

Accountability in the Water Starts with You

By Olivier Poirier-Leroy

Being a more accountable swimmer in the water means more power and control over your performance. Here are 6 strategies to gain full accountability of your training and competition this season.

Those “I just don’t feel like training today” moments seems to happen a lot more at this time of year. With the days getting shorter, the nights getting longer, and the air growing chilly, swimmers from coast to coast are settling into the long fall and winter months of training.

Gone is the exuberance and confidence that comes with the beginning of a new season, new goals, and in comes the fall and winter with it’s meat-and-potatoes training that will set you up for the rest of the season.

At this point it can be harder to keep ourselves accountable to our swimming.

We swim for our teammates. We swim for our coach. We swim for our parents. Having those layers of accountability is powerful, but at the end of the day nothing will drive results quite like having complete accountability with yourself.

It’s *your* swimming, after all. *Your* goals.

As such, it’s on you to make the most of the training opportunities that you have given to you.

Here are 6 ways to hold yourself more accountable this season:

1. Rank your effort in the pool.

Showing up to the pool and going through the motions is easy. You get to have some social time with your friends on the walls between reps and sets, during dryland, and during kick sets.

But how hard are you *actually* working?

Simply attending practice doesn't insure that you will improve or maximize your ability. Each and every time you exit the pool you should be ranking how you performed that day in the pool.

2. How consistent is your attendance?

Having an accurate record of your attendance can be humbling at first.

While it might seem like you are **only** missing a couple workouts here and there, when you see them pile up in real time, on paper, right before your eyes, than you start to see how much untapped potential you are leaving behind.

I've seen a lot of coaches over the years keep attendance sheets pinned up on the team corkboard—if your coach doesn't do this you can do it on your own at home in your training log.

3. Schedule regular check-ins.

Each week spend a couple minutes sitting down and looking over your week of training.

Where did you do well? What are the hang-ups that are causing you to have less than awesome workouts?

You should be regularly reviewing your performance in training in order to see where you are at with your goals.

You can power up this accountability tool by scheduling a check-in with your swim coach. You can do it each Saturday after your final practice of the week.

Sit down and hash over the week that was, and where you want to take things next week.

4. Write out things you want to accomplish in practice for the week.

Like check-ins, an easy way to stay on top of your training is to set yourself weekly goals for your training.

Every Sunday night pull out your training log and write out what you want to accomplish that week. It could be hitting a particular number of workouts. A specific number of hours of sleep per night. Eating better.

Whatever it is that will positively impact your week of training the most.

Make them specific, so that as the week progresses you can get the satisfaction of crossing off (or using big greasy check marks) each little goal on your list.

5. Hack the reasons you don't feel like training.

I can almost always pinpoint the reason for why my workout goes south.

The main culprit over my training history for a bad workout, or for the “meh” feelings I have towards working out is a bad night of sleep (massive construction project going on right down the street from my house—blasting and all), or needing a rest day.

Instead of simply accepting that these feelings are going to happen, your training log provides you the ability to pinpoint the causes for why you feel that way, and more importantly, gives you the opportunity to make a change so that it doesn't happen again.

Meaning you focus on getting to bed earlier. Or taking a day off from high intensity training to recover fully.

Be accountable to those moments where you feel like brushing off your training and own them.

6. Take full control of your training by seeing what works.

Similarly to cracking down on the things that do not work in terms of helping you get your butt to the pool, what are the things that lend to great workouts?

You know those workouts—where you feel fantastic from [warm-up](#) to [warm-down](#), where your stroke feels crisp and powerful, and where your training bests tumble before you.

Those breakout practices don't have to happen irregularly and randomly—when they happen break down the circumstances that made them happen and replicate them moving forward.

If doing so meant that you had an extra amazing practice or two per week that would be more than worth the couple of moments it takes to review your excellent workouts.

In Summary

The moment you decide to be more accountable to your swimming and to your goals in the pool is a liberating and powerful feeling.

Instead of allowing your performances and the way you feel about them to be subject to mysterious outside forces, you take back the power and control over your swimming.

All it takes is some regular assessment, capitalizing on your successes, learning from your stumbles, and taking the time to regularly review your training and competition.

Will you be the swimmer that is accountable to their performance in the water this season?

