

7 Tips for Swimmers to Develop Action Habits

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What is the bridge between our dreams and the manifestation of our goals? What is that line that connects the ideas and hopes we have with our swimming with the result we desire?

That bridge, that connection is *action*.

Dreaming about success with your swimming isn't enough. Having goals and a blueprint are useless if you don't have the prerequisite action to go along with them. Embracing the habit of action has many benefits, but here are 4 of the most glaring ones—

- **Gets you out of your head.** We are easily our own worst enemy. Whether we are conjuring up excuses or reasons we cannot do something, providing ourselves with the matching self-talk, sometimes we need action to remind ourselves that we are a lot more capable than we give ourselves credit for.
- **It stifles fear.** Think of the last time you were asked to give a presentation in front of your class. If you are like me, the agony of waiting was far worse than the presentation itself. Once you get up there, and things start to happen, your confidence starts to come back and results start to happen. You can wield action against fear each time it rears its ugly, unshaven face.
- **Action breeds confidence.** The surest way to feel good about progressing towards your swimming goals is to take a step, no matter how small.
- **It generates results.** The fastest way between what you dream about and making it reality is acting on it. Period. Dreaming and planning is good to an extent, but at some point you need to take the leap.

Alrighty then. Now that we are familiar with why the concept of action is a super-dee-duper one, here are 6 tips to help you embrace action with your swimming—

1. Expect resistance. Lots of it.

Think about your big goal for the season. Let it wallow in your brain for a few moments. Now think about what you are going to have to do to achieve that goal. The work, the countless hours, the long sessions in the pool.

Do you feel that tug coming from the other direction? The one that is telling you “*You won't have enough time. It's okay if you don't achieve your goal. You don't really want it*”

anyways." That, my friend, is resistance. Once you understand what it is – and how it is the inverse of action – you will be better equipped to deal with it.

2. Struggling? Take baby steps.

Instead of diving headfirst into whatever it is you need to work on, start off by dipping your toes in. There will be those days where you are dragging your butt to the pool, and getting in the lane and pounding out 6k is the last place you want to be.

Understand that these dips and ebbs are natural and will happen from time-to-time. Starting small gives you confidence and the momentum necessary to carry you forward and get you out of that rut.

3. Focus on "how" not "what if."

Burning mental energy on poor outcomes distracts you from putting the effort in on acting. Instead of going over the worst case scenarios in your head, ask yourself one (or both) of the following questions—

- What is something I can do right now to help me get closer to my goals?
- How do I turn this negative circumstance around so that it works for me?

Out of these simple questions you should be able to form a good idea of what it is going take for you to move forward.

4. Keep it Simple.

Over-thinking things is a stalling technique. Make the first few steps simple and foolproof and give yourself the opportunity to stay out of your own way.

What are the top things that are going to affect your swimming? List 'em – no more than 2-3 – and focus on them exclusively.

5. Dismiss the notion of perfect action.

The only perfect time to act was yesterday. The next best time is right now. The next best (also tied for worst) is tomorrow.

6. Zero in on what you are doing and nothing else.

Give whatever it is you are doing (or want to be doing!) your complete and undivided attention. Turn off the cell phone, remove distractions, and pour all of your focus into the task at hand.

Get the blinders on and dial in on the task at hand, whether it is a dry-land workout, the main set, or a simple post-workout ab session.

7. Be willing to show up everyday.

Here is the bad news – resistance rises every day with the sun. Each day it'll show up to whisper in your ear that you don't need to work all that hard, that you can chase your goals later, or that it isn't the end of the world if you slack tonight's workout. Once you pick up the action habit, you need to maintain it on a daily basis.