

Focus on the process. Enjoy the process.

We can't control the outcome, but you can control the process. No matter what is happening around you, stay in your confidence-building and focus-sharpening process.

Focusing on the process and continuous day-to-day improvement, allows you to stop worrying about the outcome, which you do not control. This is a way to have a lot more fun along the way.

Process-focus looks like:

- 3-5 things you work on every day
- Focus on the things that you control and forgetting everything else
- Using routines (pre-race, before practice, warming up) to get you into a peak state more consistently

1) Steps in the Process. Take it one step at a time.

"It's focusing on the little steps along the way," says Caeleb Dressel. It's really like having a flashlight in front of you and making sure you're taking the right steps toward the light at the end of the tunnel."

Approach in practice:

- Chase small, incremental improvements in training
- Have big goals, but break them down into manageable steps
- Get in the mindset of swimming your best one lap at a time

2) Sleep is training.

One of the oft-cited cliches of high-performance sport is that champions aren't made at practice—**they are made in the hours between training sessions.**

Sleep is one of the most important and fun ways to get better as a swimmer, The more you work the more sleep you need.

Nathan Adrian, a cancer survivor and 100-meter freestyle Olympic gold medalist, uses sleep as a weapon when he is doing challenging periods of training.

Smart out of the pool training includes:

- Set up a night-time routine to help you power down
- Use a gratitude journal to keep your racing mind from keeping you up
- Avoid the screens, caffeine and booze late in the evening

3) Eating is training fuel for a champion.

Ryan Murphy credits cleaning up his nutrition for part of his success at the Rio Olympics, where he won gold in the 100-meter and 200-meter backstrokes.

"Eating right was huge for me this past year, probably the first year that I really took diet seriously," Murphy said post-Rio. "Essentially, I didn't have a bad practice for three months in a row, just because I felt like I was doing everything right."

Eating better makes for better swim practices:

- Meal prep to get ahead of cravings
- Pack snacks and meals on the way to the pool for post-workout nutrition
- Carry a water bottle with you to maintain proper hydration

4) Focus during practice.

Fast swimmers bring an elite focus to the pool. If you are serious about exceptional swimming, it starts with exceptional training.

Listen to your body. Feel the water. Be present in the right now, in the moment.

You will improve the most with focused practice:

- Bring training goals each day to practice
- Keep yourself engaged with tasks for each set
- Swimming with the best technique you can, especially warming up and warming down

5) Training is a laboratory. Each day is an opportunity to get better.

Challenge yourself with new things, seeing what works and what does not.

"I come to practice every day with the mindset that I'm there to get better," says Dressel. "That's my window to improve and I just want it to be between me, my team-mates and my coach."

- Take a learning mindset to practice every day.
- Know that you don't know everything.
- It is okay to struggle with improvement along the way.

6) Fail like a champion. View failure as a steppingstone.

Research has shown that persistence alone is not enough. Learn quickly from failures and setbacks.

"Failing at something is the best way to learn what it takes to succeed at it," Summer Sanders.

Fail at practice today:

- Chase intervals that are just out of your comfort zone
- Add an extra dolphin kick to every one of your walls
- Race a faster teammate
- Drop one stroke off your stroke count per 25 for the *whole* workout

7) To get better, reflect and evaluate.

Having an even keel, a measure of objectivity and moving on from bad sessions is key.

"I've been keeping practice logs since high school for statistical stuff and technique stuff," says Dressel. I write down what we did in practice, long course or short course, how I was feeling, the times I went, then close the page, move on and not reminisce – which is important because sometimes I focus too much on the bad." -Caeleb Dressel

Use a logbook to improve your swim practices:

- Measure your focus and effort
- Reflect and objectively evaluate your swimming
- Learn from the good and bad and move on

8) Confidence comes from the process.

True self-confidence comes from recognizing a pattern of excellence in what you do instead of dwelling on the mistakes you have made.

"Confidence comes from what you do in practice every single day. When race day comes along, and you've done all the work you can do, there's really nothing else you can do to prepare, so you've just got to let your swimming do the talking and have fun." -open water and distance Olympian Jordan Wilimovsky

Build real self-confidence in training:

- Recognize your small wins in your logbook
- Pursue small steps of improvement consistently
- Go back and look at all the work you have done on a regular basis

9) Don't put a limit on what you can achieve.

Everybody has an opinion and there is an exception to every rule. Your goals are your goals. If you purposely do not set an exact goal or goal time because you do not want to put a ceiling on what you can achieve, then go for it. Just make sure to tell your coach the reason you are not setting a goal is because you plan to give 100% and will be happy with the outcome no matter what.

Like Regan Smith who shattered the WR in the 200-meter backstroke (A best time by over three seconds!) at the world at the 2019 World Championships in South Korea.

Prior to the meet she was interviewed.

"My coaches and parents think it's weird that I don't have a real goal for World Championships," said Smith. **"I don't like putting a cap on what I can do.** Since I am still young and have a lot of room to grow, I don't want to put a limit on what I can do. I'll be happy no matter what."