. I think you all know the catch up drill, as it enforces the fundamentals of swimming modern freestyle. Modern freestyle is NOT about the pull. Records are falling like stones for those who engage their largest muscle groups (core, lats, etc) to swim the body over an anchored hand. When you "hamster wheel" your stroke, you are short and slow, When you leave the lead hand forward until the trailing hand "catches up" to the lead hand, you are effectively driving your body with a core movement - not a pull. Go back to the video I have posted on [www.tzsports.com](http://www.tzsports.com) and really watch how long the hands stay on the lead. Google Phelps (maybe not this week!) and watch him in action - his paw lays way out on the water forever - until his other paw blasts past it to take the lead.... This is very easy to understand when you see good demonstrations. You should do it EVERYDAY in practice. You can even do it during a long RI race to reacclimatize yourself to a better stroke count and readjust your efficiency meter.

10) HIP DRIVE SWIMMING - \*\*please use with caution. This is an explosive adjunct to your stroke, but needs to be used with wisdom. Even the best of my young Junior Olympic kids can only do this occasionally . Take a hint from Dara Torres (age 41)... She just won 3 silver medals in Beijing and "only" swims about 30,000 yards a week (5,000 to 6,000 a day), BUT, she only swims about 300 yards a week at speed !!! This from a girl who is and only ever has been a PURE sprinter. Hip drive is swimming with your hips (smaller and quicker - think Brian Westbrook) driving , not a slow shoulder roll drive. Be careful, it is fast - but, it is a strain on you.... Reread the comments on Ms Torres - you hammerheads !!!

All for now! Make it a great month and keep this somewhere, I don't do this very often. See you all soon. Thank you for your support and dedication - love it !

SwimStrong. SwimSilent.

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