**TOP TIP #3**

**Race confidence comes from well executed physical and mental practices.**

It is very rare for an athlete, in any sport, to just "show up" on a competition day and do well. Swimming is no exception, and in many ways, one of the hardest sports to succeed on pure talent alone.

**SCIENCE FACT:**
Performance in competitive swimming is the result of a complex interaction of physical, biomechanical, physiological and psychological factors, all of which are strongly affected by the special medium of water (Morais et al., 2013)

In an ideal world, you want to be able to step behind the blocks feeling confident in your skills and ability to succeed. You want to be able to hear the five whistles - get ready, hear the one long whistle - and step onto the blocks and say to yourself: I GOT THIS.

That feeling of "I GOT THIS" is also known as sport confidence. For the most part, sport confidence comes from nine main sources: mastering skills, being able to demonstrate ability, being physically and mentally prepared, strong and powerful physical self-presentation, having a great social support, vicarious experiences, coach leadership, environmental comfort, and situational comfortableness (Vealey, Hayashi, Garner-Holan, & Giacobbi, 1998).

**HELPFUL DEFINITION:**

Sport-confidence has been defined as "the belief or degree of certainty individuals possess about their ability to be successful in sport" (Vealey, 1986).

## Critical Questions:

**Race confidence comes from well executed physical and mental practices. To best boost your confidence, after each practice, ask yourself:**

- What did I do well today?
- What part of my practice am I the most proud of?
- What is the one thing I can improve on next time?
- What is the one thing that gave me confidence that I am on the right track towards my goals?

| Source of sport confidence | What does it mean? | How can you improve it? |
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| Mastering skills | When you know you can master a skill many times at practice, you are more likely to be able to execute these skills at a meet. | Regularly attend practices and work on your skills. |
| Demonstrating ability | When you know you can do something well, you are more likely to feel confident. | Use warm-ups (practice and meet) to get yourself physically and mentally ready to demonstrate your ability in the pool. |
| Being physically and mentally prepared | When you know you are feeling physically and mentally prepared, you are more likely to feel confident in your skills and ability. | Take care of your performance see-saw base triangle as it is a great way to get physically and mentally ready. It is also important to pack for meets in a way that gives you confidence. Ask yourself: what do I need with me to give myself the best chance of success? |
| Strong and powerful physical self-presentation | Confidence comes from feeling great in your physical self-presentation. | Suits and goggles matter! When selecting a techsuit, make sure you find the one that fits you best, not the one that everyone else has. |
| Having a great social support | Knowing you have people around you who love and care for you no matter how well you swim is an important factor in building your confidence. | Nothing beats good support from parents, coaches, teammates, siblings, friends. Take care of these relationships as they are important! |
| Vicarious experiences | Watching others (and yourself) perform successfully can boost your confidence. "If they can do it, I can do it!" | Watch yourself, teammates, and other competitors in practice and meets. Youtube is filled with great performances to watch and gain confidence from! |
| Coach leadership | Nothing beats a supportive coach. Having trust in your coach is one of the key factors in boosting your confidence. | Make sure you have a great relationship with your coach! As you get older, learn how to communicate your concerns and needs to your coach without your parents. |
| Environmental comfort | Confidence also comes from feeling comfortable in a competitive environment. | Ask yourself: Where can I make myself comfortable at a meet? Can I remove myself from the bleachers to get some fresh air if necessary? |
| Situational comfortableness | Confidence comes from knowing the situation you are in. | While the situation (breaks between events for example) are not in your control, you can be strategic in how you approach the situation. Sometimes it means making sacrifices in events/expected outcomes. The more flexible you can be in your thinking (turning lemons into lemonade), the more confident you are likely to be. |

This infographic is part of the Wisconsin Swimming Safe Sport Athlete Education: "Adopting a Healthy Swim Philosophy for Success: Top 10 Tips From Sports Science" – series.
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